

power there is no need for a certificated man unless the chief inspector considers it necessary. To exclude all boilers used for heating purposes would be to exclude those used in hotels, laundries, confectionery works, jam factories, and many other places, which would be highly dangerous.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I will not press the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (f) "114" be struck out and "200" inserted in lieu.

There is no reason why a certificated man should be in charge of any of these internal combustion engines. Even though we grant exemption up to 200 square inches, it will still be leaving a grave injustice on a large section of the community using internal combustion engines. These engines have been in operation for many years. They were primarily installed, in many instances, because it was not necessary to have certificated men in charge of them, in addition to which there was no danger to fear from their use, while in some respects they were economical.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Postponed Clause 55—agreed to.

First schedule—agreed to.

Second schedule:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move an amendment—

That after "machinery," in the first line, the words "except that which is expressly exempted by this Act" be inserted. The addition of these words will make the schedule perfectly clear.

The Minister for Education: I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed; the schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Schedules 3 to 7—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill again reported with amendments.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

Assembly's Message.

Message received from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to make amendments Nos. 2, 3, 5 to 9 inclusive, that it had declined to make No. 4, and had made No. 1 with modifications.

House adjourned at 5.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 10th November, 1921.

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

QUESTION—WHEAT MARKETING SCHEME.

Dividends and final payments.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What dividends is it expected will be paid in respect to the 1916-17, 1917-18, 1918-19, 1919-20, and 1920-21 pools? 2, When will the dividends, if any, be available for payment? 3, Is it intended to make the next dividends the final payments in regard to any of the pools? 4, If so, on which of the pools are final payments being made? 5, If final payments are not being made in connection with any pool previously mentioned, when is it expected that the final payments will be made?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, 1916-17, 1½d. per bushel; 1917-18, 1d. per bushel; 1918-19, 4d. per bushel; 1919-20, 1s. per bushel; 1920-21, 1s. per bushel, less rail freight. 2, The 1920-21 dividend should be available within a month, and the others within two months. 3 and 4, Yes, with respect to the 1915-16 pool. 5, Possibly the earlier pools will be finalised within six months, and the 1920-21 pool a little later.

QUESTION—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AND RATING.

Mr. J. THOMSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that general dissatisfaction has been caused among ratepayers in suburban municipalities by a statement that he was doubtful whether a Municipal Corporations Bill would be introduced this session? 2, If he is unable to introduce such a Bill this session, will he have a short Bill drafted giving power to municipal councils to rate on the unimproved value of land, in the same manner as is provided in the Road Districts Act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, The question is under consideration.

QUESTION—UNIVERSITY ENDOWMENTS.

Mr. McCALLUM asked the Premier: What is the present estimated value of all land and other endowments which are held by the University?

The PREMIER replied: Endowment lands embrace 4,011 acres 2 roods 25 perches, value £62,185 (1915); 999 years' lease at Crawley, area 102 acres 0 roods 8 perches, value £13,000 (1912); 61 acres 0 roods 10 perches, value £13,230 (1915), at Crawley, is to be granted in fee simple when certain pending questions are settled, in exchange for land resumed from the University at Subiaco; land and buildings in Pier-street, occupied by the University, are the property of the Crown, and are held at will, free.

QUESTION—PREMIERS' CONFERENCE, RESULTS.

Mr. McCALLUM asked the Premier: Is it his intention to report to this House the result of the proceedings of the recent conference of Premiers and afford members an opportunity of expressing their views upon the decisions arrived at?

The PREMIER replied: I have published a report of the proceedings of the conference. The matters discussed will come before Parliament in due course.

BILL—CONSTITUTION FURTHER AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Hon. P. Collier, and read a first time.

BILL—PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

Report of Committee adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1921-22.

In Committee of Supply.

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

Department of Agriculture; Hon. H. K. Maley, Minister.

Vote—Agriculture generally, £59,883 (partly considered):

Mr. SAMPSON (Swan) [4.41]: I desire first of all to express my personal thanks to the Premier for his thoughtfulness in having organised the South-Western visit of inspection and having made the necessary arrangements in connection therewith. I greatly appreciate, also, the kindness of the various members representing the South-West in arranging numerous details connected with the tour, thus ensuring to all those participating in the inspection opportunities of seeing everything that was to be seen. To very many of us the inspection was an eye-opener. Un-

doubtedly the great potential wealth of the South-West is now fully recognised by members of the Assembly. I feel that the present time is opportune for a big forward movement in the South-West, and I have no hesitation in saying that whatever reasonable proposal may be brought forward by the Government for the development of the South-West will receive warm support in this Chamber. Bearing that in mind, it is to me a matter of surprise that these Estimates show an amount £5,980 less to be expended on agriculture than the amount so applied in the last financial year. The development of the State calls for the expenditure of money, and money would be wisely spent in the development of that great unused territory, the South-West. From one centre the party travelled 12 miles without seeing a human being or passing a human habitation. That may seem almost incredible, but I can assure hon. members it was so.

Mr. Pickering: Where was that?

Mr. SAMPSON: In the Capel district. Apart from the South-West, there is much other land which should be developed; for instance, the flat country around the metropolitan area and adjacent to the hills district. Those lands will, I hope, receive consideration when the scheme of development is brought into full swing; and I urge the Minister for Agriculture to give his earnest attention to the matter. Now is the time. There is a strong feeling in favour of development. We feel that we must look to agriculture in its various forms to stabilise the State. The opportunity exists to-day, and I trust the Minister will use his utmost endeavours to seize it, so that our lands may be brought into use. Apart from the various crops which can be grown in the South-West and in certain portions of the hills district, there is the dried fruit industry. When that great leader—for he is a great leader—Mr. C. J. de Garis was in Western Australia, he visited some of the Upper Swan vineyards, and as a result expressed the opinion that the best vineyard in Australia is to be found in that district. Now, C. J. de Garis was born in a district which has developed the growth of fruit for drying; and I take it there are few men better qualified to express an opinion on the subject. Mr. de Garis was very much impressed with those lands, as was also Mr. de Garis senior, whom I had the honour of taking out to Maida Vale some time back. I hope this Chamber will show, by the reception of the development scheme when that scheme is submitted, that it believes in its own country. Let us do all that is possible in order to develop our great unused territories. The argument employed here time after time as to forcing into use our unoccupied lands received solid support during the South-Western visit of inspection. I refer to the fact, already mentioned, that on one occasion at least the parliamentary party travelled a distance of 12 miles without seeing a human being or a human habitation. Throughout the trip an outstanding

feature undoubtedly was the absence of settlement. Out from Busselton there is remarkable settlement—a Spanish settlement on what appears to be third quality land. Proof is not lacking, however, that the land in question is really first quality land, because first class citrus and vines are growing on the land.

Mr. Wilson: Who owns the land?

Mr. SAMPSON: Different people. It is all alienated. As a result of that visit we have all the arguments necessary to support the Premier in bringing in an unimproved land tax, and thus force into use those unimproved lands. When it is remembered that on one occasion we traversed a distance of 12 miles without seeing a human habitation, it will be understood how heavy is the burden on those charged with the provision of roads. The settlers in that district themselves provided upwards of £200 towards the cost, but I claim it is not fair that they should be called upon like that. There is no better country in Australia than some of the land not far from Perth. The time has come when we must develop those lands and so preclude the further bringing in of dried fruit products from other countries, particularly those from the Mediterranean. The products of those countries are generally regarded as being very unclean, some even denounce them as being filthy. Australia produces the very best fruit for drying. It is at least equal to the best American products, and there is no justification whatever for the importation of dried fruit. It is gratifying to know that the department has decided to engage a number of experts whose work will be entirely in the field, giving instruction and advice to those following different forms of agriculture. It is a very important work, and it will prevent the planting of orchards in unsuitable localities and the planting of unsuitable varieties of trees. The advice of those experts should be of the utmost value.

Hon. P. Collier: This is not new. We have always had those experts working in the field, notwithstanding which grave mistakes have been made.

Mr. SAMPSON: The experts will be guided by those mistakes, and I hope they will bring about a marked improvement. There are in this State many orchards which have been planted in unsuitable localities or which contain trees of unsuitable varieties.

Mr. Davies: How do you know that?

Hon. P. Collier: Time has proved it.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is a great pity that this has happened. Many of the trees are not worth the cost of pruning. It has been said time and time again, but I am hopeful that if I continue to repeat it, members will begin to believe it. I appreciate the statement in the report of the Department of Agriculture that experts are to go out and advise growers in the field.

Hon. P. Collier: That statement has been a hardy annual in that report for the last 10 years.

Mr. SAMPSON: If it has been in the report for the last 10 years, let us hope that really effective work will be done this year. It would be unfair to the department to say that without also saying that many of the inspectors are doing splendid work. Some six or seven years ago they either did not have the knowledge or did not work as industriously as they are working to-day. I cheerfully acknowledge the work they are doing; but we have to go further and educate those who, comparatively speaking, are ignorant of fruit growing, so that unsuitable varieties of trees will not be planted. Special training and special schools for the teaching of agriculture will receive the support of every member of the House. Recently I had the privilege of visiting the school of agriculture at Narrogin. Public approval is ungrudgingly given to the establishment and maintenance of such institutions. At that school a number of lads are learning many useful subjects which will be of the utmost value to them when they take up farms or orchards. I can assure the Minister that every consideration will be accorded to the establishment of schools and the provision of expert knowledge, in whatever form it may take. On the trip through the South-West the great value of the dairying industry was impressed upon us. Last year over £800,000 went out of the State for dairy products. That state of affairs should be stopped as soon as possible. During our visit we saw wonderful growths of subterranean clover. It is held that this remarkable fodder will prove the salvation of the South-West. It thrives wonderfully on lands of apparently poor class. That is another remarkable feature of the South-West: On one side of a road may be seen a fine crop of potatoes, whereas on the other side the land appears to be useless. In the past with overweening confidence it has been said that those lands were actually useless, but experience has proved that they will successfully grow root crops, subterranean clover and other fodders, and generally are capable of being brought into useful production. One of the greatest needs of this State is the provision of sufficient cold storage. Cold storage among other things is useful for carrying over stocks of eggs from the glut season. The departmental report discloses that last year this was done. When the market price of eggs was 1s. 3d. per dozen, eggs were put into cold storage, and released when the price reached 2s. per dozen. The eggs were found to be quite satisfactory, thus proving that cold storage is suitable for maintaining them in good condition.

Hon. P. Collier: Cold storage has been largely responsible for raising the cost of living in Australia.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am amazed to hear that.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member has just shown that eggs were put into cold storage at 1s. 3d. per dozen and released when the price was 2s. per dozen.

Mr. SAMPSON: But without the cold storage you would not have had the eggs. Cold storage guaranteed a continuity of supply.

An Hon. Member: But deprived the workers of eggs.

Mr. SAMPSON: I can assure the hon. member that the workers were amongst the best purchasers of eggs, even when the price was 4s. a dozen.

Hon. T. Walker: Oh!

Mr. SAMPSON: Now-a-days it is possible to preserve eggs in the house, and far-sighted housekeepers adopt that course. That is a feature which should receive greater consideration. I am hopeful that the poultry industry will continue to develop. Several good orders from prospective buyers in India have had to be reluctantly declined owing to shipping space being unprocurable. With the regular running of our own boats it will be possible to bring about an improvement in this direction. I repeat most emphatically that refrigerators are necessary if we are to have continuous supplies of fruit, butter, eggs and other similar products. In Perth we have a refrigerating plant. I should like to see a report obtained from an expert in order that we might learn definitely whether that refrigerating plant is justified. I am of opinion that it is out of date, and that it would pay to erect a modern plant. This would give the growers an opportunity to place their fruit in cold storage during the glut season.

The Minister for Agriculture: The provision of a refrigerator is a municipal, not a Government enterprise.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is a Government refrigerator, and is quite obsolete. We should consider whether it is worth maintaining it in its present form. It is always under repair, very expensive to work, and greatly restricted in space.

The Minister for Agriculture: We have at Fremantle the most up to date refrigerator in the world.

Mr. SAMPSON: I learn with regret that there is a decline in the area under orchards. Various reasons are put forward for this decline. One is that wrong varieties of trees have been planted, while another theory has it that the decrease has been brought about by war conditions. Some of the main reasons for the decrease are, lack of shipping space, insufficient notice when shipping space is available, absence of correct marketing facilities and the heavy price of cases. In this connection I think some consideration should be given to our growers. Although we have our own State sawmills, we find that the price of fruit cases on the orchards is nearly 1s. each.

The Minister for Works: We cannot afford to cut them for nothing.

Mr. SAMPSON: I believe that if the actual cost of the cases were worked out it would be found to be considerably less than the price charged to the growers.

The Minister for Works: You are quite wrong in your belief.

Mr. SAMPSON: At Pemberton we had the privilege of seeing fruit case wood cut, and I felt pleased with the labour-saving appliances which were being used. But it seems to me incredible that those cases should cost anything like the charge which is levied upon the growers. Before the war we were buying pine case wood imported from Scandinavia at under 5s. per dozen; to-day the price for local case wood is more than double that.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What are the spot mills charging to-day?

Mr. SAMPSON: They are selling it at a lower price than the State mills.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How much lower?

Mr. SAMPSON: I understand that the product of the spot mills varies; in some localities it is 7s. 6d. I was told at Capel that there was a small spot mill where they were able to obtain case wood at 7s. 6d. or 7s. 9d. per dozen. I believe that if the costs in connection with this case wood were gone into it would be found possible to provide the growers at a cheaper rate.

The Minister for Works: You had better go down and manage the State Sawmills.

Mr. SAMPSON: Not at all, but I do feel that it should be possible to reduce the cost. The difficulty in regard to the export of fruit is emphasised by the fact that Eastern shippers appear to have the monopoly of the shipping space. It usually happens that when space is made available for Western Australia the fact is communicated only just before the vessel reaches this State, and it is then so late that the growers are put to the utmost trouble and inconvenience in making their arrangements to utilise that space. They must guarantee that they will take a certain quantity of space, and if, when the ship arrives, it is found impossible to take all the fruit that is available, the unfortunate grower has no redress. If, on the other hand, the grower has no fruit ready to put on board, he is called upon to pay for the space which he has engaged. Last year a considerable amount of inconvenience was caused to growers. One grower at Bridgetown told me that he had made the necessary arrangements, and when his fruit was sent to port it could not be taken on the boat. It was put into cold storage and taken out again on the arrival of another boat. Owing to some difficulty, even that vessel could not take it, and again it had to be put back into cold storage. The various handlings and the changes in the temperature resulted in the fruit being so damaged that it had to be destroyed. This kind of thing is peculiar to Western Australia only because of the fact that Eastern growers have a monopoly in regard to the space which is available. Cold storage is essential, not only for fruit but for potatoes as well, and if it were available it would not be necessary for us to import potatoes from Mount Gambier and Victoria. That is a very important matter and I hope the Minister will give it his best consideration and see, if it is at all possible, to pro-

vide refrigerators, modern and large enough, for the growers. We have a Government refrigerator, but it should be brought up to date or scrapped. The time may not be far distant when we will have a regular steamship service of which the fruitgrowers will be able to avail themselves. There is an unlimited market for apples in the old world, and we should be prepared to avail ourselves of that service immediately it comes about. I regret that the Minister had to reduce his Estimates and that he has not been able to make provision for some of these necessary requirements. I am of the opinion—and this opinion is confirmed by our recent visit to the South-West—that Western Australia is on the threshold of advancement. We look to the Premier and the Government, as well as to members of the House, to give the utmost support to the forward movement which, I believe, is to be made. If Western Australia is to advance, primary industries must be developed, and I say unhesitatingly that a good, bold, forward policy is the policy we should adopt.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a good, bold, round phrase.

Mr. O'Loughlin: And we have heard it before.

Mr. SAMPSON: But never before has the need been so great, nor the opportunity so good. We have seen the quality of the land; we have seen immense spaces in the South-West and we cannot come to any other conclusion but that, if Western Australia is to do any good for herself, she must take advantage of the possibilities which exist.

Hon. P. Collier: "Hansard" is full of similar speeches.

Mr. SAMPSON: We are closer to the markets of the old world than are our Eastern neighbours, but unfortunately we are not able to make our own arrangements for export. When the policy to which I have referred comes into force, it will then, I hope, be possible to carry out our own arrangements and fill up all the space which will be placed at our disposal. The great essential, of course, is money.

Hon. P. Collier: We must admit that it is a bit of a worry.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am wondering whether it would not be possible, realising the great difficulties the Motherland is going through, to procure an increased number of suitable immigrants. Great Britain has more men than she needs; in fact the preponderance of males is causing a good deal of anxiety. I put forward the suggestion—it may not be new—that the time has arrived when we should take hold of the subject and deal with it in a thorough way. Would it not be a reasonable thing to suggest that the Premier should go to England and put the position of Western Australia before the authorities there?

Mr. Munsie: Do not suggest that or he will go immediately.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have full confidence in the Minister for Agriculture, but I consider that the Premier should be sent by Parliament on this mission.

Mr. Teesdale: Quite enough row is made if he goes to the North to see his own country; do not send him outside the State.

Mr. O'Loughlin: We have Sir James Connolly in England.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have no desire to discuss the Agent General here.

Hon. P. Collier: Why not send the "Kangaroo" on such a mission when she returns from Java?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am on solid ground when I suggest that the Premier should go to the Old Country to lay the position before the British authorities in such a way as to compel them to realise the importance of peopling this great land of ours. Western Australia is part of the Empire, and if we are to become a still worthier part, it must be developed and we must have immigrants and money. I have every confidence in the Premier. He is well qualified, transparently honest, thoroughly practical, and above everything he possesses a full knowledge of the State.

Hon. P. Collier: Is this a subtle move to get someone else into his place?

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.10]: I, too, desire to tender my thanks to the Premier for initiating the tour of the South-West.

Hon. P. Collier: And to the Busselton residents for their attention.

Mr. PICKERING: Unfortunately the tour was much too rapid, for while members had every opportunity of seeing as much as could be crowded into those few days, there was a good deal which had to be left unseen. I very much regret that the Premier was unable to lead that expedition, but I feel sure that had he been with us, the trip under his guidance would have proved even more successful. The Premier is intimately acquainted with the South-West and he has the development of that part of the State at heart.

Hon. P. Collier: You are reflecting on the Minister who led the tour.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not care how my remarks are construed; I am stating my honest opinion. The trip was quite successful and will go far towards strengthening the hands of the Government when they submit to the House the vote for the development of that part of the State. I regret that the Minister for Agriculture was not a member of the party on this occasion, and especially because of the remarks he made on the occasion when I was dealing with the development of that part of the State. If he had been with us I am sure his views would have been considerably broadened.

Mr. Munsie: That is a necessary thing to have done.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is very unkind.

Mr. PICKERING: Seeing that he is so fully acquainted with the requirements of that portion of the State to which he belongs, I am satisfied that during the period of his office he will take every opportunity of making himself familiar with that portion of the State over which the recent trip was made. I regret that I have not the eloquence of the leader of the Parliamentary party on this occasion, that I might depict to the Committee in flowery language the impressions that we gained in the recent visit to this beautiful part of the country. We have in the Chamber, however, a gentleman, in the person of the member for Forrest, who will no doubt give us an example of his eloquence when he takes the floor. I have to thank the member for Swan for his kindly references to members from the South-West. I believe I am speaking for other members from that part of the State when I say that any little service we were able to render to visiting members, or any kindness that was meted out by us, was given with the greatest pleasure and with the fullest desire to assist them in seeing as much of the country as possible. Our services were given in the interests of the districts we represent as well as the interest of the State. I should like to say a few words about the Agricultural Estimates. Since the change in portfolio we have had a change in administration, and this change has been on lines that were in operation prior to the advent of the present Minister. Before the member for Greenough took charge of this position we had a director of agriculture in control of the department. This, however, was given up in favour of the prevailing usage. The Government have seen fit, however, to effect a change in the control. I hope the appointment will be more lasting than the previous appointment. I regret, seeing that the necessary development of the State will be directed more particularly to the South-West that we have not a man who is more familiar with the class of agriculture appertaining particularly to that centre. I have every confidence in Mr. Sutton as a wheat expert. He has proved himself a capable man in that direction, but, whether he will be able to attend to the many and diverse problems which surround the South-West, is another matter.

Mr. Harrison: We have a lot of other experts.

Mr. PICKERING: There was one who was recently dismissed. I refer to Mr. P. G. Wickens, who was very much devoted to the interests of the South-West. I regret, his removal from office. Seeing that the development of the South-West is of such vast importance, I would draw attention to the fact that whilst we have had a wheat commissioner who is supposed to have devoted the whole of his time to the development of the wheat industry—much of his valuable time was occupied with other offices—we have had no expert to deal with the cereal crops and other crops particularly belonging to the South-West. I trust the head of the depart-

ment will devote considerable attention to such things as barley, oats and rye crops grown in these centres. We could greatly improve our oat production in the South-West by the introduction of other species of oats not previously grown there. The oat chiefly grown is the Algerian. Considerable improvements might be made on that score.

Mr. Simons: What about flax?

Mr. PICKERING: I have been in conference with many of the potato growers in my electorate, who have found that the production of potatoes has not always been profitable, and they have asked me to investigate the question of the production of flax. The report does not disclose very much of interest in that connection. I have brought this matter personally under the notice of the Director of Agriculture, and hoped an investigation would have been specially made in this direction. If the potato lands have to go out of production because of the difficulty of disposing of the produce on a payable basis, it will be necessary to replace that industry with a highly remunerative one in order to occupy those lands. Another thing which must be borne in upon the agriculturist of the South-West is the necessity for fallowing. One of the oldest farmers there, Mr. Frank Venn, who has one of the best properties at Dardanup, has, after years of experience, decided that he can only get the best results himself by going in for fallowing. He is a capable farmer and a good business man. The lessons to be learned as a result of his treatment of the land should be demonstrated by the various officers of the department entrusted with that duty.

Mr. Money: They follow that system now.

Mr. PICKERING: It has not been so much followed in the South-West as in the wheat areas. So far as stock is concerned, I am glad the Inspector of Stock and the sheep men are giving serious attention to this question. During the recent tour of the South-West I was very much struck by the vast improvement which has taken place in the dairy herds. Every member who went there must have been similarly impressed. There is still very much room for stock inspectors to travel throughout the South-West, and emphasise to the farmers the importance of improving their dairy herds. By this means we can hope to get much better returns from the dairying industry than has been the case in the past.

The Minister for Agriculture: We have a dairy expert.

Mr. PICKERING: Sheep should also receive more attention. In the various parts of the South-West different sheep do better than others. It should be impressed upon growers that it is advisable to go in for those breeds of sheep which are best suited to the particular districts. In the part of my electorate in which I am personally interested, it is borne in upon growers that the Romney Marsh is the best breed to go in for. The Government are to be con-

gratulated on the active measures they have taken with regard to the dingo pest. It is still a serious pest in certain portions of the South-West. I trust they will continue their active operations, and continue the assistance they have given in the past to the various vermin boards. The result of the work of these boards has been that farmers have been able to show a considerable improvement in their stock holdings as against previous years. Members who went on the trip must have been impressed with the importance of the subject so well dealt with by the member for Bunbury, when speaking on this vote. I regret that the hon. member had not an opportunity of dealing at greater length with the subject. I refer particularly to the question of drainage. From Pinjarra to Busselton it is quite evident that there is necessity for an advanced scheme of drainage. Members must be in sympathy with any assistance which the Government might be prepared to give to that end. I understand the Agricultural Department has a draining machine, which they are prepared to lend to farmers who are desirous of acting in co-operation. No scheme of drainage can be of much value unless it is carried out on national lines. We must have a main drain to overcome the difficulties.

Mr. Money: A big comprehensive scheme.

Mr. PICKERING: There is no question about that. All the members who went on this trip, and saw the results which had followed the draining of the country, must have been impressed by the fact that properties had increased in value at least 100 per cent. as a result of the work done. Having looked at the wonderful pastures and fine crops in the South-West where drainage has been made, I think they would be prepared to support the Premier in any measure that he might bring down to deal adequately and efficiently with this problem. It is hardly necessary for me to speak of the roads, for those members who went on this trip saw for themselves what they were like.

Mr. Davies: They were very bad.

Mr. PICKERING: They were hard to beat for the bad state of repair in which they were. In some instances the cars had to turn back because of the state of the roads. It is impossible for the farmers to conduct their business satisfactorily along such thoroughfares. We should have main roads taken away from the control of the local road boards, and have machinery something on the lines of the Victorian Country Roads Act to deal with the matter. Country road boards have more than they can do to look after the feeder roads. Members must have been struck with the abundance of gravel lying along the railway system. The policy enunciated by the member for Bunbury for making this gravel available to the road boards at a nominal cost is an excellent one, and if carried into effect

should greatly relieve the position. Every member must have appreciated the vital necessity for affording every possible convenience to growers to take their produce to market and bring their necessities back from the railway. With regard to the fruit industry, the member for Swan said that for 12 miles from Capel he did not pass one habitation. I would point out that the road lies mainly in jarrah country, but all along from Capel to the head of the river, there are closely settled properties of considerable value. It is all good land which borders the Capel River, and there are some of the best orchards in Western Australia there. The member for Swan did not say that when he reached the end of his journey he found some of the most beautiful orchards, efficiently and properly worked. One of the things that must have impressed members who visited the South-West was the vast area under orchards. Only a small proportion of that area was seen by members, but they must have understood how valuable the industry was. I regret that it has not received the care and solicitude from the Government it so thoroughly deserves. The industry laboured under great handicaps and difficulties during the war. Now there is a chance of recovery for it, and there is an opportunity for the Government to do their best to make the position more favourable. The overseas market is one of the most important questions. Seeing that the de-control of shipping will shortly take place, early arrangements should be made by the various bodies which deal in fruit, to reach the overseas markets.

Mr. Money: It is being done.

Mr. PICKERING: It is better that the growers should do what they can for themselves in this matter. We must endeavour to improve our local market also. I believe that under the system of co-operative trading between the fruit growing and the wheat growing centres, a considerable avenue for the distribution of fruit will be provided. It is necessary that we should avail ourselves of our nearest port. That should be the basis of the policy in connection with the fruit industry. Illustrations have been given to me showing the wonderful temperature at which it was possible to put fruit from Mt. Barker into the holds of ships at Albany. At this distance from port the fruit can be kept at a low temperature and put straight into the hold in a condition which practically ensures it reaching its destination sound. If the growers of the South-West are forced to send their produce over the rail to Fremantle, sometimes in the heat of the summer, it is not to be expected that the fruit will arrive at its destination in a proper condition. The time is opportune for arriving at some decision regarding central markets. The Minister for Agriculture said that the question of cool storage was a matter for the municipal authorities. It is necessary that a decision shall be speedily arrived at between the Government and the Perth City Council

as to the provision of central markets in Perth. I have read the reports of the Royal Commission and the select committee which sat in Melbourne to deal with this subject, and I can assure the Committee that there are many and diverse difficulties to be overcome before this question can be satisfactorily determined. The question is one worthy of inquiry by a select committee or Royal Commission, because it will involve the expenditure of a considerable sum of money and the decision, when once arrived at, will be for all time. I hope the Minister will give this matter his serious and generous consideration, so that the difficulties facing the producers of the State regarding the disposal of their products locally, may be overcome. It is necessary to get the best prices for our fruit, and the best means of achieving that will be the establishment of centralised packing sheds. If that is not done, the grading of the fruit will suffer. Although there are some growers who grade their fruit properly, there are many of them who do not do so; the results are disastrous. One of the greatest difficulties regarding Australian canned fruit on the London market has recently been demonstrated, and it is that the grading has not been properly attended to. The same thing applies to green fruit. If the State assisted in the establishment of central packing sheds on the same lines as assistance has been afforded the butter manufacturing industry, sufficient packing sheds could be established with results that would redound to the advantage of the producers and of the State. In June last, the Primary Producers' Association convened a conference of fruit-growers who were representative of most parts of the State. The decision arrived at on that occasion was that there was a necessity for the proper grading of fruit and, in the opinion of the conference, the best means to be adopted to achieve that end was the establishment of packing sheds under proper control.

The Minister for Works: Are you representing the views of those people?

Mr. PICKERING: Exactly; they are not my views alone. I look forward to the time when it will be possible to reduce the freights on fruit carried over the railways. It is necessary that the greatest possible encouragement should be given to the producers. The reduction in railway freight and the elimination of the middleman would be of great advantage and benefit to the producers and consumers alike. We must take every advantage of the geographical position of the State, and I trust that the people undertaking the handling of the fruit crop this year, will see that adequate space is secured to enable us to take advantage of that geographical position. I also look forward to the time when the Minister for Works, as the Minister in charge of the State timber mills, will be able to reduce the price of fruit cases.

The Minister for Works: I will tell you all about fruit cases.

Mr. PICKERING: I am convinced that the Minister will do so. I do not say it from a critical point of view, but I consider that as soon as a reduction in the price of fruit cases can possibly be made, it should be made. The State trading concerns were introduced in the interests of the people affected, in order that they might get their requirements provided at the lowest possible cost.

The Minister for Works: Then, why criticise them because they do not pay?

Mr. PICKERING: I was pleased to read that among the subjects considered at the Premiers' conference in Melbourne recently, was the question of finding suitable markets for our products. If we are to encourage production in Western Australia, we must make adequate provision for the disposal of our products.

Mr. Harrison: If that were done, it would be more than half the battle.

Mr. PICKERING: Although there has been some criticism regarding the trip of the State motor-ship "Kangaroo," referred to by some people as the "Jamberoo," I believe that good results will follow that expedition. One of the principal difficulties affects soft fruit. I consider it will be found possible to dispose of a lot of our soft fruit in the markets of the Straits Settlements, India and Singapore, if proper shipping space is made available. We are faced with the possibility of a great increase in the production of soft fruits this year, and that will present a difficulty. It is impossible to convert the fruit into jam because of the iniquitous imposition on sugar which prevents the local manufacturer from turning the fruit into jam and into the tinned article. On top of the many handicaps the producers and manufacturers of Western Australia have to face, they are called upon to pay £20 a ton for sugar more than is necessary. It is intolerable that while the Federal Government are prepared to make a concession for the manufacture of jam for export, sugar required in the manufacture of jam for local consumption has to pay the full price. Where the equity of such an arrangement comes in, I am at a loss to understand. Surely the people of Western Australia should have the benefit of cheap sugar just as many members advocate the advantage of cheap wheat for the consumers. Those who advocate cheap wheat, should be prepared to advocate the provision of cheap sugar as well.

Mr. Marshall: The Country Party are responsible for that position. Why kick about it now?

Mr. A. Thomson: The Country Party are not responsible for the sugar position.

Hon. P. Collier: That is about the one thing they are not responsible for.

Mr. PICKERING: The value of the fruit industry last year was £707,658. It is anticipated that the export of apples will increase to 500,000 cases. In 1920 the fruit exported included: 153,423 cases of apples, 14,782 cases of pears, and 16,516 cases of

grapes. All that fruit was disposed of at more or less satisfactory prices.

Mr. Money: That record represents only a third of what could have been disposed of, had the conditions been different.

Mr. PICKERING: Quite so, but those figures give an indication of the value of the fruit industry. It is understood that the apples for export will increase to 500,000 cases in a year or two. In these circumstances, the Committee will realise how important it is to provide adequate means for the disposal of our fruit at prices satisfactory to the grower. Another problem worthy of investigation is the establishment of dehydration plants. Mr. de Garis has deemed it advisable to erect a plant at Kendenup. If Mr. de Garis is prepared to erect a dehydration plant on what is practically virgin country, surely the Agricultural Department should be prepared to take this question into serious consideration.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is a matter that concerns the Minister for Industries.

Mr. PICKERING: If it does not concern the Minister for Agriculture, it does concern people under his jurisdiction.

Mr. Money: It concerns all the people engaged in these industries.

Mr. PICKERING: The Government should provide cool storage at any port that is likely to become a shipping port for fruit.

The Minister for Agriculture: Provision is made for that at Fremantle.

Mr. PICKERING: We are not dealing with Fremantle only; there are other ports that need attention. I am sorry to admit that it will probably be some time before cool storage will be required at Busselton, but because that is so, I am not going to refrain from advocating the provision of cool storage facilities at other ports.

Mr. Money: They should be provided as part of the port's export facilities.

Mr. PICKERING: That is so. Every possible step must be taken to see that the natural port entitled to the trade must get that trade.

Mr. Money: We cannot afford to do otherwise.

Mr. PICKERING: These points are vital to the export trade and the fruit industry. It is useless to ask the Committee to vote a huge sum of money to develop the South-West if the Government are not prepared to face these problems I am putting forward. If it is necessary to spend so much money in developing that portion of the State, it is equally necessary to see that facilities for export are provided to deal with the results of that expenditure. The provision of louvre trucks for fruit and other similar commodities should be made an urgent question by the Minister for Railways. The problem of dairying is a vital one in the South-West. I want to impress upon hon. members the great advancement that has been made in that industry in that part of the State.

Hon. P. Collier: There has been a satisfactory increase in the production of the Busselton butter factory.

Mr. PICKERING: I will deal with that aspect too. The departmental report for the year ended the 30th June, 1921, contains the following references to the State butter factory at Busselton—

The butter manufactured for the period under review was 229,248 lbs.; this exceeds the previous year's output by 45,652 lbs. The season has started early, and the supplies now coming to hand exceed those of previous years. There are a good number of new settlers in the district. At the invitation of the management, and with a view to assisting the farmers, about 180 cows of the district around the factory have been tested, all samples being tested at the factory and the majority being of a fair average. This shows that the farmers are beginning to realise that it is essential to have good stock to obtain good results. Everything points to a record season. The average price paid to suppliers per lb., butter fat, first grade, was 2s. 2½d.—a very high figure.

Those members of Parliament who availed themselves of the opportunity to travel through the South-West last week, must have been impressed by the excellent pastures they saw. It would be invidious to draw attention to any particular part, but mention might be made of the excellent pasturage noted around Burrekup, thence from Capel, through the Preston Valley, and, in fact, throughout the South-West generally, even to Boyanup. Members must have been struck at the remarkable improvement in the pastures. This improvement is mainly due to two grasses which have been introduced and established with beneficial results. I refer particularly to the subterranean clover and paspalum. I was amazed to hear one of the Government inspectors express the opinion that paspalum should be declared a noxious weed.

The Minister for Agriculture: Was he serious?

Mr. PICKERING: Perfectly.

Mr. Sampson: In an orchard it becomes a great nuisance.

Mr. PICKERING: Grasses for pasture are not usually grown in orchards. The pastures of clover and paspalum at Brunswick were an eye-opener to members. One feature which I wish to impress upon members is that these pastures were found in all sorts of unexpected places. We found them not only on first-class land, but on areas which were previously condemned as being useless. This was one of the biggest lessons of the tour, and as we proceeded through the South-West, we were more and more impressed with the possibilities of the poorer lands, given drainage and proper treatment. On land which was hitherto regarded as valueless we saw most luxuriant pastures. This should inspire us with a great hope for the future of the State, and more especially the

portion to which I have referred. There is the water grass (*Poa aquatica*) which I believe will become the reclamer of some of the worst swamps in the South-West, swamps which we cannot drain but which, if properly planted with this grass, will be made useful for the dairy farmer. It is a very nutritious grass of good fattening qualities, and I am pleased to know that the department is experimenting with it. With the sowing of these grasses I believe that the future before the South-West as a pasture country will be a glorious one. The Agricultural Bank authorities should recognise the large asset which we have in the South-West. Hitherto they have regarded the area somewhat doubtfully, and it has been difficult for applicants to get that measure of assistance which has been so readily extended to other parts of the State. The more one sees of the South-West, the more one must be impressed with its permanency, and this being so, surely the Agricultural Bank should generously assist operations in this centre. I am glad that the Department of Agriculture is doing much to improve the dairy herds. If this is persisted in, the output of butter will be considerably increased, and at no extra cost to the producer. The dairy farmer is awaking to the fact that it is no more expensive to carry good dairy stock than the weeds which at present are being milked. I hope the dairy expert will continue the excellent work he has started, and persist in his efforts to induce people engaged in dairying to improve the quality of their herds. The Minister for Agriculture should take a generous view of requests for assistance for the provision of silos, milking machines, and butter factories. All the facilities which tend to make dairying more popular will prove beneficial to the State. Everyone knows that dairying entails considerable and continuous labour, and that it is difficult to induce people to interest themselves in it. They are willing to take up any other form of farming, but they object to dairying on account of the amount of work involved. If the Government can do anything to encourage the provision of facilities which will make the work less laborious and produce better results, the industry will make rapid progress. I have been asked whether we had any potatoes in the South-West. I guarantee that finer crops of potatoes than we saw were never grown. I do not wish to single out any particular district. A striking feature was that we found potatoes growing on flats and flourishing equally on hill-tops in the same season and only a few yards distant. One of the best crops we saw was that of Mr. Percy Rose growing on top of a hill. He expected the crop to yield eight to nine tons per acre. I had the privilege of taking several members to one of the best farms in the South-West—Higgins Bros.' farm at Capel, and I showed them a five-acre block, consisting of one and a half acres of onions, three acres of

potatoes and half an acre of peas. I defy anyone to find better crops in any part of the world. Near by we saw one of the finest oat crops that came under our notice during the tour. If these crops do not illustrate the possibilities that lie before the South-West, I cannot cite better. The position of the potato grower is serious. There is no question that we can produce potatoes in abundance. This year it is expected that our growers will produce more than a thousand tons in excess of local requirements.

The Minister for Works: Export them to Victoria.

Mr. PICKERING: If there happens to be a failure in the Eastern States we may do so, but the chances of finding a market there are remote. These figures are the estimates of Mr. Clarke, who is intimately associated with this industry. He assures me that growers are endeavouring to arrange for cold storage to tide over the period between seasons, but he says that the price of cold storage is much too heavy to admit of the potatoes being stored at a profit. In the course of our travels, I met a gentleman from the Malay States, Mr. Small, who told me it was possible we should find a market for our potatoes in the East. He assured me that potatoes there were sold at 3d. per lb. If we could get 3d. per lb. for ours, there would be a very big margin to cover freight and other charges.

The Minister for Works: You would not get much if you sold them at that price.

Mr. PICKERING: Mr. Small is a gentleman for whose judgment I have great respect. When I returned to Perth I rang up the Premier's office and asked that a cable be despatched to Mr. Scaddan with a view to having this question investigated during his visit to the Straits Settlements. If we can find a market, even though it returns us only a fair price, it will do much to relieve the position of the potato growers in this State. Seeing that many of our returned soldiers settled in the South-West will be dependent on their potato crops for some years to come, every possible step should be taken by the Government to investigate this matter. One of the disabilities under which potato growers are labouring is due to the use of indifferent seed. The attention of the potato expert might be directed to this matter. I understand that some of the seed used in the South-West this year was procured at Denmark, and has not turned out as well as was expected. In fact, if any loss occurs it will be due to the indifferent quality of the seed. I realise the difficulties which confront the department, but still a great deal can be done to help the settlers. Varieties such as Manhattan have been cut out because the yield was not so good as that of Delawares. The Manhattan was a very firm potato of good keeping qualities, and I cannot understand why it should have been discarded altogether. The methods of cultivation and sowing have been considerably improved since the depart-

ment interested itself in the care of the industry. It is essential that the greatest care be exercised in the planting, cultivation, and subsequent treatment by spraying and other means if the crops are to be brought to fruition. The area under vines is very considerable, and the market in my opinion is almost illimitable. While at Boyanup three cases of wine produced at the Biddieup vineyard were put on the train. I have tasted a good deal of wine in my life and I claim to have some knowledge of it, and I can assure members that I have never tasted wine which satisfied me so quickly as that which came from Biddieup. It was a wine of excellent flavour, aroma, and colour, and plenty of kick, and not many of the party wanted more than one or two glasses. It is a splendid advertisement for Western Australia that wine of such quality can be placed on the market. I would like to pay a tribute to Mr. Drnee on the marked improvement which has characterised his wine during the last few years, and to express to him our thanks for his generous gift. I would like to record our thanks to all those ladies and gentlemen who were kind enough to place at our disposal motor cars and vehicles. Throughout the trip every possible assistance was given us in this respect. We are also indebted to the residents for the entertainment accorded us, in which respect Busselton was not behind-hand. I do not wish to particularise, but I must say that of all the shows we attended, the most enjoyable was the dance at Bunbury. I wish to refer to the Spanish settlement on the Warren-road, 80 miles from Busselton. I took the Minister for Education and several other members of Parliament there. As the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) said, the results obtained there from inferior soil are astounding. The experiment of that Spanish settlement has proved that much of our country which has hitherto been condemned is good country. Let me assure the Committee that the area of country on which the Spanish settlement is placed extends over many thousands of acres. During our trip we saw a good deal of excellent land which, however, is unobtainable except at high prices, and therefore is useless to us. But we also saw in the South-West large extents of Crown land which can be made available to settlers. No doubt the difficulty and cost of bringing that land into production are great. Still, we should be grateful that that land exists there. I would not be doing justice to my district, or to the agricultural industry generally, if I did not make some reference to lime. For years past the South-West has been crying out for lime, and that requisite has been promised to us by Acts of Parliament and in other ways. No lime has, however, come to hand. I have spoken to Mr. Johnson, of Ora Banda, one of the directors of the Lake Clifton Lime Company, on the subject; and that gentleman assures me that the company are putting in a plant which will at an early date make available to farmers lime with not a greater percentage

of water than 10 per cent. Such lime will be made available at an early date; and the price, I understand, will be as laid down. This should give great satisfaction to the farming community.

The Minister for Works: When did Mr. Johnson tell you that?

Mr. PICKERING: A couple of days ago. In conclusion, let me say that the trip from which members have just recently returned was a trip of much value to the State. It was not a picnic, as some people have suggested, but a hard working tour the whole way through. The example set by the Minister for Works in his electorate was followed, and more than followed, throughout the trip; and all members of the party returned more or less wearied by their exertions. The trip was a hurried one; but, still, members of the party were enabled to obtain a good idea of the potentialities of the South-West. It is my firm opinion that the trip will result in material savings to the State in many directions. Moreover, it has afforded hon. members information which will enable them to appreciate the justification of any votes proposed here for the development of the South-West and of the agricultural industry.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [6.4]: I have listened with careful attention to the speeches made by hon. members on this vote, although it is not one which touches me as a Minister save in one respect, to which I shall make reference directly. But had the debate been ten times as long as in fact it has been, I would still say that the last speaker in his concluding remarks gave information which is of great value and interest to the farming community, and to myself as Minister. We have it on the authority of the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) that Mr. Ora Banda Johnson, one of the responsible directors of the Lake Clifton Lime Company, has assured him that within a few days, or say a few weeks, dry lime in accordance with the conditions of the company's lease will be available to the farmers who require it, because the company are putting up a plant which will grind and treat the lime in such a fashion that they will be able to carry out their undertaking. I should be glad to know that I have not misunderstood the hon. member.

Mr. Pickering: No. That is quite right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am very much obliged for that confirmation. The information will be of great use to me in matters I have to deal with relative to the Lake Clifton Lime Company. I therefore want the information recorded in "Hansard," available to be used by me when I require it.

Mr. Money: I have a letter saying that the lime is available now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was referring to the assurance that the company are putting up a plant. The only other point I want to make reference to is one raised by the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson), and

I do so in all kindness to a young member. Had that hon. member been in the House last Parliament, he would now be quite au fait with the facts of the fruit case controversy, and not merely au fait with the opinions of interested persons, who may be either his constituents or the constituents of other members. Let me say that the State Sawmills do not desire to cut any fruit cases whatever, and for this reason, that while there is a profit on fruit cases, though not a large one, yet any timber that can be cut into fruit cases is available for conversion into other sizes which can be exported to Adelaide at a larger profit. The State Sawmills are a commercial concern, and are criticised as such inside Parliament, and are maligned as such outside Parliament. They are maligned wherever possible by people who make statements that in ordinary life are considered lies, statements which, did the Standing Orders permit it, I would describe as damnable lies, because they are lies which ought to be condemned. The State Sawmills, if they are to be criticised as a commercial concern, must be allowed to conduct their business as a commercial concern, and must not be looked upon or treated as a medium for distributing among any class of the community a bonus on the industry of that class, a bonus which might almost be termed charity. The State Sawmills exist for a commercial purpose, and from that point of view they will be quite satisfied if they never cut any more fruit cases.

Hon. P. Collier: Then don't cut any more.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Let me tell the member for Swan, lest there should be further misunderstanding, that the State Sawmills have endeavoured to assist the small producers of fruit cases as much as they possibly can. From our mills at Holyoake we are now sending down as far as Harvey the class of timber which, if not sold as firewood, is burnt on the mills. As the parliamentary party saw, that class of timber is being sent to Harvey, to be cut into fruit cases. I refer to what is known as the "dockings." Those hon. members who visited Mr. Snell's orchard at Harvey could see fruit cases being cut out of that class of timber, which had been obtained from the State Sawmills at Holyoake.

Mr. Wilson: The same thing applies at Pinjarra.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and elsewhere. The State Sawmills have shown the small mills that the State is prepared to act in a spirit of philanthropic consideration, provided the State Sawmills are paid for it. The State Sawmills are providing the small mills with those dockings, which the small mills convert into fruit cases, thus providing a good living for their owners, giving employment, and supplying the orchardists with locally manufactured fruit cases at such prices as the owners of the small mills have the conscience to charge. With regard to fruit cases, the instructions given to the management of the State Sawmills were these:

"Although we are not a philanthropic institution, we cannot stand by and see the product of men's industry in the orchards wasted and rotting because fruit cases are unobtainable. Therefore we will supply fruit cases on reasonable terms, meaning that we must get back our cost and a shade of profit on it." We have done that. But if for the future the State Sawmills could avoid cutting fruit cases, I would never have them cut another. Still, if private sawmills do not supply we must cut and supply. My friends opposite would say that one of the justifications for the existence of the State Sawmills is that they render such services to the people of the State. To my young friend the member for Swan, I would say that if he accepts all the statements emanating from fruitgrowers, he will speedily have a head like a bumblebee, full of noise and nothing else. He can take this straight out, that I could give him the names of some of the fruitgrowers who interviewed him on the way to Bridgetown and told him about fruit cases and many other things. I can tell the hon. member all about that old dodge of asking me for allowances on lots of cases supplied. In one instance the State Sawmills, cutting karri only, were able to prove that the cases on which an allowance was desired had been cut out of jarrah, and not out of karri. Thereupon the applicants for allowances subsided. The State Sawmills are doing what they can for the orchardist; but if hon. members want to see the State Sawmills functioning as a bonus-giver, the Committee had better get some other Minister to run them. If any bonus is to be given, let it be given straight from the Treasury; let it not be a charge on a business concern such as the State Sawmills. The orchardists have Buckley's chance of getting such a bonus out of me.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [6.12]: I regret very much that I was unable to accompany the party that visited the fertile districts of the South-West last week. I had fully intended to join up during the week, but later found myself unable to do so. I have, however, covered, if not the whole of the area traversed by the party, certainly a very considerable portion of it. I have been over the South-West many times during the past 14 or 15 years, and I know it fairly well. I can quite understand that those hon. members who visited that portion of the State for the first time were astounded as well as delighted with their trip. I feel sure that they will have acquired a great deal of knowledge and information concerning the possibilities of the South-West; and that information and knowledge must be of inestimable value to them when considering the problems confronting that portion of the State, problems inevitably bound to come up here for discussion during the next year or two. The South-West, I think, has been neglected. As a fact, replicas of the speeches to which we have listened this afternoon con-

cerning the possibilities of the South-West are to be found, almost word for word, in the volumes of "Hansard" for the past 10 or 12 years.

Mr. Pickering: They must be true.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They have been uttered chiefly by members representing the South-West and interested in its development. Unfortunately, those expressions of opinion fell upon more or less deaf ears. As each year went round, either on the Address-in-reply, or on the Agricultural Estimates, hon. members, Liberal or Labour, voiced similar sentiments to those expressed this afternoon. And so the matter rested until the Address-in-reply or the Estimates came round again the next year. Everybody's eyes were turned towards the wheat belt. The wheat belt attracted settlers not only because it offered opportunities for making homes, but also because of the fact that it was much easier to acquire land there, and, thirdly, because that land could be brought into a productive state at a much earlier period and at less expense than land in the South-West. There was also the fact that practically unlimited Government assistance through the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank was available to men taking up land in the wheat areas, whereas that assistance was not extended to settlers in the South-West.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The very rapid development of our agricultural industry during recent years and the regrettable decline in the mining industry have brought the Agricultural Department into a position of first importance in Western Australia at the present time. It will depend largely, or at least to a considerable extent, upon the administration of the Agricultural Department, upon its efficiency and upon the knowledge and advice of its expert officers, as to what progress and development is to be made in connection with agriculture in the future. Quite recently, the Minister in control of the Agricultural Department reorganised it, in that he has placed as the permanent head, a Director of Agriculture who formerly had been the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt. I am firmly of the opinion that in doing that, the Minister made a profound mistake. To-day, the Agricultural Department is without a permanent head or, rather, it has as its permanent head, a gentleman who was brought to Western Australia because of his special qualifications, training and knowledge regarding cereal production and wheat growing. It may be held that it will be of advantage to have an expert officer as the permanent head of the Agricultural Department, but, in my opinion, the result will be that an officer, who has done splendid work in the past in the wheat growing areas, will merely be withdrawn from the arena of activity where he has been of service to the

State, and be placed in a position where he will do mere routine work.

The Minister for Agriculture: That will not be so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think it will be so. Some years ago, during the war period, Mr. Sutton's time was taken largely up with work in connection with various boards and commissions. Shortly after the Premier took office, he released Mr. Sutton from those duties, which confined him practically to head office work, and instructed him to devote his time to field work in the wheat areas. In other words, the Premier released Mr. Sutton in order that he might carry out those duties for which he was brought to Western Australia, and which he had formerly carried out with success. The Premier held the view, and I agreed with him at the time, that Mr. Sutton's place was out in the field among the farmers, speaking and lecturing to them as to the best and most effective methods to be adopted in the development of their holdings. That policy has been entirely reversed. In my opinion, it cannot be gainsaid that the State has lost an expert officer from the field where he did good service and—I am not casting any reflection upon Mr. Sutton—gained a man who may not be a good administrator in the position he now holds. Let members look at the Estimates. There are 31 clerks employed in the Agricultural Department. There is a Chief Inspector of Rabbits with his staff; there is a fruit expert with his staff; there is a chief veterinary surgeon with his staff, and so on. With these expert officers and their staffs, is it not essential that, in the performance of duties of the nature they carry out, there should be some permanent head to whom they would be responsible for the due performance of their work. It should go without saying that such is the case. Through the hands of all these experts and their staffs, files and papers will be continually passing.

The Minister for Agriculture: They will pass through the secretary.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am coming to that point. There must be a considerable amount of head office work, sufficient to engage the administrative ability of a man as head of the department. Otherwise, each head of a sub-department, such as the Chief Inspector of Stock, would be an authority unto himself. There would be no supervising permanent head of the department to see that they carried out the functions of their respective offices. The Minister for Agriculture says he has a clerk through whose hands files and papers will pass. This means that either Mr. Sutton's services have been withdrawn from the field, where hitherto his services have been of advantage, and his attention has been devoted to routine work in the head office, or a secretary, who is a clerk with £360 a year, will assume the duties of permanent head of the Agricultural Department.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, he is doing clerical work.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course, and Mr. Sutton, as permanent head of the department, must of necessity have his time taken up at the head office. How can it be otherwise, in the circumstances? In every other department there is a permanent head whose duties confine him to head office work alone. Surely the work and responsibilities attached to the Agricultural Department, will no less engage the time of a permanent head than will those of any of the other departments. That being so, I repeat that a profound mistake has been made by the Minister in withdrawing Mr. Sutton from work in the field and confining him to head office routine duties. Because Mr. Sutton is a qualified man regarding wheat production, it does not follow that he is a capable administrator and expert in every branch of agriculture.

The Minister for Agriculture: He has had a scientific training in all matters relating to agriculture.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And that scientific training will be of no avail because he is now confined to head office to deal with files and reports.

The Minister for Agriculture: He is of service in his position as permanent head just as much as he ever was.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When Mr. Sutton was engaged upon the work of the various boards, Commissions and committees some years ago, it was generally admitted that, while he was a first rate man in his proper sphere, it did not follow, and, in fact, he was not and could not be—it is no reflection upon him to say so—possessed of the necessary business or administrative ability to take charge of the Agricultural Department. Before we discuss the Estimates 12 months hence, the Committee will realise that a mistake has been made by the Minister. To have a man with the professional knowledge and ability possessed by Mr. Sutton merely doing routine work at the head office of the Agricultural Department, work which could be just as effectively done by men who have no particular technical knowledge of the science of agriculture, is not in the best interests of agriculture or of the State. It has been proved time and again that such duties at the head office, could be effectively carried out by men without the technical knowledge such as that possessed by Mr. Sutton.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you think a clerical officer could gather up the threads from the reports of the expert officers and piece them together adequately?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Most decidedly; it is done in all departments.

Mr. Underwood: These experts are not usually men to control such a department.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is a well known fact that professional or expert men, who are trained as specialists in certain sciences or work, are invariably failures as business administrators.

Mr. Teesdale: Hear, hear, that is so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Without reflecting or wishing to reflect on Mr. Sutton in the slightest degree—I have the highest opinion of his qualities and training in his proper sphere—I candidly confess that I have not the same confidence in his ability as an administrator in the position he now holds. I am convinced that the Minister has made a very grave mistake in effecting this alteration. It may be said, of course, that there will be experts who will take Mr. Sutton's place and that there will be another expert to take up his work in the field. In any case, that simply means that Mr. Sutton has been withdrawn from a sphere where his work proved of such much value to the farmers and to the State. With all our vast wheat growing areas, stretching so far as they do across the State, the services of a man like Mr. Sutton could be well employed the whole year round, lecturing and advising farmers throughout the whole of the wheat areas. In that capacity, Mr. Sutton's services would be of more value to the State than they will be in his present position. There are many men who could do the work as head of the Department of Agriculture equally as well as Mr. Sutton.

The Minister for Agriculture: But the director will not be shut up in the head office.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think he will be.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, he will not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If that is so, it means that the administration of the department will be largely assumed by the secretary or clerk who is receiving a salary of £360 a year. It would be absurd to say that a department of such importance should be controlled by a clerk, practically as the permanent head, with a salary of only £360 a year, and have a certain amount of control over expert scientific and professional men drawing salaries of £600, £700, or £800 per year.

Mr. O'Loghlin: Mr. Sutton cannot divide his work between the head office and the field.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Decidedly that cannot be done. It simply means that we have lost the services of a man from the field where he has been of use to the State or otherwise the clerk will really be the head of the department. Some phases of the work of this department require close investigation. It will be remembered that, three or four years ago, it suddenly dawned upon Parliament and the people that the rabbits were invading Western Australia in great numbers, and that prompt action was necessary. Only a few years ago very little money was being spent on the destruction of rabbits. In 1915-16 the amount so spent was £9,800. In 1917 it increased to £11,000; in 1918 to £17,000; in 1919 to £28,000; in 1920 to £30,000; in 1921 it was £23,000; and the estimate this year is again £23,000. So, in all we have expended from revenue account during the last seven years £144,000 on the destruction of rabbits, or

an average of about £21,000 per annum. That perhaps, is not too large a sum to pay for the destruction of the pest. But we find from the report of the Chief Inspector of Rabbits that largely the money is being wasted. Only two years ago we passed an Act dealing with the destruction of rabbits and giving very great powers to the Government, not only in respect of the eradication of the pest on Crown lands, but also in the direction of compelling the farmers to take active steps in the campaign. If we are to spend public money at the rate of £21,000 per annum, or nearly £150,000 in seven years, it is reasonable to ask that some result should be shown. I propose to read an extract from the last annual report of the Chief Inspector of Rabbits, as follows:—

However, few of the settlers have taken advantage of the offer of the Government to supply rabbit-proof netting on extended terms for the closing in of dams. Where this has been done the reduction of rabbits has been very marked; and where the inclosure has been used as a trap, in some cases over a thousand rabbits have been caught in a week; but, I regret to say, no general acceptance has been made of the offer. On the west side of the No. 2 Fence, between it and the coast, rabbits have spread almost over the whole area, with the exception of the extreme South-West, and reports have come to hand that even there rabbits have been seen or killed—four having been killed near Manjimup. The vermin boards on the west side of the No. 2 Fence, with one or two exceptions, are doing nothing, and the excuse of many of them is that, so far, the rabbits have not done any damage in their districts. The foolishness of such a policy should be apparent to any person. While the rabbits are few they can be kept in check if each settler would poison as soon as the first traces of them are seen, whereas, if allowed to increase until the damage they do is felt, the reduction of them and keeping them in check becomes a serious expense. Some boards have stated that there were no rabbits in their district, and I have sent an inspector to report, and have even given the boards the numbers of the locations on which the rabbits were, but notwithstanding this they would do nothing, either in the way of compelling the owners or occupiers to destroy, or having the work done at their expense. East of the No. 2 Fence some of the boards have been doing excellent work, but this has often been minimised by the fact that adjoining boards were doing nothing. As regards the whole South-West division of the State, only about nine or ten boards are doing anything worth calling work. The practice of appointing the road board secretaries the vermin inspectors is a most pernicious one, and many of them simply draw the increased salary and do nothing to justify it. All that is required is another good season or two with summer thunderstorms for rain and the

damage done to crops will be exceedingly serious all through the State. On the worst breeding places on Crown lands the department has had on an average about 16 poison carts working, with most satisfactory results; the rabbits have been kept down there so well that it was at times difficult to find any rabbits where there had been tens of thousands previously.

If that report be correct we are faced with a very serious position. It means that the State is spending an average of £21,000 per annum, and as a result of the neglect of the vermin boards to carry out the functions imposed upon them by the Act, only a good season or two, in the words of the chief inspector, are required to nullify the expenditure. If the State is to keep 16 poison carts going all the year round, and spend the sum I have mentioned, then the permanent head of the department and the Minister should see to it that the vermin boards and the farmers do their part of the work. It is useless to keep Crown lands comparatively free from rabbits if adjacent holdings are to be overrun with them. Something more effective must be done if the money poured into this work is not to be entirely lost. It is worth remembering, too, that the State has spent an enormous amount of money in other directions in an endeavour to cope with the pest. Our rabbit-proof fences have cost £392,000 in all, inclusive of £66,000 expended through the Gascoyne vermin board. So, in addition to the annual expenditure I have mentioned on the destruction of rabbits, there is interest and sinking fund on £392,000. If the officer whose duty it is to attend to the destruction of rabbits places in his annual report a statement such as that I have read, it is up to the permanent head of the department and the Minister to give serious attention to it. It is of no use paying responsible officers high salaries if their reports are to be ignored, either by the House or by the department. The Minister will find that under the Act he has plenty of power to compel the vermin boards to carry out their functions. If he did this we should not have the chief inspector reporting that the secretary of the local authority sits down and draws his increased salary without doing anything in return. Then the Chief Inspector of Rabbits points to the danger confronting the pastoral industry as the result of the rabbit invasion. He says—

The rabbits are slowly but steadily making headway in the pastoral country and, so far as I know, absolutely nothing is being done, either by the boards or by the settlers, to check them. In some places the saltbush is being steadily eaten out by the rabbits, and it is only a matter of time when it will disappear entirely from some districts, as it has over vast areas in the Eastern States, and the carrying capacity of the country reduced by more than 50 per cent.

And again—

Perhaps the greatest danger to the State by rabbits is the way in which they are eating out the saltbush in pastoral areas. In the agricultural districts where crops are attacked the result is seen at once, whereas in the pastoral areas the damage is so insidiously done that it is scarcely noticed; but it is steadily going on, and unless the squatters recognise the danger and cope with it, the pastoral industry, in a few years, will be seriously menaced.

Mr. Angelo: The Premier the other night said it was news to him that rabbits were in the North-West.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Well, there is a deliberate statement in the annual report of the responsible officer, and it points to a very serious situation. If the carrying capacity of a considerable portion of our pastoral lands is going to be reduced by 50 per cent., it is indeed a serious outlook.

The Minister for Agriculture: The same officer in his last report said that for a distance of 300 miles along the fence north of Cunderdin he had not seen a rabbit.

Mr. Angelo: No, because they are all well inside the fence now, and cannot get out.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so, they are away inside and the fence prevents them returning whence they came. We have them carefully shut in.

Mr. Harrison: How can a damaged fence keep rabbits in?

Hon. P. COLLIER: They cannot easily discover the hole through which they came. Their bump of locality may not be sufficiently developed. We all know that it is very easy to get through an opening and then be unable to find it again when one wants to get out. However, the department must take hold of this position, for the item for rabbit destruction represents the largest sum in the whole of the Estimates. It is only pouring water into a sieve if, through the neglect of the farmers or the failure of the vermin boards to carry out their duties, the rabbits are to keep on increasing. Now I come to a question which will interest the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo). We have all heard something of the history of the Gascoyne rabbit-proof fence. Some years ago the State advanced £66,000 for the erection of a rabbit-proof fence in that district, the squatters giving an undertaking that they would repay the amount over a period of 30 years. Instead of standing up to that obligation, they have incurred a further debt of £26,000. The State is called upon year after year to contribute a very considerable sum of money to the maintenance of that fence. Because of the failure of the board to maintain the fence under their contract, the department has taken over the control of the fence and it is now being maintained by the State.

Mr. Angelo: The trouble is that the Government are debiting the vermin board with

the cost of maintenance, which the Government themselves undertook to meet.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The board can have no complaint against the Government, because the board failed to carry out any part of its obligation.

Mr. Angelo: That is wrong.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member will find the balance sheet on page 7 of the report of the Agricultural Department. The accountant's report reads as follows:—

The department is still handling the affairs of the late Gascoyne vermin board, and the position disclosed by the revenue account hereunder shows that a loss of £26,348 18s. 5d. has accumulated. It seems clear that the rates levied, namely 1s. on 100 acres, is not sufficient to pay the working expenses, and, therefore, no money is available to reduce the advances made by the Government.

Mr. Angelo: Five years ago the Government undertook to maintain the fence if the pastoralists paid the capital. Instead of doing that, the Government have been debiting the cost of maintenance to that fund. That is the cause of the trouble.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Government took the fence over because the pastoralists failed to carry out their obligations. The Government had no alternative. They had no desire to take over the responsibility for or the work of maintaining the fence if the board had properly carried out their duties. As the board failed, the Government had to assume the responsibility.

Mr. Angelo: I will explain it later on.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope the hon. member will explain the figures in the balance sheet. The rate being paid to-day is not sufficient to cover the cost of maintenance. So much did it fall short last year that the loss to the State was £2,092. Having regard to the fairly good seasons which have obtained in our pastoral areas and the very good prices received for wool in recent years, the people benefiting from the construction of this fence ought to be made to meet their financial obligations to the Government. I have no personal knowledge of the North-West, but I understand that some of the finest pastoral holdings in the State are within the area served by this fence—in the Gascoyne district. Some very wealthy men have holdings in that district, and it is not fair that the general taxpayer of this country should be called upon to make up a deficit of over £2,000 a year for a service rendered to these particular squatters.

Mr. Teesdale: A lot of small men cannot pay, but I would make the big men pay. They got the fence in the first instance, and handed it over to the Government when it was out of repair.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They undertook to repay the amount of £66,000 in 30 years. They neglected to keep the fence in repair, and then refused to meet their obligations, and threw it on to the Government to maintain it. The State now has to maintain the

fence and the taxpayers last year had to find £2,092, because some of these wealthy men have failed to meet their contracts or keep the undertakings given by them to the Government when the money was advanced. If there are small holders who are not in a position to pay, they should be given the same consideration as any other man engaged on the land.

Mr. Teesdale: Plenty of them can pay.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Those men who can pay should pay. No doubt the member for Gascoyne will feel it necessary to put up some defence. Probably among these men are many of the most powerful and most influential citizens. I make no charge, except so far as the information in this report justifies me in so doing. I hope the Minister will give serious attention to the rabbit problem generally, and that he will not have to launch into the expenditure of huge sums of money to no purpose, as was necessary three or four years ago. Turning to the question of the development of the South-West, this could more readily be discussed when we consider the Loan Estimates. It is really a question of land settlement and concerns the Lands Department, not the Department of Agriculture. I must say, however, there can be no doubt whatever that the South-West has been very considerably neglected and starved by all Governments during recent years, in comparison with other agricultural districts. While money has been lavishly available for the development of the wheat areas, and properly so, the South-West has not had the advantage of the Industries Assistance Board. It has not had the advantage of the Agricultural Bank, through which millions of pounds of public funds have been made available to assist those engaged in developing the land.

The Minister for Agriculture: South-West settlers can get assistance from the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But to a very limited extent.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Five pounds an acre.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I understand they have had no assistance at all from the Industries Assistance Board, and that the Agricultural Bank has been very conservative in its treatment. If wheat growing is going to be successful, we should have reached the stage by now, after the very generous Government assistance of the last 12 or 15 years, when the industry should be on a permanent and profitable basis. Nearly all the wheat lands have been taken up.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: You said the other night that there were great areas of land held.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I was not then speaking of the wheat growing lands. Practically all of our wheat growing lands have been taken up with the exception of the areas in the Esperance district. I might remind members that, according to the report of the expert officers of the department, there is a larger area of Crown land available for

selection in the Esperance district than in any other portion of the State. When the railway is constructed, I have no doubt whatever that the Esperance district will be able to absorb hundreds of settlers as wheat growers.

The Minister for Agriculture: There is good land out from Burracoppin.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But that is more or less risky from the point of view of rainfall. The men engaged in our wheat belt should be able to get along fairly well now without anything like the amount of Government assistance which they received in the past. Having secured a footing and got their holdings considerably developed, fenced, cleared and cultivated, it should be only a matter of time when the greater proportion of these holdings are brought under cultivation. While in past years it was necessary for the Government to give great attention and assistance to the wheat growing areas, I think that in future the Government might well leave them to work out their own destiny, with such assistance as will still be available to them from the I.A.B. or the Agricultural Bank.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is our quickest line of development.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is why the wheat belt was first settled and that is why settlers rushed out there while the South-West was practically neglected. If we are to make up the leeway of £800,000 or £900,000 which is sent out of the State every year for the purchase of dairy produce, it must be done in the South-West. A policy will have to be prepared for the development of that portion of the State. I am quite aware of the fact that it will involve the expenditure of a very considerable sum of money. There are very large areas of low-lying country of excellent soil which is valueless to-day, because the land is not drained. By the expenditure of money in draining the low-lying lands and by the expenditure of public funds for irrigation, we should be able to overcome this leeway. There must be a policy of drainage and irrigation. There must be a policy of co-operation in clearing the holdings. We will never get the South-West developed to any extent, except by Government assistance being made available for clearing. An individual cannot do much in the South-West in the way of preparing the land or bringing it into use, because it is so heavily timbered and because the cost is so great.

The Minister for Works: I know it has nearly broken me.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If it has nearly broken a man of the capacity and business acumen and experience of the Minister for Works, what is likely to be the effect on the poor unsophisticated immigrant who settles there? If we are going to have any considerable policy of immigration, the newcomers will of necessity have to settle in

the South-West. Being new to the country, its life and surroundings, they will be faced with greater difficulties in developing holdings in the South-West than if they were settled in the wheat areas. There will have to be a very generous policy of assistance; as we have been told, a bold, comprehensive, courageous policy for the South-West. In these districts we must hope in years ahead to carry on the development of our agricultural industry. This State in future will have to depend largely on its agricultural and pastoral resources, together with other subsidiary primary industries. There are considerable areas awaiting settlement, and I hope that in the next few years our loan expenditure will be concentrated almost entirely on that portion of the State. There is no doubt that the South-West is capable of carrying thousands more people than are settled there at present. It is capable of producing all we require in the way of foodstuffs which to-day are imported from the Eastern States and overseas. It is a reflection upon the people of this State, small in numbers though we be, that we have to send out of the State an amount in the vicinity of a million pounds a year for foodstuffs which our own country will produce and which it should produce.

Mr. Money: It is a scandal.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I agree with the hon. member; it is a reflection on our capacity and intelligence. When we consider that this portion of the State has been occupied for the past 70 or 80 years, it is amazing that so little has been done. I attribute this, not so much to those who have settled in the South-West, because they have been confronted with great pioneering difficulties, but largely to the lack of interest, the lack of assistance, and the lack of a policy on the part of successive Governments during the past 15 years to develop that portion of the State.

Mr. Money: Quite true.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And I include myself and the Government of which I was a member.

Mr. Money: The settlers became disheartened.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have listened during the last 15 years to many speeches delivered by members representing the South-West, and they have been as voices crying in the wilderness. Necessity will now compel us to develop the South-West. The most easily settled portions of our agricultural lands were inevitably taken up first and, as they become occupied, we will have to turn our faces to the South-West. I hope that before the session closes the Government will put forward some policy and will make available a considerable amount of loan funds for the development of this portion of the State. I hope the Government will make every effort to push this matter to the front to such an extent that a large amount of development will take place during the years to come. I shall be only too pleased to assist, more

particularly members who represent that portion of the State, and who are more intimately acquainted with it and more concerned in its development. But it should not be left to members representing the South-West to carry the burden; it should be the concern of every member of the House.

Mr. Money: For the benefit of the State?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. I should be only too pleased to assist not only members representing the South-West but the Government as well, in the pursuance of any policy that will overcome the lethargy and indifference which have hung over the State for so many years.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [8.16]: It is very rarely that I speak upon the Agricultural Estimates. I should not have been prompted to make a few observations had it not been for the fact that the Leader of the Opposition has delivered an utterance of great importance to the South-West. It is practically the first time the Leader of this party has made such a definite announcement on a matter of this sort. The Government which fails to profit by his promise of support in developing the interior of the South-West will be neglecting its duty.

Mr. McCallum: Do you think the South-West members will come over to this side?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not think so, but we should all get on the one side on this question. If, by so doing, we could do anything to save Western Australia the hon. member himself would be the first to join in doing so. Many members opposite perhaps forget the measure of assistance which is sometimes rendered by people from remote localities. The Leader of the Opposition represents an electorate that is situated many hundreds of miles from the South-West. His public spirited statement to-night will, I hope, give encouragement to many new settlers who are endeavouring to carve out a home for themselves, in a climate blessed with a magnificent rainfall and in an area that offers such opportunities that warrant our deepest attention being concentrated upon it. Loan money will have to be secured. A large sum of money will be required for the purpose of development. The Leader of the Opposition has pointed out that which every member of the parliamentary party is aware of, that until we have an effective drainage system, good roads, and a large amount of fertiliser, we shall not make that progress in the South-West that we all so much desire. Some time ago the Government Analyst, Mr. Mann, was requested to take samples of soils. I have never yet seen any comprehensive report upon those soils. I am not so sure that I do not understand the reason for the non-appearance of this report. The department is naturally reluctant to publish any report which may be damaging to the locality concerned. One of the problems we have to face is that the soils in the South-West vary. We have not such a large stretch of uniform country that is so pronounced a feature of Warrambool and Warrenheip in Victoria.

We have our prolific patches and we have our sour patches. Every expert officer of the Agricultural Department should be put on to ascertain the best use to which the land can be put. Mr. Mann took samples from many localities. I hope as a result of this sampling and analysis the department will be guided in pushing settlement on in those localities where the reports are favourable.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: I hope they will be more reliable than the Estimates.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: They should be reliable. We have a sufficient number of officers to give us reliable data. There are many difficulties confronting the South-West. In a country blessed by Providence to such an extent there are many natural difficulties. There are the pests, for instance. One of the most pronounced of these pests is the zamia palm, and the department might well devote some attention to its eradication. I know of people who have been obliged to go out of the dairying industry because the zamia palm has caused rickets amongst their stock and much loss. The settlers used to bore into the palm and pour kerosene into it to kill it, but kerosene is now too expensive to be used for this purpose. It has been demonstrated in the laboratory at Maylands that the palm can be put to commercial use if properly handled. Tenders were recently called for taking over a quarter of a million acres of zamia country near Pinjarra, but I do not know if anyone put in a tender. Seeing that so many different commodities can be turned out from this palm, the Agricultural Department should apply itself more vigorously to putting it to commercial advantage, and in that way assist in ridding the South-West of this undoubted menace to dairymen. During our travels in the South-West we saw large areas of blackboy. The late Mr. Rowley, a well known chemist, conducted a number of experiments with the blackboy, and I believe demonstrated that it contained many useful commodities which could be extracted by treatment. On the show grounds recently I saw a motor cycle event in which the record was broken by a machine driven by petrol obtained from the blackboy. If this can be done there should be no doubt that the blackboy can be proved to be of value if the scientists of the department will push on with the experiments. After we settle people on the land we have to arrange for their produce to reach the markets. There is one thing that is greatly concerning people who are now beginning to get their first crops, and that is the doubt and uncertainty that exists in regard to freights and the marketing of their produce in a satisfactory way. The group settlements that we saw upon the trip were an eye-opener to most of us. The system has my hearty commendation. Provided people agree together and work together in co-operation, and that harmony exists amongst them, there is no reason why any of these settlements should fail. They work on a guarantee of 10s. a day for a certain period and they ballot for the blocks which

they prefer. There is one thing to be said in favour of the group settlement, and it is that no settler has ever been known to have been driven from his holding by the Agricultural Bank or any other Government institution. Anyone who leaves the wages market to join a group settlement is on a fairly good wicket. I have five letters from my constituents who want to join in the group settlement, and I applaud them for the desire. Given that they have reasonable help and encouragement for the first few difficult years of pioneering, these men will make good producers and establish such a home for themselves as they could not hope to get if they were dependent upon the fluctuating industrial markets that exist to-day. The Leader of the Opposition said that we required drainage and irrigation. We were able in the course of the trip to view some of the effects of the irrigation scheme already established. Many similar schemes could, with advantage, be undertaken, perhaps more economically to the settler and with more bountiful results because of the experience the Minister may have gained since. In the Collier River scheme, which has been reported on by Government experts, we have a magnificent proposition for supplying water to all the country around during the summer. People are going out of the dairying industry because of the lack of green fodder during the dry months of the year. By harnessing the numerous streams in the South-West, we should be able to carry the settlers over the dry and difficult period until they are well established and are able to make permanent homes for themselves. I was very much struck by the Spanish settlement outside Busselton. This place is situated 10 miles away. In company with the Minister I went out to see the settlement. We saw nine settlers. They had taken up the worst land in Western Australia. Those who are married have big families and they have done excellent work. After 10 years' residence there they have a fine orangery, magnificent potato crops and good oat crops, and everything to which they have turned their attention has done well. We were able to converse with one or two of the older settlers. I asked why they had selected such poor land on which to settle, land which was recognised by the people of Busselton and the agricultural experts as the most poverty-stricken land in the State. They informed me that they had travelled for four months looking for land and that they had picked this out as being the best in Western Australia.

Mr. Money: It might be.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It gave me a shock, but it opened my eyes to what could be accomplished by settlers of this description. They had probably come here to escape the lack of freedom afforded by their own country and with a desire to establish themselves in a new land. Doubtless, too, they have put up with privations in the matter of living

to which the ordinary Britisher would not subject himself. Nevertheless, they are producing good crops, and showing what can be done in winning from a reluctant nature the riches of the soil. They are now carrying on a good class of development assisted by their numerous progeny. Doubtless in the future these will mix up and mingle with the rest of the settlers of the State. I believe that a judicious mixture of white races can do no harm to the country. In South Australia, where I was born, the most thrifty and prosperous settlers, and those with the largest deposits in the bank, were the German settlers. These people did much to build up the prosperity of the State. I will not stick at importing an exclusively British population. We can become too insular and narrow-minded upon these matters. By getting people from the north of Italy and from Norway and Sweden and like places, we shall be able to develop much of our country which to-day is beyond our means and heart-breaking in its outlook. Anyone who sees that Spanish settlement, and what they have been able to accomplish in such a short time, must stand in wonder and amazement. At all events it has opened up in my mind a new outlook. No one would have thought that this part of the country would have produced anything, but to-day it is yielding a rich harvest by the work of those men who have only received £5 an acre from the Agricultural Bank. This serves to demonstrate what a mighty heritage we have in the land and climate lying south of the metropolis. It was pointed out during the trip that much of the country lying along the existing metals was unimproved and left in a state of nature. The Leader of the Opposition was charitable and just enough to say that the pioneering difficulties were so great to the old settlers that they had not been able to conquer as much of nature as they would have liked, and that a great deal of the land had therefore been held up. If this land is not going to be brought into production by being offered to the State at a reasonable price, the position of our finances demands that there should be a tax on unimproved land values, in order to force into occupation those areas which are blessed by Providence and kept out of the reach of man. One of the striking features of the trip was the large amount of unimproved land we saw between Perth and Bridgetown, which should be doing much towards contributing to railway freights and the revenue of other Government departments, and towards reducing the taxation under which the citizens of Western Australia are groaning to-day. I was delighted with the eulogy which was showered on the South-West by previous speakers. The whole of the discussion on the Estimates has been directed towards the South-West as the only avenue opening up for the people whom we expect to receive here. It is indeed the only avenue upon which the Government can concentrate. They require money and they should get it. The member for East Perth has intimated that money

can be secured if it is not available in other directions.

Mr. Simons: Ten million pounds.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: At a reasonable rate of interest?

Mr. Simons: At 6 per cent.

The Premier: That is too much.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I hope that whenever money is secured we shall be prepared to gamble on the future. We are obliged to do so. We must save Western Australia, and develop the South-West by hook or by crook. By developing the South-West we shall be giving our people an opportunity which has been denied them in the past. We shall be giving encouragement to people who have battled for many years to make a home for themselves. By that means we shall assist in building up for posterity as well as the State. Let me conclude by repeating what the Minister for Education said to the people of the South-West: We must realise that we are only a sparsely populated country and are practically only an undeveloped people. Within a few days' sail of our shores there are teeming millions of Asiatics. They want room and are casting their eyes upon this great southern continent. Unless we people our own areas we have no right to hold such large and fertile areas in a state of undevelopment. I know there are problems, the result of the great war in which millions of money went up in smoke and the flower of the human race went under. We had our difficulties during the war, and the problems of peace are equally pronounced. In Washington a conference of representatives of all parts of the world has assembled in order to try to provide for the permanent peace of the world. I hope the conference will succeed. But we have to remember that though the gentle praises of the simple life may be sung in the schools, from the copy books may be struck the last note of every martial anthem, somewhere deep down in the darkness of human greed and ignorance, there will still be heard the drums of armies and the tramp of horses, and the silent upturned faces will be seen. Men may prophesy and women may pray, but we shall never have perfect peace on earth until we get back to the dreams of childhood, until those dreams are taken as a chart to the destinies of man. I have been speaking about the pioneering difficulties. They are great and pronounced. The other night I was speaking to a lady at Manjimup, who declared, as a resident with 12 years' experience—she spoke as one with authority—that those who went out into that wilderness 50 or 60 years ago had hearts as big as the Atlantic ocean. They went out through pathless forests to grapple with the silence and solitude of centuries; they faced the terrific grandeur of the bush; they carved out for themselves and their children homes which will stand as monuments to their memories. We have established group settlements of soldiers, and there is no reason why they

should not succeed. At Yorkrakine there was established some years ago a settlement of penniless lumpers from Fremantle, and to-day those men are prosperous. Those lumpers succeeded in the wheat areas: why should not the soldiers succeed in the South-West? In scaling the cliffs at Gallipoli the soldiers were described as the bravest thing God ever made. On the fields of France and Flanders they vied with the most powerful armies that Continental nations could produce. On the sun-baked plains of Egypt and Palestine they demonstrated their worth, and built up a tradition that will live "till the sands of the desert grow cold."

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [8.36]: After the brilliant speech just delivered by the member for Forrest I feel no disposition to speak at length, but I must reply to the criticism made by the Leader of the Opposition on the Gascoyne Vermin Board. The best way of doing so will be to quote a speech which I made here on the 21st February, 1918—

Some years ago, it will be within the memory of the House, there was a rabbit invasion approaching Western Australia. The people came to the Government and asked that something should be done to prevent the rabbits getting to the fertile parts of the South-West. Two fences were erected by the Government out of money found by the taxpayers, of which the Gascoyne people contributed their share. Ever since the fences have been erected they have been kept in good order at the cost of the taxpayers, of which, again I say, the Gascoyne people paid their share. In 1908 the rabbits had got through the No. 2 fence, and the Gascoyne people pointed out to the Government the serious menace the rabbits were becoming as far as the Gascoyne district was concerned. The Government said they had no money at that time, so the Gascoyne people replied by asking the Government to give them power to tax themselves and when that power was given they formed a vermin board and, borrowing the money from the Government, erected their own fence. We put up 327 miles of fencing, and protected not only the fertile plains of the Gascoyne, but also the lands adjoining in the North. Unfortunately, two years later came along the worst drought the pastoralists have ever known. Our flocks were depleted in some instances by one-half, and in other instances by two-thirds. This drought continued for four years, and hon. members can easily imagine that the arrears of rates became rather high. On one station the amount totalled £700, on another £500, on another £300, and so on.

Briefly, I may say that the vermin board, consisting of pastoralists, were not able to enforce payment of these arrears. One squatter does not like to sell another up. So the board asked the Government to take

over the fence and maintain it. The Government agreed to do this providing, of course, that the pastoralists paid back the amount of their loan indebtedness together with all arrears of interest. This the pastoralists willingly undertook to do. According to the Auditor General's report, in June 1918 there was a debt of £70,849, and also accumulated interest £18,763. On the date I spoke, according to figures supplied to me by the Agricultural Department, the loan indebtedness had been reduced to about £60,000, and on account of interest £9,800 had been paid. The pastoralists expressed their willingness to repay their loan indebtedness, together with arrears of interest and accrued rates, provided the Government gave them 30 years to do it. So far as the fence was concerned, however, the pastoralists were ready to abandon it. The Government thereupon expressed their willingness to maintain the fence if the pastoralists paid up the amount of the loan and arrears of interest. That has been done ever since.

The Premier: Are you sure it has been done?

Mr. ANGELO: There may be a few isolated cases of pastoralists in difficulties and therefore in arrears; but the pastoralists as a whole have been paying each year their quota of principal and also of interest. Notwithstanding the agreement, however, the Government have been debiting the account with the cost of maintenance. From the report of the Agricultural Department, page 7, it appears that on the credit side there is, for rates collected, an amount of £4,566.

Hon. P. Collier: And what is the expenditure? £7,000.

Mr. ANGELO: Exactly; but the Government have been debiting this account with the cost of maintenance, which they themselves undertook to bear.

The Premier: Oh, no!

Hon. P. Collier: Why should not the Government debit the maintenance?

Mr. ANGELO: Because the Government undertook to pay for the maintenance.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Who is reaping the benefit of the fence and its maintenance?

Mr. ANGELO: The State as a whole.

Hon. P. Collier: You are admitting my case, which is that the squatters have not paid anything back.

Mr. ANGELO: I want to impress on the Leader of the Opposition my figures, which show that he is absolutely wrong. On the revenue side there is shown £4,566 on account of rates collected. On the other side are the items for which the pastoralists are liable, namely, interest on loan account £2,185, and a thirtieth of the £66,000 being the amount of the loan, £2,200, making a total of £4,385. That is the amount the pastoralists should have been liable for during the past year, namely, £4,385, and against that there is a collection

of £4,801 for rates and rent, or £500 more than the squatters were really liable for.

Hon. P. Collier: In equity they are liable for the lot.

Mr. ANGELO: No. It was definitely agreed six or seven years ago that if the Government wanted to see that fence maintained, they would have to maintain it themselves. The pastoralists do not desire in any way to repudiate their liability, that of paying back the loan and interest.

Mr. Lutey: They are prepared to keep on owing it for ever.

Mr. ANGELO: As regards the fence, they decided that it was unnecessary and so they declined to maintain it. They told the Government that if the Government wished the fence maintained, the Government would have to do the maintenance.

Hon. P. Collier: Why should the Government do it?

Mr. ANGELO: Why should the Government look after the other two fences? To the pastoralists it did not matter whether the fence was sold, or what was done with it. They never at any time tried to repudiate their liability. The trouble is that for the last six years the Government have been debiting the account with maintenance. How is that going to be squared? When Mr. Baxter was administering the Department of Agriculture I approached him two or three times in order to get the matter settled; but it has been allowed to drift on and on, until now there is another £20,000 to be added to the State's deficit. That is a question that has to be settled yet. Pastoralists on the Gascoyne and the Ashburton now owe between £41,000 and £42,000 and there is not one of them who would endeavour to repudiate that liability for a moment. I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition brought up this point, because it has enabled me to correct a wrong impression regarding the attitude of the pastoralists.

Hon. P. Collier: I think you have entirely failed to do that.

Mr. ANGELO: I am sorry if the Leader of the Opposition thinks that is so.

Hon. P. Collier: If you are satisfied, I am.

Mr. ANGELO: Most decidedly, I am satisfied.

Hon. P. Collier: I am afraid I am still satisfied with my case.

Mr. ANGELO: There are none so dense as those who do not wish to understand. Regarding the South-West trip, I also join with other members in regretting the absence of the Premier. I think the party was very much in need of a guide, philosopher and friend.

Mr. O'Loughlen: His deputy was not too bad.

Mr. ANGELO: I will simply say that I only wish the Premier had been with us instead. I will give one little instance to demonstrate why we should have had the Premier or someone who thoroughly under-

stood and knew the lands of our State. Members will remember that we went to see the soldier settlement at Brunswick. We visited a farm owned by a man named Stanley. I think it was the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) who said that his place would not carry a rabbit. For my part, I thought it was a most impossible proposition. Several members remarked that it was a very poor proposition upon which to settle a returned soldier. That was the impression we went away with. Fortunately, the member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) subsequently took us to see a paddock covered with subterranean clover. While looking over that beautiful paddock I remarked to Mr. Dungey, who was driving us, and who is an expert in that particular district, that it was a pity that the returned soldier had not been placed upon land such as that we were looking at. He replied: "That was exactly the same sort of land as this paddock. The only thing is that it wants working." That incident demonstrates the fact that we needed a guide, philosopher and friend during our travels. More than one member went away from that soldier's property remarking on the poor quality of the land, and we wanted someone who was able to tell us that it was similar land to the other good land we had seen. Do hon. members think that, had the Premier been with us, he would ever have allowed us to go away with such a wrong impression? I say he would not, and he would have called upon his officers to prove that he was right in his contention that the land upon which the returned soldier had been placed, was equal to the good land we had seen all around that part of the district. A few months ago, I had the advantage of a trip to South Australia and Victoria. I saw a good deal of the country, particularly of the dairy farming areas. I could not help noticing the difference between the methods adopted in South Australia and those adopted in Western Australia. Both in South Australia and Victoria, nearly every farm throughout the dairying areas had its silo. They preserved fodder for use during the dry periods. Throughout our whole trip in the South-West, we saw only two silos and neither of them was being used. Mr. Richardson, who accompanied us, assured me that ensilage was not necessary in the Pemberton district, but I consider we should encourage the use of the silo in the Roelands and Brunswick districts, where we know they experience their dry periods.

The Minister for Works: We had some of the best silos in the State on the Brunswick State farm, but they were all condemned.

Mr. ANGELO: At any rate, I could not help noticing the difference between the methods adopted in the States I have mentioned and in Western Australia. I am afraid our methods are 20 years behind the times.

Mr. Money: If you went down to those districts in January, February, and March, you would see them growing green maize. You do not want silos there.

Mr. ANGELO: In connection with the pastoral industry, an expert came from the Eastern States many years ago and told the pastoralists they were 20 years behind the times in the methods they were employing. These pastoralists were in a better position than, perhaps, the farmers are in. They had money to go to the Eastern States and money to send their sons there as well. They went East with the result that the methods employed in the North-West now, are up to date. If we could induce some of the successful farmers of South Australia and Victoria to pay a visit to Western Australia, even if they came as guests of the Government, they could go amongst our farmers and give them help and advice in connection with their farming operations.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Our agricultural experts should be able to do that.

Mr. ANGELO: I suppose we only have one or two such experts.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I think there are five of them.

Mr. ANGELO: Are they abreast of the times?

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is what we want to know.

Mr. ANGELO: Some of them have been too long in Western Australia.

The Premier: That will not do; you are native born, are you not?

Mr. Money: Perhaps the remark applies to the hon. member himself.

Mr. ANGELO: I am satisfied that unless we go away from our own State and see the methods employed in other parts of Australia, we cannot keep up to date. The Premier himself went to Victoria and, as the result of what he saw, telegraphed to the Ministers here, his surprise at the development that had taken place in connection with the Victorian industries and suggested that we should do the same thing. It is by such means that we all benefit.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You want to get out of your own little groove.

Mr. Munsie: How about the banana plantation?

Mr. O'Loughlen: Or the fishing industry at Carnarvon.

Mr. ANGELO: I was interested in the soldier's settlement at Pemberton. From what we saw in that part of the State, members must be convinced that there is room there for a great number of settlers to be placed.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Not too many.

Mr. ANGELO: I think the area granted to each man is a little too extensive. I had a talk with a lot of farmers in the district I refer to, and I met one man who is a successful farmer. He holds between 600 and 700 acres. He said that after 20 years hard work he had only been able to bring 100 acres under cultivation.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He is a lucky man to have 100 acres cleared after 20 years work.

Mr. ANGELO: If the soldiers were given 50 acres instead of 100 acres, it would be

quite sufficient. In those circumstances, they would be brought closer together and that would have the effect of making their life more congenial. Their overhead charges, as regards the making of roads and so on, would be less, and each group of 20 or 30 men could thus have a commonage at the back of their blocks, where they could run their dry cattle during the period of the year they were not depasturing their cattle at home. We are all of one opinion that there is a wonderful area of magnificent land in the South-West. Previously, I had never been south of Bridgetown, and I was surprised at the extent of the good land right from Bridgetown to Pemberton. There were not only high karri and jarrah forests, but close jungle country, evidencing the richness of the soil. Country which could give such a prolific growth in trees and jungle, would need to be rich indeed. That impression was confirmed by the few settlements that have been undertaken along that tract of country. To develop the South-West we require to spend a considerable sum of money, otherwise it cannot be done. The question this Committee has to decide is: Are we to spend that money or are we not to spend it?

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you suggest we should settle those big karri hills?

Mr. ANGELO: The question whether the timber should be cut and replaced by settlers or whether settlement should only take place where the timber has been cut out, is one to be decided by experts. It is an important question and it should be decided before any settlement is undertaken in a big way. As to the financial aspect, is the State justified in spending a large amount of money in the development of the South-West? We know this State is in a parlous financial condition. We are right up against it. I think everyone acknowledges that fact.

Mr. Mann: You do not expect to develop the State out of revenue surely? You must have money.

Mr. ANGELO: If the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) will wait for a few moments, he will find that my opinion coincides with his. During my career as a banker, I had some important businesses and big overdrafts to look after. There was one particular case that comes to my mind. It was that of a pastoralist who had magnificent country but who had spent too much money on one particular line of development. That line was the provision of water. He had spent a lot of money trying to find water, without obtaining any. He was not satisfied until he had procured sufficient water to provide for the requirements of the whole run. His overdraft ran up to a very big figure. The bank authorities were rather anxious about his account. They asked for my opinion. I told them there was one of two courses to follow. One course was to ask him to sell his holding, and the other was to give him £5,000 or £6,000 extra to fence his run and stock it. The bank agreed to the latter proposition. The pastoralist fenced

his run and stocked it. To-day he does not owe a penny to anyone, and he is a wealthy man. The State is in the same position regarding the South-West. We have a magnificent country. We have spent too much money in one particular line of improvement, namely the railways. What are we going to do? Are we going to sell out or develop the South-West? The only way to develop the South-West is to follow the same course adopted by the pastoralist I have mentioned. We must get money to improve the South-West in other ways besides the provision of railways. The land has to be cleared and roads have to be made. We have to stock it, not with sheep but with people. We should get as many people as we can induce to come here and settle in the South-West. The Government should borrow ten million pounds if necessary, and that money should be spent in the development of this magnificent part of the State. If the question be brought up in the House I will unhesitatingly vote in favour of raising a big loan to develop the South-West. After my visit to the South-West I have come to the conclusion that no Government could hope to simultaneously develop both the South-West and the North-West. In the South-West the Government have such a wonderful territory to develop that I consider it their duty to go right ahead with that work and allow us in the North-West to form a new State and look after our own destinies.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [9.1]: Having heard so many members speak in praise of the South-West, I have come to the conclusion that the next time I want anything in my electorate I will organise a tour down there and so get members to come and see for themselves. It must be very gratifying to the members for the South-West to hear all these eulogies of that portion of the State.

The Premier: It is very gratifying to me, after so many years.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

Mr. A. THOMSON: I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on his desire to assist the Government in the development of land settlement. Unfortunately I seem to have incurred some displeasure by asking, some little time ago, what the trip to the South-West was going to cost. Let me assure the members for the South-West that I had no desire whatever to hamper in any way the development of that part of the State. The member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) has said that what is wanted down there is encouragement to the settlers. I say that what is required for the development of the South-West is practical assistance to the settlers. We have heard a lot about sympathy, and the Leader of the Opposition has declared that for the past 10 years the discussion on the Estimates has been full of references to the wonderful potentialities of the South-

West and that, presumably, we shall still continue year after year to hear the same phrases.

Hon. P. Collier: In the past we were faced with the difficulty of finding sufficient money to develop at the same time the wheat areas and the South-West. Now that we have one fairly well developed, we might reasonably see about finding the money to go on with the development of the other.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If money spent in the development of the South-West will give as big a return as that spent on the development of the wheat areas, we shall be fortunate indeed.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It will give a bigger return, but it will take more time.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Practical assistance is required for the settlers, not only in the South-West, but for those engaged in agricultural production right round to Albany. I have always contended that the Industries Assistance Board should have rendered assistance to those growing root crops as well as to those growing wheat. I have never been able to understand why such assistance should be withheld. I do not agree with the Leader of the Opposition in the exception he takes to the changes made in the Agricultural Department. I congratulate the Minister on having reorganised the department and placed at its head a practical man. We want there a man who will be able to direct all branches which come under his control, and I am sure that, as the result of the reorganisation effected, we have in the department to-day greater efficiency than ever before. In Mr. Sutton we have one who is not only an expert in wheat, but who has a thorough knowledge of agriculture generally. If we are to get the best results from agriculture, it can only be done by having in the department men who understand their work.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How can he direct settlers in the field if his time be taken up in the office?

Mr. A. THOMSON: A general does not go into the fighting line.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Neither does he stay in a dugout.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have never known Mr. Sutton stay in his office. There is no 44-hour-week attitude about Mr. Sutton; all days, including Saturday and Sunday, are alike to him, and the State is exceedingly fortunate in having him at the head of the Agricultural Department. I take strong exception to the Leader of the Opposition's quoting from the annual report of the Chief Inspector of Rabbits to the effect that very few settlers have taken advantage of the Government's offer to supply them with wire netting with which to fence in their dams.

Hon. P. Collier: Then you are taking exception, not to my remarks, but to the expert's report.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is so. Still, the hon. member said that the farming community were not taking advantage of what

appeared to be a generous offer by the department.

Hon. P. Collier: I was merely quoting from the report of the chief inspector.

Mr. A. THOMSON: You drew attention to it. I wish to impress on the House another phase of the question. The rabbit department consider that one way of effectively dealing with the pest is to fence in all dams. It is also a very effective way of fencing out stock from the water. Additionally, it means considerable cost to the farmer. He has either to go each night and open his dam to allow the stock to get to the water, or he has to purchase an expensive windmill and erect troughing.

Hon. P. Collier: On a farm a windmill would be cheaper than rabbits.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Probably so, but there are scores of farms which have no rabbits at all. The late chief inspector insisted on the farmers fencing in their dams. I have had strong protests against this from various parts of my electorate. Much as I desire to economise, I must confess that it would be very unwise to make any drastic reduction in the expenditure of the Agricultural Department.

The Premier: What does Mr. Gardiner think of that?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have not asked him.

The Premier: But he is your adviser in chief.

Mr. A. THOMSON: He advises me, and I act on his advice when I think it is right. The Estimates of the department show an apparent saving of £5,000. I say apparent, because with the exception of a few minor items, it represents actually a number of transfers to other departments. Last year this department, under the administration of Mr. Baxter, kept within its Estimates. I was pleased to hear such eulogies of the South-West. Regarding the statements made from time to time that there are large areas of alienated land adjacent to the railways, and not being profitably utilised, I would like to refer members to the annual report of the department. Will the Minister, in reply, give some indication of the intention of the Government with regard to assisting those people who have been placed on light lands and are suffering as a result? Some of these men have spent years of their lives in trying to make a success of the light lands, and their efforts have merely gone to prove that the light lands are unprofitable. An important conference was held in the Perth Technical School on the 23rd and 24th February last, and I would like to know from the Minister whether the Government intend to give effect to the resolutions of the conference.

The Premier: I have no intention of carrying them out.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I take it the Premier will deal with each case on its merits.

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I know the Premier can be relied upon to give these settlers

sympathetic treatment. During the years I have represented Katanning, I have never known the Government to do an injustice to any settler; on the contrary they have extended all possible consideration and leniency to settlers. Recently this State was visited by Mr. Strachan, who gave us an interesting lecture on the flax industry. He has since visited various portions of this State, and the Minister might give us some information as to whether there is likely to be any result from his visit. I think the flax industry might well be fostered in Western Australia. Seeing that we are faced with an almost certain glut as regards many of the commodities we are producing in the South-West, the Government might devote some of its energies to encouraging the growth of flax. I know that the Minister and Director of Agriculture are sympathetic. If it is possible for the Government to set aside a sum of money to foster the industry, excellent results should follow. I congratulate the Premier on his land settlement policy in connection with the South-West, and particularly on his introduction of the group settlement scheme. If we are going to develop this country, only by having community settlement organised on proper lines can we hope to obtain any real measure of success. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) stated that last year the excess quantity of potatoes produced amounted to 1,000 tons. This is a great difficulty which the Government must face.

The Premier: We imported £30,000 worth of potatoes last year.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Still, there was an excess of local production.

The Premier: No fear.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There was a temporary glut, anyhow. No provision was made to handle the excess quantity and, unfortunately, the potatoes would not keep, and great loss was sustained by the producers and by the State. The same thing applies to all other commodities which are now being produced, and which will be produced by the group settlements. While the Government are to be congratulated on their land settlement policy, it is the duty of the Government and of the department to seriously consider practical means for marketing the produce of these men. It is all very well to urge people to go upon the land and tell them that it will grow potatoes, onions, cabbages, peas, and all sorts of things, but if they cannot sell their produce profitably after growing it, there is not much encouragement for them to stick to the land. Our orchardists have produced soft fruits and sent them to market, and the return has not recompensed them for the cost of the cases. I hope the Government will consider a comprehensive scheme for marketing these commodities.

The Premier: Why the devil shouldn't they get into touch with the people who want their produce?

Mr. A. THOMSON: That might be possible in the case of people who are already established on their holdings. The Premier has introduced the group settlement scheme. There is nothing new about it; it has been in existence for years.

Capt. Carter: Where?

Mr. A. THOMSON: In Victoria, where they have had village settlements for years; they amount to the same thing.

Capt. Carter: Give the Premier the credit for introducing the system here, anyhow.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have no desire to discount the credit due to the Premier; he is the responsible Minister and he has brought the group system into being here, but when he is putting soldiers and new settlers into group settlements, there is a duty beyond merely settling them on the land. Markets must be provided. The bulk of the settlers have only limited capital, and are not in a position to arrange to market their own produce. At the present time commodities are being produced and, in the glut periods, it does not pay to gather them. I consider that the group settlements will be a success, but it might be advisable for the Government to take a limited quantity of the produce. The Government have to supply their hospitals, gaols, the sanatorium, the State steamers, and Parliament House with fruit, vegetables and dairy produce, and surely they could take a given quantity from the settlers and thus provide a small market for them. The Commonwealth Government, too, might be prevailed upon to take produce for their steamers. The Premiers' conference recently considered the question of marketing and I hope that some practical results will follow their deliberations. I do not intend to move for any reduction of this vote. This is one of the votes every penny of which, if judiciously expended, will return greater value to the State than any other division of the Estimates.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [9.26]: I wish to say how much I appreciate the remarks which have fallen from members to-night. I am delighted that we are in accord on the point that great expenditure may safely be undertaken for the development of the south-western portion of the State. In organising the recent tour of the South-West for members, I hoped it would be successful and that members would see more than they had ever seen before and would learn that the possibilities that there exist were far beyond anything they had dreamed of. The trip proved successful. Members were able to see much that it would have been impossible to see except on a trip of this description. I promise members not to disappoint them when I bring down the Loan Estimates later in the session. Some weeks ago I told them what they could expect. I intend to ask for money to enable us to make considerable progress in the south-western portion of the State. I desire, if

possible, to be able to clear a couple of million acres more of the wheat lands of this country, and I want to see the wheat production doubled in the next three years. There is no way out of our present trouble except by increasing production, and in the wheat areas this can be brought about very quickly, much more quickly than in any other part of the State. The development in the wheat belt is considerable, and the preparation for further development is at hand. I hope we shall be able to get enough money to enable our wheat farmers to clear a vast area during the next two or three years, and that the result will be as I have mentioned. I hope that before many years are over, we shall have a very much increased wheat production. I think that in six or seven years from now, we can expect to produce 45 million bushels of wheat. I recollect that in 1910 we imported flour, and yet six years later we produced six times as much wheat as we produced in 1910. Having accomplished that, surely we can multiply our present wheat production by two in the course of the next six years. It is not a question of whether we wish to do this or not; we have got to do it if we are going to live. Money borrowed to do this work is money for which these men themselves have to pay, and not the general taxpayer. The general taxpayer has all the advantages of this expenditure and production without paying any portion of the cost. It is sometimes said that the wheat farmer of this State has been spoon-fed. There is not an atom of truth in that. We have done for our wheat farmer what has been done by all other countries in the world. Kitchener's work in Egypt was work of development, and it was paid for out of money advanced for that purpose. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain spent money in order to encourage development and production. We too had to spend money in the development of the Wheat Belt. No one knows what would have happened to the country but for the men who went out into those lands during the last four or five years. We must also have money to develop the South-West. Men are available to-day for settlement there. They are willing to go down and settle there under the group system. They would be unwise if they missed this opportunity, because it will not always be with us. The land is there now. I prefer our own people if they will go, and the people who come to this country can go to the jobs that our own people leave. Some time ago we took 50 men from Fremantle. The member for North-East Fremantle joined with me in this matter, and we made a successful settlement. The other day, at the invitation of the member for Fremantle and the member for South Fremantle I went to the port, and had a remarkable meeting there. The lumpers are a fine body of men. We are getting ready to send a number of them on

to the land, and I believe they will make good settlers.

Hon. P. Collier: We will join you in every effort in that direction.

The PREMIER: I am sure the hon. member will do so. I want to see all the land settled between Perth and Albany. I also want to see the Pemberton line completed. It is not right that we should hold our country undeveloped any longer. It is a responsibility we have to face.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Settle them along the gulleys and leave the hills for the timber.

The PREMIER: There is plenty of room in the South-West for the forester as well as the farmer.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We just have to curb you a little.

The PREMIER: We must have our timber, and we shall always have jarrah because that grows on the poor land. There is a great opportunity awaiting anyone in the marketing of our fruit. Last year hundreds of tons of magnificent fruit were wasted which might well have gone to the back country. Fruit should go into every home at prices which will pay the producer. Every ounce of fruit grown in the orchard can be taken to the goldfields and the wheat areas, if it can be sold to the people by the producer or his organisation direct and at moderate prices. It is a crying shame that this is not done. We look far afield for markets, but I do not know a better market than that which we have in our midst.

Hon. P. Collier: And yet the fruit is beyond the reach of the working man.

The PREMIER: It is beyond the reach of most people at present. The Minister for Agriculture is inquiring into the matter. I hope he will be able to arrange for the fruit to be directed into the homes of the people who at present do not get it. If Mr. de Garis can do for the fruit industry of Western Australia what he did for the dried fruit industry in the Eastern States, he will be doing a great work for the State. When I went to Bridgetown last year I saw tons of pears rotting on the ground. I then went to the Wheat Belt and found that the people there were without fruit, notwithstanding all this waste that was occurring. I believe the Minister will be able to get the fruit to the people this year without its being passed through the middleman at all, and that this will be of advantage to both the producer and the consumer.

Hon. P. Collier: He will do exceedingly well if he does.

The PREMIER: I think we can arrange for the fruit to go by train direct. I would inform the member for Katanning that we import about a million and a half pounds worth of foodstuff, which can be grown by the people in the group settlements of the South-West.

Mr. A. Thomson: I quite agree with you.

The PREMIER: The hon. member said he was in doubt about the market for the pro-

duce. We import thousands of pounds' worth of butter, cheese and other commodities from the Eastern States, simply because we do not produce them here. All these things can be produced here, and I hope there will be a good many more people in the State before those people who produce them have turned out all that the community now here requires. We can produce these things with absolute safety, because we can produce them more cheaply than they can be produced, I believe, anywhere else in the world. Our land is cheap and our climate is better here than it is in the Eastern States. The South-West is particularly favoured in that respect. It is well watered, and possesses everything a man could desire. I am justified in saying that the land will do what is expected of it more cheaply than the land in any other State of the Commonwealth. The Director of Agriculture is in charge of the experts of the department. It is for him to see that the office is properly staffed, and that the men in each branch are doing their work. We used to have a dairy expert who kept to one part of the State, and a wheat expert who kept to another part, whereas to-day we have both dairying and wheat-growing going on in many parts of the State. The department should be a department of experts. We look to these men to direct us. If they are not good men, they constitute a danger to the State and should not be retained in their positions. If they are good men, there is no end to their value.

Hon. P. Collier: They would do an infinite amount of harm if they were not good men.

The PREMIER: They would be of no use if they were not good men, but I think the men in the department are competent. I certainly wired from the Eastern States, because I saw the prosperity of the East was largely due to land development. The people of the East never will think well of the West until we cease to buy from them. So long as we buy their produce and their manufactured goods, so long will they have nothing good to say of Western Australia. Last year we bought seven million pounds' worth of clothing and other forms of merchandise. Naturally they do not want to see this market go. They think very little of the West over there, and one frequently hears criticism of this country. If the area that Mr. de Garis has at Kendenup were situated outside Melbourne or Adelaide, the blocks would bring ever so much more than they do here and would have been sold in a few minutes. Our productive values are only a third of the values in the East. I do not see why there should be this hostility towards us. We have been good friends to the people in the East for many years. We have allowed them to feed and clothe us and provide us with nearly all our wants. They have taken our gold, our wool, and our pearls, and many of them have grown rich at our expense. Notwithstanding this, many people over there think that no good can come out of the West.

Hon. P. Collier: We will teach them some day.

The PREMIER: We shall not be long in teaching them a useful lesson.

Hon. P. Collier: Our rowers and footballers have opened their eyes.

The PREMIER: We shall soon be able to show that Western Australia can do as much as all the other States put together. I said at the conference, "If you want to bring Australia out of her troubles, double her production all along the line." I offered to do it in Western Australia, and I believe we shall do it. Every industry will increase in production. I understand the gold-mining industry will also increase in production. I am told that there is an indication that after the Christmas holidays a great deal more stuff will be turned out and more gold won.

Mr. Munsie: I think so too.

The PREMIER: I am told this by men who know. We want this increased production. It is our duty as citizens of the Empire to see that this portion of the King's dominions is developed. The Minister for Agriculture has not long been in office, but he is doing his part well, and I believe he will carry out his duties as Parliament expects him to do. I am pleased with the result of the trip. Members will realise how gratified I am by the discussion which has taken place to-night. It is not the first time the Leader of the Opposition has spoken as he has done to-night. He has never spoken in any other way of the South-West. Many other members, however, have expressed doubt, probably justified, because they had not seen the South-West. These doubts have now been removed, and I will not disappoint them when I ask them to give me a vote for the development of this part of the country.

Mr. SIMONS (East Perth) [9.42]: Before this vote is passed there are one or two points which might well be stressed in connection with the development of this section of our activities. One of the great incentives to land settlement is the matter of the surety of a market, and the removal of the possibilities of over-production and the disadvantages of a recurring glut. We are all glad to hear the announcement of the Premier that something is to be done to organise the fruit industry, so as to prevent the great waste of the fruit which occurs practically every season throughout our fruit growing areas.

The Premier: The wastage was about £50,000 worth last year.

Mr. SIMONS: That is probably a low estimate. While we are all anxious that the Government should help in the matter, I am sure we must all feel that the fruit growers themselves should exercise a little self help by organising their own industry.

Mr. Pickering: I think that is being done now.

Mr. SIMONS: A general publicity campaign would not cost them very much, and the industry could be organised on lines which will aim at educating the people to use

an increasing quantity of fruit as a diet. Visitors to Australia, who know that this is a wonderful fruit-growing country, must be amazed at the small part that fruit plays in the diet of the people. We have to a great extent floundered along on the dietary scales usually adopted in colder countries. Even though four or five generations in the settlement of Western Australia have passed, we have not adapted our people and our conditions to the climatic forces operating here. It is a regrettable thing to find that fruit is not a staple article of diet in every home in Australia. As the Leader of the Opposition points out, it is only a few weeks ago that we had fresh fruit on the tables within Parliament House. While we are on that subject, it is difficult even in the best hotels of the city of Perth to get first-class fruit. That is a very important point, on which the fruit-growers should take action. It is equally difficult in the dining cars—those wretchedly run institutions which are mechanically managed by our department for robbing the public—to get decent fruit. Whether there is a system of graft or not in the stores branch of the Railway Department I do not know, but I do know that the highest prices are being paid for the lowest grades of fruit. People coming from overseas travel across the Great Western Railway, and there is no more cosmopolitan passenger list to be seen anywhere in Australia than that of the Great Western Railway. It is usually made up of men who are here to report on the resources of this State. They may have to make a rapid survey of our position. The first thing they get in the way of fruit here, if ever they get any at all, is stunted oranges, apples below standard, and, if during the stone fruit season, fruit in a state of semi-decay. Those are the first impressions visitors get of fruit as an article of diet in this State. If the Great Western Railway were run by a private company without any interest in or soul regarding the prosperity and future of Western Australia, one could understand the existence of that sort of thing. But seeing that the Government run both the Agricultural Department and the Railway Department, they should ensure that the two organisations work together to present the State in the most favourable light to visitors. Regarding the organisation to increase local consumption of fruit, we might take pattern from Mildura. It was not until the growers of Mildura were robbed of their overseas markets, that they undertook a campaign to educate the people of Australia to eat every pound of dried fruit produced in the Commonwealth. They did it by putting a very small impost, a fraction of a penny, on each pound of fruit sold in the local market. Thus they obtained a fund which had for its purpose the launching of a campaign of education to teach the people of Australia the benefits of eating raisins, currants and sultanas. To the astonishment of the growers themselves, this campaign succeeded

so wonderfully that in addition to absorbing hundreds of tons which had hitherto been exported overseas, and which then could not be exported because of the lack of shipping, the local consumption was so great that when the Christmas season came round during the first year of the campaign, the Christmas demand from the public was 100 tons above the supply. We get to this point, then, that there had been a policy of education, a campaign of publicity, which proved conclusively that there existed in Australia a local market capable of absorbing everything produced during that year in some of the most prolific fruit-growing districts of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Underwood: Did the fruitgrowers advertise in the "Call"?

Mr. SIMONS: We shall give the hon. member a very good advertisement in the "Call" if he does not make himself less objectionable. As none of this fruit was distilled, the matter will not interest him. This State should take pattern from what has been done in the Eastern States. If the apple-growing districts of Mt. Barker and Bridgetown would organise a campaign to educate the Western Australian people in the virtues of apple-eating, on the lines of the Mildura plan, I venture to say that we would consume practically the whole of the £50,000 worth of fruit for which there was not any market last year. We had the extraordinary spectacle of hundreds of tons of apples—this is no exaggeration—rotting in the apple-growing districts of Western Australia, while in the wheat areas there were people without fresh fruit, and in the cities there were homes where fruit was only a very rare visitor. That is a condition which should be altered, and I think it will be altered largely by organisation of the growers themselves after the Government have given a legitimate lead. There is another point in connection with our agricultural industry which cannot be passed over. One of the biggest drains on this State each year is the amount of money we send over to our Eastern sisters for products which could very well be obtained in Western Australia; but I am convinced that there is a very definite and a very sharply organised understanding, if not an actual campaign, in the Eastern States to prevent Western Australia from advancing far enough to supply her own needs in this respect. There is not any question whatever about it. The Premier knows it, and the Minister for Agriculture may have seen evidence of it. There is a great fear among Eastern States exporters that the markets of Western Australia may gradually dissolve; and I believe there are big interests organised to prevent production from going ahead in Western Australia, because in proportion to the growth of our own self-reliance does the market for Victorians reduce. I hate saying anything that is likely to foster ill feeling between the sister States of the Australian Commonwealth, but there is no use shutting our eyes to facts which are obvious; and I have no hesitation in saying that there is in the Eastern States a very definite feeling and

idea to thwart the progress of Western Australia in the realms of agriculture. There is another point on which I desire to touch. During the South-Western trip we had that little object lesson of the group of Spaniards who are winning so much wealth from soil classified as poor. It may indeed be that the soil is poor. On the other hand it may be that the Spaniard has better natural judgment in the matter of agriculture than we as a people possess. When the Immigration Vote comes up, I hope to have the opportunity of saying a few more words on the matter of broadening our outlook and broadening our immigration policy, so as to bring into this State members of other races from the Continent of Europe who are so eminently fitted for agriculture. If we look to the progress of Canada, the United States, the Argentine, and other newly settled countries depending very largely upon the products of the soil, we observe that they have thrown open their gates to the best agriculturists and the most industrious soil workers who are willing to come from any part of Europe. It is very gratifying, therefore, to hear members paying generous tributes of admiration to that little group of foreigners who are providing so fine an object lesson in the South-West. On the Immigration Vote I hope to deal at some greater length with this subject of broadening our immigration policy in such a way as to attract here, and absorb in profitable employment, tens of thousands of men who do not yet speak our tongue.

Capt. CARTER (Leederville) [9.55]: Like most new members, on picking up for the first time the Annual Estimates, I felt in a manner appalled to learn the nature of the financial situation to which we have retrogressed. I do not say that in any pessimistic way; I am not at all pessimistic to-day. Since I have seen for myself the actual achievements and the possibilities of the South-West, on the tour recently arranged by the Government, I have been in a much better frame of mind. The Agricultural Vote represents one of the most important items on the Estimates. On the hustings our talk was all of production, and the word "Produce" was and is to-day something of a slogan with most of us. I believe, too, that we mean it. I believe that all of us who have seen the writing on the wall have realised that there is to-day an urgent necessity for the creation of new wealth. We cannot live forever on our overdraft; we cannot go on for ever increasing our overdraft. We must utilise the money raised on overdraft for the creation of more wealth and the opening of new avenues of employment. It seems to me that we look in the right direction when we look towards the South-West as a source of new wealth. There I have seen production in many forms—production, I was going to say, in tabloid form. In the South-West we have not got all our eggs in one basket. On the wheat belt we have seen men rise and fall, some luckily rising to prosperity in a

very few years, others sinking with the dread spectre of failure overhanging them within the first year or two. But the South-West offers possibilities of almost assured success provided certain elements are present at the beginning. In the first place, personality is necessary. To-day we have in the South-West men who are living examples of personal success, individual success. I believe I am right in saying that the Parliament of this State has never yet voted to the South-West, as a district, the assistance which has been given to the wheat belt, for example. The statement has been made, and I think it is true, that not a farmer in the South-West is on the I.A.B.

Mr. Underwood: The Act does not permit it.

Capt. CARTER: We are told that the Government have never assisted the South-West; in other words, that the South-West has hoed its own row and got through fairly successfully. There is the example of Mr. Cullen, of Bridgetown, an outstanding example of splendidly successful effort. I asked Mr. Cullen to what he attributed his success, and he replied, "Work, and plenty of it." I asked him how many hours a day he worked, and he replied, "As long as I can see; and I am keen on it all the time." Whilst that may be an extreme case, and whilst we should not expect men to become as so many slaves in the South-West, yet if we send there men with energy and with personal love for work, we are sending them to certain success. Their success would mean further success to this State, the creation of new wealth, and the disappearance of our financial difficulties of to-day. What do we need besides that? We need certain assistance from the Government for clearing and drainage purposes. The trip through the South-West demonstrated the value of community effort and the necessity for a comprehensive scheme to deal with these problems. We saw one tree-puller—a Government machine, pulling down in one effort about 14 trees. To my mind, it represented work which would have entailed arduous effort for four days or more for a man, and yet we saw it done in four minutes or so. That was a splendid example of community effort. Throughout the soldiers' settlements we visited, we saw the value of that type of effort. That principle must be applied in the development of these areas. The individual farmer scheme will not pay. I will support the Government if they bring forward a complete scheme to drain the South-West on a comprehensive and adequate basis. One hon. member said that we wanted another C. Y. O'Connor to arise in our midst with a grand scheme which would drain the land and make it sweet and fit for intense culture. I believe we have that type of man in our midst, and that we have engineers capable of carrying out some such big scheme to drain these great areas of sour land which, as we saw in those parts that were drained, are capable of great productivity and

much intense culture. We need Government assistance and the Government need more money. I pledge my support to the Government in any scheme they may bring forward to achieve that result. Further than that, we need individual assistance to the settlers along similar lines to the assistance granted to the farmers in the wheat areas through the Industries Assistance Board. We want cheap money on long terms. We want expert advice, not merely theoretical advice, but the advice of men with practical experience in the field, men who have been on the land and know the difficulties of the land. I believe we have those men. We recognised such men in the individuals who met us throughout the trip and guided us through the different districts we visited: They were men with a sound, practical knowledge who knew the district, knew the difficulties and peculiarities of the land, and who were sought after by the settlers.

Mr. Money: They are the men who would make the best experts.

Capt. CARTER: I believe that is true too. They were men who were born and bred in the districts we were passing through. They would be the best men to act as the Government experts controlling this grand scheme which, I believe, is in the wind. In addition, we must get markets. I do not wish to labour the question of the establishment of dehydration plants, canning and preserving plants, and so on. This aspect is peculiarly a matter for co-operative effort. There are various ways of procuring the market. Population will help to furnish a market, and with an adequate population, the means of providing for community effort would be at hand. There would need to be action on the part of the Government to induce immigration from the Eastern States and from overseas as well. There is a splendid vista of possibilities opening up before the eyes of anyone with any sense of vision at all. Community effort appears to me one of the finest schemes ever inaugurated in this country. It spells a period of almost certain success. It spells a period of certain hard work for those who settle in these areas. It means that those men will need assistance. They will require to share their troubles and difficulties and learn from one another's mistakes. If they do that, they will do more to develop the country than any similar number of individual farmers could possibly achieve. Personally, I thank the Government for the opportunity afforded me of seeing the South-West and seeing what is possible in that great country, learning something of the ideas of the settlers themselves and of those who love their country. There is one thing that disappointed me during the trip. I have mentioned it before because it is a matter that affects my own electorate as well. I refer to the neglect of the pig-raising in-

dustry. We saw practically no pigs throughout the trip in the South-West. I cannot understand why that is so, seeing that there were such luscious root crops and fruits in abundance and to spare for feeding purposes. If members turn to the agricultural report for 1920 they will see the following paragraph:—

The pig raising industry has had a rather disappointing year, and pig production has fallen away in spite of the fact that pigs are the only livestock which have not seriously depreciated in value during the last six months. Undoubtedly the high prices which have ruled for wheat and mill offals have affected the pig industry, and an effort should be made by the Government to control and pool for distribution all inferior wheat. By this means, a large quantity of cheap pig feed would be available, and an important industry fostered.

Hon. P. Collier: There is a similar paragraph in the same report relating to the poultry industry. It is all due to the high price of wheat.

Capt. CARTER: That is so. In 1918 there were 85,863 pigs and there were in 1919 only 58,160 pigs in the State.

Hon. P. Collier: Four years ago, there were 111,000 pigs as against 60,176 in 1920.

Capt. CARTER: That is perfectly true, and it is all due to the high price of mill offals and wheat. As the Leader of the Opposition has remarked, the same thing applies to the poultry industry. I have already quoted figures relating to that point. In Belmont where there were a hundred thousand head of poultry two years ago, there are to-day about 5,000 head, or 95 per cent. less. This is a matter which the Department of Agriculture and the responsible Minister should take into consideration. I believe that these industries are essentially part and parcel of the future progress of the State. We should be one of the greatest pig-raising and bacon-curing States in the world, and we should be producing sufficient eggs for our own consumption. Despite our opportunity we are still importing large quantities of eggs from the Eastern States. As members learnt while on the trip through the South-West, we are making excellent butter and we all enjoyed it during our trip. To-day, we are eating butter imported from the Eastern States.

Mr. Pickering: And it is of an inferior quality too.

Capt. CARTER: As compared with some of our own butter, the imported article is inferior. I am afraid that the responsibility in some respects lies with the earlier butter factories established in Western Australia. Those factories did not produce as good an article as they should have done. Matters have been improved now, better machinery has been installed, and a better article is

now being produced than is being imported. I hope that this will be the beginning of an era when the name of Western Australia will be famous throughout the world for its dairying, bacon-curing, and other industries, and that the South-West will make a name for itself and continue to maintain that good name "till the sands of the desert grow cold."

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [10.9]: I was rather surprised that it was not until the member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) spoke that we had some reference to pigs. I was very pleased to be able to participate in the journey to the South-West. As I had been through the country 20 or 25 years ago and again two or three times in the interim, I can speak with appreciation of what has been done by the pioneers and others who have settled in those areas. I was agreeably surprised to find that the soils which we did not think capable of producing, have proved under drainage and cultivation, to give good results. We appreciate the importance of subterranean clover. In the wheat belt and throughout the Great Southern and South-Western districts, our soils do need tickling with some fertiliser. The climate is one of the best assets we have in Western Australia. There is no part of Western Australia where stock cannot be turned out throughout the whole year, to become fat and reproduce their own species within the 12 months. With the advantage of such conditions, when we realise that in other parts of the world the settlers have to face six or seven months of rigorous winter, for which they have to make preparation during the summer months, we must realise what advantages we possess. I believe that the South-West can produce more butter, and that it is possible to maintain the flow of milk from our dairy herds right throughout the year at less capital cost than I thought possible. Some hon. member has said that ensilage is not necessary in some parts of the South-West. That may be true to some extent, but I think there are many places where it is essential that provision should be made for stocks of ensilage. Particularly does that apply to some parts of the country which are on higher levels, although it does not, perhaps, apply so much to the river flats.

Mr. Money: Some of those higher plains retain the moisture better than the river flats.

Mr. HARRISON: The member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) has had more experience in this part of the State, but I claim that we have yet to prove his contention. At Brunswick, we saw a farm where we were told the land had been fallowed and cultivated. There was a thick vigorous crop of Spanish radish. What could be better than to run a mow through that crop and store it away for ensilage, allowing the cattle to eat it when ever they felt so inclined. If what we saw was the result of cultivation and fertilising it demonstrates that there is room for the

provision of ensilage in those parts of the State. I look forward to much greater development in the South-West. The member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) referred to the bacon curing industry. Equally with the hon. member, I was surprised to see so few pigs during the progress of our tour. Pigs could be maintained and developed right through the districts we visited. We saw crops of peas on the farm which have been particularly referred to as vigorous and as healthy as I have seen anywhere. If there was a shortage of wheat and offal, what was to prevent the farmers growing the best cereal crops for pigs, namely peas?

Mr. Money: You cannot have peas always; they have to change their crops. We have to send products to the Wheat Belt, just as we require products from other parts of the State.

Mr. HARRISON: Some of the farms showed evidence of the growth of good crops of peas which, however, had been ploughed in to provide the necessary nitrogen for the soil. It is only a matter of getting a few acres more under cultivation and the development of the pig industry can be maintained. There can be no more profitable industry than pig-raising and bacon-curing for the next three years, at any rate. Regarding the dairying industry, we saw three or four really good herds. As to how we should secure the development of good dairy herds in the quickest possible time, I suggest that members should turn to page 32 of the latest annual report of the Department of Agriculture and study the figures provided there, regarding the pure breeds herd testing scheme. These butter tests afford the best methods of choosing sires. If the Agricultural Department want to develop dairying, they cannot do better than distribute amongst the dairy farmers, particularly those settled in groups, the most suitable class of animals. The Government have control of a pure bred Shorthorn herd at Claremont, and of a good line of stock at Wooroloo. They can get Ayrshires, milking Shorthorns and Jerseys, and let the various dairymen choose pure bred stock. By these means the Government can point the way and assist settlers to obtain first class dairy herds. It is necessary that extreme care should be taken in handling the timber areas. The timber should be reserved for future use, while land more suitable for agriculture should be cultivated. Surveys and roads are necessary throughout those areas, so that the timber on the hill slopes may be taken out without resuming land for railway purposes. A good deal has been said about drainage. It is clear that after passing Pinjarra drainage is beyond the efforts of private persons. If we are to spend the State's money on drainage, the land served by the drainage scheme must be made fully productive in order that it will return interest on the capital outlay and give the highest agricultural result. Those lands should be subdivided into areas which could be developed

in from 15 to 20 years. Small areas in preference to large will be required, and a percentage of the private land within the drainage scheme should revert to the Crown. At present those lands are of but little use except that they afford stock an occasional change from the hills. Under a drainage scheme with closer settlement, the value of those lands would be materially increased, and there would be the unearned increment to consider.

Mr. Lutey: Unimproved land values taxation would fix it.

Mr. HARRISON: No, that would not meet the case, because those among the land owners who are financially strong could afford to pay the tax, whereas the weaker men would have to relinquish their land. It has been said that the Railway Department are going to transport gravel to areas where it is required. That gravel should be deposited at the nearest possible point to the place where it is to be used. Thus will the railways assist in the development of the South-West roads. The marketing problem will be a vital one. We frequently hear of the troubles of fruit and vegetable growers in getting fair results during the short annual period of surplus. Co-operation will furnish the best means of overcoming the difficulty. There is altogether too great a margin between the money received by the producer and that which the consumer pays. The fruitgrowers clear land, plant trees, prune them and care for them until they reach the remunerative stage, and then the men who distribute the product get 100 per cent. more than they pay for it. I cannot understand the fruitgrowers allowing the middlemen to get more out of the industry than do the growers. The whole difficulty would be met if the growers conducted their own marketing. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) contended that the best thing to do was to get markets in the city centres. I do not think that will meet the difficulty. The majority of the consuming public will not go to market and take home their purchases. What is required to be done is to establish in city and suburban areas a bi-weekly supply through the growers' own organisation. It could be very well done by means of light motor lorries distributing the products. I was pleased to notice that the Premier is not only going to spend money in the South-West, but intends to assist in clearing much larger areas throughout the wheat belt. It is essential that production should be stimulated in every branch. By doing that, we shall be encouraging immigration to Western Australia from the Eastern States and elsewhere. We cannot get increased production without a further capital outlay, and we cannot afford to shirk that outlay, because we must have increased population in the agricultural areas.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is not of much use shifting population from one part of Australia to another.

Mr. HARRISON: But we can never develop our primary industries in this State under existing conditions. I still hold that our settlers would have got home and dried much more quickly if they had had smaller holdings. It is of no use having too much virgin land. Much better is it to fully develop the land one has and then, if necessary, purchase some more from his neighbour, or, alternatively, sell out and take on a larger holding. We have to consider the position of those farmers in the wheat belt who are more than 12½ miles from a railway. This morning, with others, I interviewed the Minister for Agriculture. He is willing to assist—

The Minister for Agriculture: I want you to help yourselves.

Mr. HARRISON: That is why I mention the matter here, in order that it might get publicity. It is all a question of self-help if we are to get the greatest result. The men in the wheat belt are willing to help themselves. That is why they want to cut out the time spent in carting and apply it to cultivation. I trust the farmers will give the necessary data, including the quantities that are to be removed, and show that they are willing to co-operate in improving the position. In conclusion, let me say that I appreciate the way in which the residents of the South-West afforded facilities in order that we might see the maximum land in the minimum time, and I wish to thank them for having done so much to make our sojourn comfortable and pleasant.

[Mr. Stubbs resumed the Chair.]

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [10.30]: There are a few matters I wish to mention in connection with the recent trip to the South-West. One of the things that impressed me most was the Fairbridge farm school. I wish to make the admission that while I was not previously prejudiced against the Fairbridge farm school, until I had seen it I entertained a false impression as to what it really was. Having seen it, I am of opinion that this farm school is doing a wonderfully good work in the interests of the future generation. I believe that Mr. Fairbridge has gathered around him a staff that will compare favourably with that of any other institution in Australia. For absolute enthusiasm in their work I was never in an institution in this or in any other State that could compare with the Fairbridge staff. I have repeatedly said that the land from Pinjarra south has been wasted. But from my experience on the trip and my conversation with some of the old settlers of Pinjarra, I must say that the land around Pinjarra did not impress me very greatly. There is some good land in the river beds of Pinjarra, but there is a considerable area of land around Pinjarra which at present is almost useless.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are treading on dangerous ground there.

Mr. MUNSIE: This does not apply to many of the holdings as one proceeds further south. The next point that struck me was the method of settlement now being adopted in the South-West. I congratulate the Government on the establishment of the group settlement system. I believe this scheme will mean the solving of the problem of settling the South-West. We saw many very fine examples of what could be achieved by individual effort, but the task before an individual of carving a home for himself in the greater portion of the country we traversed must be almost heart-breaking, and one would need to be a superman to undertake it. Under the group settlement system there is a big future before this part of the State. I wish to say a word regarding some of the repurchased estates in the South-West and the effort being made to increase production. We visited the Brooklands estate and I had the privilege of driving over a portion of it with one of the oldest settlers, a thoroughly practical man who had made good. From what I saw I believe the soldiers there will eventually make good, but the State or Federal Government, whoever are responsible for granting assistance to these settlers, must do a little more than they are doing during the first two or three years. It was interesting to hear the different remarks passed by the settlers. I regret that the member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) is not in her seat.

Mr. Underwood: Why?

Mr. MUNSIE: I wish to refer to her and I do not like to mention the name of any hon. member who is not present.

Mr. Underwood: Well, I will respond for her.

Mr. MUNSIE: On that estate I met the wives of several settlers and conversed with them as to what they thought of their prospects. One of them expressed the belief that they would get on all right now that they had a woman in Parliament. I am very much afraid that those settlers who entertain this view will be greatly disappointed if they rely upon the efforts of the member for West Perth. I say this because the hon. member has had only one opportunity since Parliament met—

Mr. Underwood: That has nothing to do with agriculture.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, it has. The women settled on the Brooklands estate are producing agricultural products, and it is time enough for me to refrain from referring to it when the Chairman objects. I was about to say that the member for West Perth had had only one opportunity so far to do something in the interests of the womenfolk generally, and she then voted against the proposal. I am afraid the hon. member is not going to be the success that some people anticipated. Whatever system or policy the Government advocate for settling the South-West or any other portion of the State, they must make the life attractive for the women. To do this they must grant more assistance

than they are giving as regards home comforts for the women. On these repurchased estates the settlers are harder up against things for the first two or three years than the men who take on the group settlement work on virgin country.

The Minister for Agriculture: Of course they are.

Mr. MUNSIE: I discussed the matter with experts during the trip and I am of opinion that, under the group settlement, a man has probably five years of hard work in front of him with the opportunity of very few home comforts, but that he will eventually make good. While he is doing that hard work he can under the present system earn sufficient to keep himself, his wife and family. Settlers on the repurchased estates have not got that opportunity, even though the land was cleared for them. Subdivide any area and put new settlers on it, and what chance have 90 per cent. of them of making a living during the first year? They cannot possibly do it; they must receive some assistance. At the end of 12 months they have to pay their rents, and the very best of them cannot earn sufficient on their holdings to keep body and soul together, much less pay their rents. I admit that a great portion of the South-West needs draining. I was very favourably impressed with the tens of thousands of acres that do not need draining. From Pinjarra to the coast and from the railway as far as Bunbury, the bulk of the land needs draining.

Mr. Money: The country from Donnybrook to the coast needs draining.

Mr. MUNSIE: On the other side, in the Bridgetown and Pemberton districts, none of the land, in my opinion, needs much draining, and any drainage that is required could be done by the settlers themselves, because there is a fall for the water to get away. During our trip we saw many magnificent homesteads. We also saw several fine homesteads around which there was not more than 150 acres of cleared or partially cleared land. Some of these holdings ran into 4,000 acres. Before we can successfully develop the South-West these large holdings must be subdivided. No man can successfully work more than 100 acres of the rich soil in the South-West. That area is ample for any man.

Mr. Pickering: Dungey's 30 acres is an example of that.

Mr. MUNSIE: Another man near Bridgetown on 37 acres has made a fortune. Unfortunately some of the settlers who are working on 100 acres are constantly asking for more land, whereas they have already as much as they can possibly handle. I was pleased to hear the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. I, too, will be pleased to do anything I can to assist in the development of the South-West. I ask members who represent the Southern portion of the State, irrespective of the party to which they may belong, to reciprocate and to do what they can in the interests of the mining industry. I have known the goldfields for 20 years and

worked in the industry for 12 years. I know what effect the industry has upon the health of the men engaged in it. Those who are on wages have only three things before them—one, that they end their days in the Old Men's Home, another that they die a premature death, and another that they go to the sanatorium and thence to the cemetery. We are sometimes chided because we advocate the claims of the workers, and do not agree that the agriculturist is the hardest worker in the State. I agree that the farmer has a great deal of hard work to do, but the man who goes on the land and works hard is creating a heritage for himself and his dependants. Ninety per cent. of those who settle on the land eventually have something to fall back upon, but 90 per cent. of those who work for wages, particularly those engaged in the mining industry, have nothing whatever at the end of their term. Anything I can do to dissuade a young man from starting in the mining industry and from going underground I will do, in his own interests and in the interests of the State as well as Australia as a whole. We should encourage as many people as possible to go on the land. With the exception of the Hunter River, there is possibly no place in Australia where there is such fine land for cultivation as there is in the South-West.

The Minister for Agriculture: Or with a more reliable rainfall.

Mr. MUNSIE: The land is equal to anything I have seen.

Mr. Underwood: Some of it.

Mr. MUNSIE: A good deal of it is. The Merrivale estate is portion of the Bunbury estate and was repurchased for the settlement of soldiers. The five soldiers who are settled there are on land so good that in my opinion one acre of it is better than ten acres of the area remaining unsettled. I understand there are 15,000 acres of land in close proximity to this settlement, which is not being cultivated. The Government should repurchase it and settle it. If I were compelled to go on the land as an occupation, I think I should certainly go to Merrivale. I believe the soil is the best that can be found and that the conditions are the best that exist in Western Australia. Of course there are pests to be contended with in the South-West, and money has been expended upon the eradication of those pests. The Minister should see that the chemists attached to the department do more than they have done in the past to get rid of these pests. The reports of the heads and advisors of the departments have not been all they should be. In my opinion a little more energy should be put in, and a little more light should be afforded to settlers proposing to carve out homes for themselves, and something more done to prevent ruination coming to those who are already engaged in the task. I trust the Minister will see that the experts do that work; and I hope that if they do not do it he will have enough backbone to put them out and to put in others who will do it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [10.51]: I have no very great complaint to make regarding these Estimates. However, in reply to the criticism of the Leader of the Opposition on the appointment of Mr. Sutton as Director of Agriculture, let me say that in my opinion that appointment will prove successful. I have known Mr. Sutton, and to some extent have worked with him; and I am aware that above all things he is a trier and a worker. Although he is a scientist, he is a scientist as regards wheat; and an intelligent man who tries can make a success of almost any position one can put him in. I believe Mr. Sutton will do good work in his present position. We have heard to-night a great deal about the South-West, I suppose mainly as the result of the recent trip. I have had the opportunity of looking at the South-West for 26 years. To those who come along and tell us that the South-West is another Gippsland, I reply that they are wrong, and that it is not another Gippsland. All the same, it is good country. However, it represents a problem on its own. If we try to work the South-West of this State as one would work Gippsland, we shall fail. In fact, that is the mistake we have made in the past. We have brought from the East men who try to apply Eastern methods to utterly dissimilar country. One reason why I like the appointment of Mr. Sutton is that he has now been here for a considerable number of years, and that the knowledge he brought with him he has in the meantime supplemented by experience of the special conditions of this country. Western Australia has to solve its problems on its own. I repeat, we have heard a lot about the South-West. But we have not heard a single word about the North-West.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no agriculture in the North-West, and these are the Agricultural Estimates.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There is no agriculture in the North-West, and there never will be if we allow the South-West to dominate the position. I want to point out that we North-West representatives do not come to Parliament or to the Government begging for assistance. The North-West pays in land rents alone £100,000 a year. It would be only reasonable to ask that Parliament should give the North-West back half that amount for the purpose of development. The South-West, while paying nothing, is drawing our £100,000 and wanting money out of loan funds as well.

Mr. Money: You have had our market all these years, and have left us undeveloped.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The hon. member's district can have our market. What I have suggested is a fair proposition.

Mr. Money: What about the Wyndham Meat Works?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I will tell the hon. member about those works when we come to them. We have heard a great deal of

talk about the necessity for eating fruit. The member for East Perth (Mr. Simons) wants to educate the people to eat fruit. But the men who won the war mostly ate meat. Meat is what I have been reared on. It is what the pioneers of Australia have been reared on. When members talk about what to eat, I say the North can produce what puts stamina into men. I regret the member for East Perth is not present. After the rather nasty remark he made to me I want to say to that elongated, mosquito-bitten member that, whether the fruit is distilled or not distilled, whether I take it in its distilled or in its natural state, I am prepared to meet him in any capacity he likes. He speaks about a publicity campaign. He says we should have a publicity campaign in regard to our fruit. God forbid we should have another such publicity campaign as we got in the "Call" in regard to Bremer Bay oil! That paper has written open letters to Rufus Underwood. I have no doubt the publication of those letters increased the sales. But the "Call" will write no more open letters to Rufus Underwood for a month or two. It will take the "Call" all its time to explain away that ramp, that swindling ramp, of Bremer Bay oil. When the Mining Estimates come up I shall deal further with the matter of Bremer Bay oil. In the meantime I just tell the Chamber this: we do not want any more publicity campaign of that kind.

Mr. Lutcy: We want a different oil.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: And a different man. As I have said, our South-West is a problem on its own. It is one peculiar to Western Australia. The South-West has got to be developed on its own. But there is one point I would like to make specially, and that is in regard to the timber of the South-West. I was born in possibly one of the best forests in Australia—the Bullarook forest. I have been in all the forests of Australia. I have been down in the South-West, and I have seen the karri timber ringbarked there—dead, ringbarked, so that it would make a man cry.

Hon. P. Collier: The trees a dead monument to the living men who ruined them.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: To the foolishness of the men who ruined them. Whatever one can grow in the South-West—and many things can be grown there—it strikes me, as one who was born in the forests, that in ringing our timber we are possibly ruining a product infinitely more valuable than anything we can produce from forest land. Whatever is done in the South-West, I would say to those in authority: "Never destroy timber, such as I have seen destroyed." Beautiful karri timber, the finest I have ever seen, and some of the finest timber grown in Australia, is ruthlessly ringbarked and killed, and the people there are eking out a bare existence. They pay 10s. an acre for the land and they kill £10 or £20 worth of timber on every acre of it. That sort of thing should never be

allowed. There is one other point I would like to make, and that relates to the compassion and words of sympathy which have been uttered regarding the pioneers, who went out into the bush. As one who was born in the bush, and one of a big family of relatives still in the bush, I want to say to you St. George's-terrace people that we are not anxious for your sympathy. We are doing well and, so far as I know, we are not desirous of coming into the city. The bush, as you people call it, is treating us well, and we want no better country.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE
(Hon. H. K. Maley—Greenough—in reply) [11.2]: I do not desire to take up much time in replying to the debate. Not having had an opportunity, however, of introducing the Vote, I think it is only right that I should say something in reply to the speeches and comments generally regarding the Agricultural Department. I am sorry I was not among those who made the trip to the South-West. That trip, has perhaps, been the means of giving the discussion on the Agricultural Department's Estimates a wider and fuller range than I have ever before known in this Chamber. As to the Leader of the Opposition and his criticism of the appointment of Mr. Sutton to the position of Director of Agriculture, I think he is entirely wrong in his viewpoint. Mr. Sutton has a thorough knowledge of all the principles and practices underlying the science of agriculture. He has specialised in that subject and was a pupil or disciple of Farrer regarding wheat fertilisation. Can it be said that a man so trained, cannot apply his knowledge of the principles of agriculture to the other branches of the science and direct and co-ordinate the efforts of the other specialists in the department and work towards a common end? I want to relate my experience upon first taking office as a Minister of the Crown, which experience, I hope, coincides with what I hope was the trepidation with which the Leader of the Opposition entered upon his first Ministerial duties. When I entered the office, there was a considerable pile of files awaiting me on the table. After a comprehensive view of the pile, and gingerly handling one or two of them, I finally grabbed one and looked through it. I found that the measure of my responsibility concerning the first file was to give authorisation for the writing off of the magnificent sum of 3d. That file had been minuted from the accountant to the Under Secretary and from the Under Secretary to the Minister. I also found that if I wanted any of the expert officers of the department to confer with me, my request had to go in a roundabout fashion through the Under Secretary or Acting Under Secretary. I found that there were jealousies creeping in between certain officers because their functions overlapped to some extent. The Leader of the Opposition knows that there are certain agricultural aspects that enter into the con-

sideration of matters affecting the South-West, equally with the wheat belt. The same thing applies to rabbit inspection and so on. To avoid this endless secretarial work and the circumlocution that was going on, and in order to get better co-operation and concentration of effort in the department, I was led to make the appointment of a technical officer as head of the Department of Agriculture.

Hon. P. Collier: You will not get it in that way.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am just as convinced that I will get it as the Leader of the Opposition is convinced that I will not get it.

Hon. P. Collier: Now you have a director who will minute the file to write off that 3d.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not the position at all. There is a secretary to the department now who relieves the technical officer of a large proportion of the clerical work that the head of the department undertook before. As to the references of the Leader of the Opposition to the vermin branch of the department, for some time back we have been giving considerable attention to the work of the vermin boards throughout the State. Those boards are not carrying out their functions under the Vermin Act as completely as we anticipated they would, when the Act was passed and its administration was placed in the hands of those boards. I remember a few years ago, special references were being made to the encroachments of the rabbits, and I remember the particular report the Leader of the Opposition read to the Committee. The Chief Inspector of Rabbits was apprehensive that, with a couple of good seasons, the pest would get out of hand and all the money spent upon the eradication of that pest would be wasted. I remember, too, the Leader of the Opposition returning from the Eastern States a couple of years ago and announcing that he had seen millions of rabbits streaming across the Nullabor Plains. It was a very graphic description and, as hon. members know, the Leader of the Opposition is capable of giving such a description when he chooses to do so.

Mr. Angelo: The train must have been going pretty fast.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Before the Chief Inspector of Rabbits, Mr. Crawford, left the department on his long service leave of 12 months, prior to his retirement, he made a thorough inspection of the rabbit-proof fence from Cunderdin northwards. In his subsequent report, he said he was relieved to find that from Cunderdin for 300 miles northwards, where rabbits had previously been extremely numerous, he scarcely found a trace of a rabbit. As showing how the department has carried out its duties in regard to rabbit destruction on Crown lands, during the last 12 months we have had 16 poison carts continuously employed on abandoned I.A.B. farms, Agricultural Bank holdings, and Crown land. We

have used 6,724 tins of rabbit poison. During the same period we issued free to the vermin boards 4,424 tins of poison. So it will be seen that the ratio of work being done by the department and by the vermin boards is altogether out of proportion. Unless a far larger measure of work is undertaken by the boards, we shall have to review the situation and restore the position to the hands of the department by an amendment of the Vermin Act. Some boards are doing very good work, but it is not fair to those boards on the outer fringe who are satisfactorily performing their duties that other boards closer in should not strike any rate, or should strike a rate only sufficient for the payment of salaries to their secretaries.

Mr. Marshall: The inner circle is protected by the outer circle.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I want to supplement the prediction of the Premier that we are to see greater things. We have a fair sized job in the development of the State, whether in the South-West or the North-West, or to the east or even to the west. Our climate lends itself to the greatest individual man power production in the world. I do not know any other country where two men can cultivate and harvest and deliver a 500 acre crop by their own efforts. Taking into consideration the laborious methods and processes of production in Northern America, people who say that Australia is but an infinitesimal factor in the world's production of wheat, are uttering a partial truth. I would remind those people that although Australia produces but two per cent. of the world's wheat, yet she puts afloat 14 per cent. of the world's exportable surplus of wheat.

Hon. P. Collier: As an exporter of wheat, the United States are now practically out of it. They are producing only just enough for their own consumption.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I believe that within 10 years, without any special effort by the natural development of the wheat belt, we ought to reach the 30 million stage; but by clearing and putting in an additional couple of million acres, and doing the job three times as quickly, within five years we ought to attain to the position of being the second wheat producing State, if not the first, in Australia. In regard to our currant and raisin production and our clover settlement development, it is of no use investing all this capital if we are going to neglect the question of finding a market for our goods.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the whole point.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the key-note of the whole position. It has been receiving the attention of the State Premiers in conference in Melbourne. I think a policy will be enunciated under which a much greater effort will be made, not only in regard to looking abroad for markets, but in seeing to it that what we export shall be right up to trade description and sample. Tremendous harm has been

done in Australia by the exporting of goods not up to trade description. It is of no use putting a brand on the outside of a case notifying that the contents are of inferior quality, unless every tin or bottle inside the case is branded also.

Mr. Money: That sending away of inferior butter was most unfortunate.

Hon. P. Collier: Look at the bad advertisement we got from that inferior flour sent to South Africa.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We should take particular care in regard to processing. We produce the best wool and wheat in the world, and we have the best raisin and currant growing country ever discovered.

Hon. P. Collier: Moreover, the State is capable of producing every metal known to science.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I believe we are on the eve of embarking on a bold, vigorous and forward policy.

Hon. P. Collier: Is not the all-important question of finding markets the duty of the Commonwealth?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: At the conference I suggested that the best thing the Commonwealth Government could do, seeing that they had some ships tied up or about to be tied up, would be to fit out a Commonwealth trade exhibit on much the same lines as has been fitted out in the "Kangaroo." If they had prepared a floating exhibit of this kind and had guaranteed to sell up to the standard of the exhibits, it would have been possible to pick up plenty of business—more than by appointing additional trade commissioners in London. Already we have exhibits in the office of every State Agent General.

Mr. Lambert: They are exhibits, too!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A floating exhibition of our commodities would have resulted in much greater good. We would have been able to display our products to prospective buyers in all parts of the world. I thank members for their kindly criticism. I ought to be gratified because, during the period I have been in the House, I have never known such a full debate as has taken place on the Department of Agriculture to-day.

Hon. P. Collier: I think it is the fullest and best all-round debate I have heard on the Estimates.

This concluded the general debate on the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

Item, Director, £352:

Mr. MONEY: It is the intention of the Premier to double our wheat production and there is no wheat expert in the State equal to the Director of Agriculture, Mr. Sutton.

The Premier: But he is not going to double the area.

Mr. MONEY: He is the most capable wheat expert in Australia, and it will be a distinct loss if his services are not so freely available to the settlers of the wheat belt

as they were formerly. The South-West is so great that the appointment of a South-West Commissioner should be warranted.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Sutton is capable of directing the work in the wheat belt, because he still has his trained specialists and the Chapman and Merredin State farms.

Mr. Lambert: The need must be growing less every year.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We still have the same expert advice for the South-West. Mr. Wickens, officer in charge of the fruit industry, is in the department and is one of our most efficient officers. In future, perhaps, the development of the South-West may justify the appointment of a highly-trained officer, but at present the staff is as efficient as formerly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I sincerely hope that the expectations of the Minister with regard to the position to which Mr. Sutton has been appointed will be fulfilled. I still hold strongly to the view I expressed earlier in the evening. The Minister, of course, would not have made the appointment unless he had felt sure that it would prove successful; but as one who has had some years of experience as a Minister, I might be permitted to advise the Minister for Agriculture that he will have to be very watchful and careful to see that Mr. Sutton, in his new position, does not develop into a routine officer handling files and papers in the office in Perth. I know the Minister has no desire that this should happen, but I fear that, as a result of the numerous head office duties Mr. Sutton has to perform, it is almost inevitable that the permanent head of the department will become head of the city office handling files and so forth, and the benefit of his technical knowledge will be lost to the State.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.36 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 15th November, 1921.

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

QUESTION—COMMONWEALTH BANK NOTES, STATE TAXATION.

Hon. J. EWING (for Hon. A. Lovekin) asked the Minister for Education: Does the Commonwealth Bank pay tax to the State on its note issue?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: No.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing leave of absence for twelve consecutive sittings granted to the Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (South-West) on the ground of ill-health.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the State Children Act Amendment Bill.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to make amendments Nos. 2, 3, 5 to 9 inclusive, that it had declined to make No. 4, and had made No. 1 with modifications, now considered.

In-Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Council's requested amendment—Clause 5, Subclause 1, paragraph (b): After the word "advances" insert "not exceeding three shillings per bushel," and add the words "and may charge the wheat acquired under this Act and the proceeds with the repayment of advances";

Assembly's modifications: 1, Omit the proposed words "not exceeding three shillings