

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have proceeds from the sale of wheat £737,710. The amount recouped was £595,000 and with the £142,000 paid to creditors the total comes to £737,000. If we deduct this amount of £737,000 from the £1,257,000 there remains £519,000 instead of £661,000 as stated in the return which has been laid on the table. If the other figures are as accurate I do not know where we are.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It looks to me as if there had been a typing error. The hon. member heard me say that the amount was in the vicinity of half-a-million, so that my figures agree approximately with his. The hon. member must know that it is difficult to investigate closely matters of this description at four o'clock in the morning, but I cannot get away from the fact that before the hon. member spoke I several times declared that the balance owing, after allowing for recoups, was in the neighbourhood of half a million.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is impossible for it to be much more than half a million.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: With reference to the rate of interest, two sets of notices have been sent out to the customers of the Bank. I agree that in private life a person cannot be notified that it is intended to charge him a certain rate of interest; he can only be charged the increase from the day of notification onward. Whatever the terms of the notices which have been sent out may be, I can promise that the rates charged will be charged after notice has been given.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Will the Attorney General explain the meaning of the item, "C. C. C. and Secretary to Board"?

The Attorney General: This item was previously paid from "Extra clerical assistance."

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Why have the Estimates been prepared as we find them here? Is it intended that in the future only lump sums are to be shown?

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Woods and Forests, £12,432—agreed to.

This completed the Estimates of the Industries and Woods and Forests Departments.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 4.23 a.m. (Friday.)

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 19th March, 1918.

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

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

### QUESTION—CLOSE OF SESSION, GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

Hon. P. COLLIER (without notice) asked the Premier: Will the hon. gentleman make a statement to the House with regard to the disposal of the business set out on the Notice Paper, in view of the motion of which he has just given notice, for the suspension of the Standing Orders during the remainder of the session? This morning's newspaper announces that the Government intend to close the session before Easter. Having in view the fact that there are on the Notice Paper 14 or 15 Government Bills of the utmost importance, and that notice of another important Bill has been given this afternoon, I think it is only fair to the House, as well as in accordance with practice, that a statement as to which measures the Government intend to put through, and which, if any, they propose to drop, should be made for the information of hon. members. In my opinion, it will facilitate business, as well as assist members, if the Premier makes a statement in that regard, because it is obviously impossible to close the session before Easter if anything like the volume of business on the Notice Paper is to be got through.

The PREMIER replied: In addressing myself to-morrow to the motion of which I gave notice this afternoon, I shall be able to make clear the matter upon which the leader of the Opposition desires information.

Hon. P. Collier: I have, of course, to accept that answer; but I should prefer to have a statement this afternoon. Such a statement might help the progress of business to-day.

### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act Amendment.

2, Treasury Bonds Deficiency.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

### BILL—SPECIAL LEASE (GYPSUM).

Select Committee's Report.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.50]: In the absence of the chairman of the select committee, the member for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse), I move—

"That the select committee's report be adopted."

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.51]:\* I think the hon. member ought to give the House some little information. The printed report of the select committee has been

placed in the hands of members only during the last few minutes, and doubtless the great majority of them have not had an opportunity of perusing it. The recommendation of the select committee is important, in that, if the House accepts it, we shall be practically committing ourselves to the passage of the Bill. The members of the select committee ought to afford us some information on the merits of the case, and on the reasons which have actuated them in agreeing to the Bill without amendment. I personally entertain some doubt whether it would be wise to grant a lease for the large area suggested by the Bill. The right to operate on the Cowcowing Lake was granted to the same people, or to some of them, several years ago by the Government of which I was a member; but they did nothing or very little, although it is given in evidence before the select committee that they spent a fairly considerable sum of money—about £4,000, according to one witness. The fact remains, however, that practically nothing has been done by them; and I observe from the evidence that the principal witness, one of the largest shareholders, was utterly vague and indefinite as to what the company proposed to do in the future, and also that this witness supplied very little information as to the quantity of gypsum available on the lake, or the probable output of plaster of Paris, or the probable production of fertiliser.

Mr. Thomson: About 1,000 tons, is stated in evidence.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The principal witness, Mrs. Nathan, is very indefinite indeed—does not know the size of the plant which it is proposed to erect, does not know the probable output, does not know the number of men that will be employed, in fact knows nothing definitely and makes merely the most general statements. I am not now saying that this may not be a good proposal, but I contend we ought to look into it more closely instead of agreeing to it in this off-hand way. Then there is the large area which the Bill proposes to grant—5,000 acres. It is practically agreed by those who are competent to form an opinion, that the gypsum in the lake is not a fertiliser, that it has no fertilising properties whatever, or at least none such as would make it a marketable commodity. If that is correct, then there is all the more reason why the area of the proposed leasehold should be considerably reduced. If the gypsum were of any value for fertilising purposes, I could understand so large an area as 5,000 acres being granted; but if that is not so, if the proposal is merely to operate it for the manufacture of plaster of Paris, then I consider the area altogether too large. As a matter of fact, these people in the first instance applied for only 25 acres, to be utilised in the manufacture of plaster of Paris. The additional area was understood to be required for the manufacture of fertiliser. If it is agreed that fertiliser cannot be manufactured from this gypsum, then there is a very great discrepancy between granting 5,000 acres for the manufacture of plaster of Paris as against the small area of 25 acres which was deemed sufficient for that pur-

pose when the proposal was first put forward. The House ought to have more information before adopting the select committee's recommendation. Then there is also the question of the rental, and of the royalty to be paid. The rental for the 5,000 acres is only £10 per annum, though with a royalty of 1s. per ton. One of the witnesses before the select committee suggested that Mr. Montgomery, the State Mining Engineer, should be called, as he would be able to supply a good deal of information.

Hon. J. Mitchell: His report is on the file.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But I notice that he was not called as a witness. It was also stated by the witness referred to that Mr. Montgomery's view was that 100 acres would be sufficient. I am rather surprised that Mr. Montgomery was not called, in view of the fact that one of the witnesses, and he a public officer, said Mr. Montgomery could give important information and held the view that 100 acres would suffice. I have knowledge of the fact that the original holders of this lease applied to the Mines Department for assistance, which they did not succeed in obtaining. I do not know where the present company are going to secure the necessary capital; an amount of at least £10,000 is said to be required. It may be that the desire to obtain so large an area as 5,000 acres is only natural, with a view to assisting these people in obtaining capital. If one sends broadcast a prospectus showing that one has a large area of 5,000 acres upon which to operate, that circumstance might induce people to subscribe capital who otherwise would not do so. But, all the same, that is not a sufficient reason why the House should agree to the proposal. I do not think these people, or any other people, will raise much capital unless they have a great deal more accurate knowledge of the quality and quantity of the deposit and of the purposes for which they propose to utilise the gypsum in that district. Information of that character would certainly be required by the investing public. Mere general statements that the promoters do not know the depth of the deposit, and have no analysis showing the quality of the gypsum, will not do. Altogether, the information that these people show themselves possessed of according to the evidence given before the select committee, is not such as would induce many to put capital into the venture. I think the House should hesitate before granting a lease for 21 years at a peppercorn rental, though certainly with a royalty of 1s. per ton, to a company the majority of whose members have already failed to do anything with the undertaking during the three or four years they have had it in hand.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.57]: May I make a statement?

Mr. Holman: You are not replying?

Hon. P. Collier: This does not close the debate?

Mr. SPEAKER: I realise that the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) took the usual course in formally moving the motion. The leader of the Opposition is, naturally, desirous of obtaining information before the motion is carried. In the circumstances, if it meets the wishes of the House I am sure it will meet the wishes of the leader of the Opposi-

tion if the member for Katanning is allowed to make some remarks, though not by way of closing the debate. That course is unusual; but the hon. member has merely moved the motion formally and the House needs some information before dealing with it. Moreover, the hon. member in charge of the report may be prepared to give the necessary information. Therefore I think it would be well to let the hon. member make an explanation at this stage.

Hon. P. Collier: I personally have no objection to information being supplied to the House by the hon. member, except that I fear we may be establishing a precedent.

Mr. SPEAKER: The proceeding is quite irregular; I realise that.

Hon. P. Collier: We may be establishing a precedent that will rise before us later on to our discomfiture.

Mr. HOLMAN: I move—

“That the debate be adjourned.”

Motion put, and the House proceeded to divide.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no need to go further with the division; there are only three members voting with the noes. I declare the ayes have it. The debate is therefore adjourned.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1917-18.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 14th March; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Treasury Department, Hon. J. Gardiner, Minister.

Vote—Treasury, £11,216:

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin) [5.5]: I purpose taking my departments as they are shown in the Estimates and giving the Committee as much explanation as I can, and assuring hon. members that any further information they may require will be given on the items. My Estimates will be reduced practically another £8,000 in addition to the amount shown. This is the result of what has been done since the Estimates were framed. Take the Treasury Department itself. Hon. members will see that there is a decrease shown of £1,351. The department has been cut as near to the bone as possible but I think another £200 will be saved there. I would draw attention to one or two facts. The Under Treasurer is shown in the Estimates to receive £708; as a matter of fact the actual cost of that officer to the State is £360 inasmuch as we get £100 paid by the Commonwealth Government, £130 by the Imperial Government and £88 10s. by the Workers' Homes Board.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Less money than you are paying the Superintendent of the Gaol.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The accountant is shown on the Estimates to receive £528, but £90 is repaid by the Commonwealth Government. These amounts are paid into the Treasury and so far as the Government are concerned it is intended that in the future, sums of money which are paid to State officers shall all be paid into the Treasury. It is manifestly unfair that some officers should

receive these additional payments while others are obliged to pay the amounts into the Treasury. There is not much more that can be said with regard to the Treasury Estimates. They show, on the face, the reductions which have been made. With regard to the Audit Department, the Auditor General is an officer of the House. There is a slight increase in this department of £16. I do not know of any department which has been so handicapped as that of the Auditor General by reason of officers enlisting. The work the officials have to do can only be performed by trained men and in the majority of cases good salaries have to be paid in order to have the work done efficiently. It is only right that I should say that the Auditor General has given me a good deal of assistance in the way of pointing out where he thought economies might be effected. It is not part of that officer's duty, but I could always go along and discuss these questions with him and he was only too willing to give me that assistance to enable me to find out in which way the State could get a better return for the money expended. With regard to Compassionate Allowances, these are granted under Public Service Regulation 80, which says—

The Government may, on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner, grant the equivalent of such leave or proportion of such leave, and an allowance calculated at the rate of two weeks' salary for each completed year of service, as a compassionate allowance to the relatives dependent on the officer.

This has given me a good deal of worry because my impression is that the regulation was framed to meet cases of misfortune at tending on the death of a public servant. Now this has grown to be a custom. If members will turn over the leaf, they will see that several big sums were granted during the year 1916-17, one being £1,405, another £1,453 and another £1,500. I am merely following a custom established by previous Governments, that when an officer dies, the matter goes before the Public Service Commissioner, who says that in accordance with the regulations the dependants are entitled to receive so much, and they get that sum of money whatever it may be. It does appear to me, however, that if we are paying officers good salaries, they should during their lifetime make provision for their families, and when we see again in this year's Estimates that a sum of £910 is set down as a compassionate allowance for the widow of an officer, I would like an expression of opinion from the Committee as to whether this kind of thing is to continue, and as to whether the Government should go fully into the matter and determine whether these grants should be made as compassionate allowances and not as a matter of right. We are piling up the expenditure in this way, and if we had a big death roll the State would be compelled to pay an enormous sum. So far as the Savings Bank is concerned, an increase of £142 is shown. I have not gone fully into the matter, but on the business turnover I think the increase is justifiable. In 1915-16, the amount standing to the credit of depositors was £4,611,590 and in 1916-17 the amount

was £4,820,447, the increase being £208,857. The accounts have considerably increased in number during that time. There were 17,226 ordinary accounts and 5,775 school Savings Bank accounts opened during the year, while 12,000 ordinary and 2,726 school accounts were closed. Hon. members will therefore see that practically 5,000 of one and about 3,000 of the other new accounts were opened during the year. Under those circumstances I have no objection to seeing a slight increase in the cost of administration. Coming to Government stores, the actual saving shown is £1,026. The Stores is one of those departments which we can well look into to effect economies because we can easily get lavish in our buying and our demands. Just to show the Committee how extravagance can easily creep in here, I will supply a few particulars which have been furnished by Mr. Payne, who apparently takes a very keen interest in his work, and when the opportunity occurs I like to state that fact. We had at one time no fewer than 42 distinct varieties of envelopes. We have cut them down to 16 and in the process we have saved £230 in envelopes only. In wicker document baskets, handy desk calendars, and plan covers we have also effected savings. With regard to the last named, they were backed with Whatman's hand-made drawing paper. They are now using another paper which is less expensive and a saving of £158 is being effected there. There has been a saving of £125 effected in office paste, and in the matter of ink and a number of other things the saving has been £600.

Mr. Smith: How do you recognise Mr. Payne?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: By saying that he is doing good work.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some of the paper now being used is rotten; it is like blotting paper.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Amongst the other items there is material to astonish hon. members. There were 556 office knives used last year, and an office knife should last a person a lifetime. There were 244 pairs of office scissors used; they must have walked away. Of pins 411 lbs. or 6,576 one-ounce packets were used, and pins are worth 5s. a lb. Moreover, they are on the prohibited list. Of nibs there were 195,984 used last year and of steel drawing pins 43,300. Last year those pins cost 3s. 6d. a box. String 3,110 balls, or 16,026 lbs.

Hon. P. Collier: Those figures cover the whole of the service.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Quite so. Blotting paper 202 reams, worth about £2 5s. per ream; penholders 7,588, fountain pens—these seem to go before you know they are there. These are the things we are looking into. The existing system of dealing with public stationery has not been very satisfactory, and we require to initiate a better system. Although these may appear to be pettifoggish things to deal with, yet if we are to have a system, it should be sound in small things as well as in big things. The probability is that we have been losing from £1,500 to £2,000 a year in sheer waste. Mr.

Payne says he thinks people do not realise that these things belong to the public, and are being paid for by public money; that people seem to think they have a proprietary interest in these things. We are going fully into that matter. Fortunately we have a pretty live officer and we may, therefore, expect good results.

Mr. Smith: What salary is Mr. Payne on now?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He is clerk-in-charge at £276.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He only happened to be in a position to write a minute to the Minister.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We now come to the Literary and Scientific Grants' division. I have reduced the Public Library and Art Gallery by £500. This year there was a grant of £350 to the University to cover the salary of the Professor of Agriculture for six months. Previously we were paying £700 on this item. From the Zoological Gardens I have deducted £125, and from the Acclimatisation of fish, birds, and animals, £25. Last year the Zoological Gardens had a special grant of £250 for botanical gardens, but I have knocked that off. This division would have shown a substantial reduction, but for the fact that a grant of £1,120 was made to the University for extension work. That will not occur again. The Lithographic Department shows a saving of £923. Since the Estimates were framed we have reduced this amount by a further £814, which gives a total saving of £1,737. Now we come to the Printing Office. Roughly, there is here a decrease in expenditure—covering the whole of the departments—of £3,742. We estimate a total saving of £7,484, after paying Arbitration Court increases amounting to £532. Mr. Simpson, the Government Printer, is very keen in seeing to what extent he can effect savings. He and Mr. Glyde are working together in this. All the old printed forms that have accumulated in the different departments we propose to send to the Government Printer, who will print "cancelled" across the form and use the reverse side for printing a new form. This will effect a saving of not merely hundredweights, but tons of paper, which is at abnormal price to-day. Consequently, we shall here effect a substantial saving in cash.

Mr. Smith: Why does he not save on the "Government Gazette"?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is probably your little fad. Let the man have a chance. When I find a man doing his best to effect economies, I am not going to worry him with pin-pricks. In respect of the Taxation Department, I candidly tell the Committee that I have not yet gone thoroughly into it, for this reason: at the present time additional work is entailed in the bringing of the dates into line with the Commonwealth dates, and there is going to be additional work in connection with the new taxation measures. Moreover, the Premier has agreed to a conference of taxation officers of the Commonwealth and the State, with a view to handing over the

work of the Commonwealth Department to the State Department. The Prime Minister has expressed his approval of the proposition, and if he finally agrees the whole of the work of the Commonwealth Taxation Department will be done by the State taxation officers, and as far as possible, the taxation returns will be made identical, so as to obviate the irritation created by the necessity for sending in two very different returns. The department shows an increase of £3, but, as I say, I have not gone fully into it, because of the circumstances I have mentioned. The Workers' Homes Board appears to be in a very satisfactory position indeed. They have had to effect a few foreclosures, but the loss on those amounts to only £130, while the profit on the year's operations has been £1,297. The board informs me that the payments have been wonderfully well maintained and that tenants generally are taking a deep interest in their properties. In the division "Miscellaneous Services" I have made some reductions, and there will be more to come. In regard to the Home of Peace grant, I have cut it down by £100, for I found they had a credit balance of £580. So, too, in regard to the Cottage-by-the-Sea Convalescent Home, I found they had a credit balance of £342. I have cut down by £100 the subsidy to Rescue and Prison Gate work, for I found that there was not much control exercised over the money. I have determined to strike out the grants to sailors' homes at Albany, Bunbury, and Fremantle, for I found that what we were giving to those homes was really being spent in administrative costs, and the sailors were getting very little benefit. For the Fresh Air League this year we have paid £423 to the goldfields, and notified the league that it was to be the final subsidy, until times look up again. The Home for Friendless Women at Boulder has been closed. I have struck out the grant to the Royal Life Saving Society because I found it was simply going in salaries.

The Minister for Works: Some of these grants, which you say you have struck out, still appear on the Estimates, although in reduced amounts.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I mean that I have reduced them and intimated that this would be the last payment, that next year they will be struck out altogether. The contribution to the Fire Brigade Board shows a reduction of £694. The payment of £645 for the free passes of members of Parliament over the Midland railway represents actual fares. I am having thoroughly analysed the payment of £1,500 to the State Railway Department to cover all charges for free passes, special trains and cars, etc. There is no doubt there have been abuses under this item, and we require to put it on some more satisfactory basis. Numbers of public servants have received free passes, the issue of which was not justifiable. Probably, if the Commissioner of Railways had been paid fully last year for services under this item, he would have received something like £4,700. It is not fair to him. We have been issuing free passes for all kinds of duties in all kinds of ways, and it is time we inaugurated a proper system, and stated what fares should be charged where now free passes are

given, and at what rate those fares should be charged. The State railways are not going to carry dead heads where I can avoid it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But, even if the £4,700 had been paid, it would be nothing more than a book entry.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Still, if those who got the free passes paid, the Railways would be getting the money. In respect of grants for parks, recreation grounds, etc., last year £3,100 was voted and £2,350 expended. I have taken £200 off the King's Park Board and, seeing that the others last year did not seem to want anything, I cut them down a little too.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some of them wanted it, but you cut them down just the same.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is quite possible. I cannot claim to be doing all this on any system of high class equity. The Police Benefit Fund, of course, represents a special subsidy on contributions. "Retiring Allowances": I will give the Committee a list of these. Coming to Royal Commissions, that on Esperance lands has finished up. We made them a last payment of £550. Commissions inquiring into charges against Dr. Stevens and into the Nevanas contract have also finished up. The Commission on Agricultural Industries have this year been paid £990 to date, and the total vote is only £1,000. For the Cost of Living Commission I have only £500.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Knock out both of those.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The Premier has notified both of them that he desires them to close up.

The Premier: That is so.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The others are wiped out by having finished their labours. "Refund of Revenue" is always an awkward item. It is merely a book entry. Only last year I received the money shown here, and I have to refund it this year. The "Government Gazette" indices we are doing in the Government Printing Office. The amount of £750 for "Incidental" is for conferences, and that sort of thing. It was anticipated that there would be an increase of £2,849 on "Interest and Exchange," but I am thankful to say that we have managed to save that, largely, and I hope that in the end there will not be anything under this item. "Departmental advertising" we have gone into thoroughly and we find it can be cut down by £300. The item "National Volunteers' Service. Maintenance and other Expenses, £2,500," is, of course, new. It will probably create some feeling among members, but if the circumstances were to occur again to-morrow, we would have to take the same action, for it would be necessary to protect the State. For experiments in the manufacture of pottery we have provided £200. We believe that high class pottery can be manufactured here, and where we find that we can start any of these industries we are determined to make the experiment, even if we have to spend a few pounds on it. Now, I have a suggestion to make to the Committee. It is that we should offer bonuses for suggestions. It is done in every big concern in America and we do it in one or two concerns here in which I am interested. It gives very fine results. The sug-

gestions would come to me, or some other responsible Minister, who would see if they were worthy of being put into actual practice. If so, we would then pay a bonus to the maker of the suggestion to mark appreciation of his efforts. They say that in the General Post Office, as the result of this system, they have saved several thousands of pounds in administrative costs. I believe there are in the public service men quite capable of making suggestions that would save the country money. But at present they are hampered. They cannot always make suggestions to their heads, because frequently it would impair the good terms upon which they are with those heads. If there are in the service men capable of making suggestions which would save the country money, I say we should give them bonuses. And this system would not merely result in the payment of a bonus to the men who made valuable suggestions, but it would mark them for advancement when the opportunity should occur. So, we would be effecting savings and picking out men capable of taking higher positions.

Mr. Foley: Does that refer to suggestions put forward by members on the Address-in-reply?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have nothing further to say, but I shall be glad to give any information that may be required when the items are being discussed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.23]: After the Treasurer's Budget speech, it has not been general for an explanation to be given by the Treasurer in dealing with his Estimates. But I want to point out one or two matters in connection with the Treasurer's department, as this is the only opportunity we shall have of speaking on particular items in regard to some of the votes. I do not think the Government have acted altogether fairly in regard to the parks vote. The amount for country parks has been reduced by 50 per cent., whereas the amount voted for King's Park has not been reduced. An amount of £1,900 is set down for the King's Park, while only £400 has been set aside for the rest of the parks of the State. In my district we have one of the best—if not the best—recreation grounds in the whole of Western Australia; I think I am safe in saying that. I refer to Point Walter reserve, which everyone must admit is a beautiful spot. It is a national park. When this reserve was taken over by the roads board in that district there was a definite undertaking that the Government should pay to the roads board the amount of money which the Government had been spending previously for the upkeep of this park, namely, £100 per annum. The reserve at that time was not looked after in the manner that it should have been. Since then the reserve has become a very popular place. A large number of visitors are encouraged to go there; the place is kept clean, looked after well, and now the Government say that this board is not to have the amount of money which had previously been spent upon it. An undertaking given in the manner in which this was given should be kept. The

country vote for parks and reserves has been reduced from £700 to £400, and this reserve in the future is to go without any money at all. This is one of the reserves for which money was applied, and it is unfair that the ratepayers of the district should have to keep up and improve that reserve without any grant from the Government. It is as much a national park as the King's Park, and I think it is more popular than King's Park; at any rate, more people visit the place. I have seen as many as 5,000 or 6,000 people there on one day. I am pleased that the Treasurer has drawn attention to the compassionate allowances, and has pointed out that these amounts are set down owing to a public service regulation—No. 80, I think it is. These allowances are granted under a public service regulation, and are part of the agreement that officers come under when they enter the service. If anything happens and an officer dies, then the dependents should receive a sum of money from the Government. It is a part of the agreement when an officer enters the service. I want to point out how well the higher paid officers are treated compared with the lower paid officers. The other evening I referred to the fact that warders of prisons for disciplinary reasons were removed from the public service regulations, and I cited the case of an official who had been receiving a salary of £3 a week. There was a definite undertaking that the Government should pay these allowances. I notice that Mrs. Loveday is set down on the Estimates for a compassionate allowance of £32. That is for long service leave due to the officer, who died. I think she only received £28. The Minister told me that this matter had not been finalised. I know that the claim was refused. However, it is to come up for consideration again, and I hope that during recess the amount will be paid; if not, I shall refer to the matter next year when the Estimates are discussed. There is a large amount of money set down this year for maintenance and other expenses in connection with the national volunteer service. That will give members an opportunity of dealing with this question, and I want to say that the way in which these expenses were incurred by the Government is not altogether in the best interests of the State. The money has been expended in assisting a number of shipowners to carry on their business, and at a time when the difficulty that existed could have been easily removed. I have said before, and I repeat it, that the Premier and some of his colleagues—I will not say all of them—did their utmost to try to get the employers and employees together to overcome the difficulty which then existed. But the employers definitely and distinctly refused to agree to the request of the Premier and his colleagues. At the time these employers refused the proposal of the Government, money was being spent to assist the shipowners. If the employers had agreed to the request of the Premier the difficulty would have been easily overcome.

Mr. Thomson: What was the request of the Premier?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That there should be a conference?

Mr. Thomson: Did he not grant all the requests made?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I shall not deal with that matter now. A deputation waited on the Premier, who asked the employers to meet the employees in conference, but the employers refused. If the matter was not worth discussing it was not likely that there would have been much trouble. The request was made to the employers three times by the Premier, I think. The employers had the power to refuse the Premier's proposal, and they did so. Why should the Government pay away money to assist people to fight the men when the whole matter could have been easily settled? There were many accusations made at that time against the men employed on the Fremantle wharves. I have here an extract from the "West Australian" dated the 13th October, 1917, and before I read it I may say that I do not believe it. It was just after the first ship arrived from Melbourne—the "Dimboola"—and it was issued by the Melbourne Steamship Co. It says—

The Melbourne S.S. Company has issued a statement in which it is said that the cost of unloading the "Dimboola" by voluntary labour on the occasion of her former visit to Fremantle was 20 per cent. less than the average cost for such work, while the losses from pillage, namely, goods missing from packages, was only £5 as against an average of £80 per trip usually sustained on a vessel of similar cargo carrying capacity. Though a total of 300 tons of drapery was carried, not one claim for loss in this direction was received.

Mr. Munsie: Yes, a good deal went back to Melbourne in the bottom of the boat.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some of the boys employed on the wharves were not big enough to wear long pants, and it is a crying shame that these boys should be taken from a public institution and sent to work on the wharves. I refer to an educational institution in the metropolitan area. I told an officer of the department that if any of those boys met with an accident, fatal or otherwise, the institution ought to be responsible for sending the boys down there.

Mr. Stewart: They were volunteers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Volunteers! Why, the boys were sent there.

Mr. Stewart: Where were they sent from?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I say it was a scandal. My own little boy came home one day and said to me, "Why, there are boys down there no bigger than I am." I told him that he could not do the work, and he said, "Never mind, I could get the money." One woman complained bitterly of her boy working there, and she went down to the wharf and tried to catch him.

Mr. Munsie: They have ruined that school for ever.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I said at that time that if I was on the bench and a case came forward I would have committed the responsible persons for manslaughter. It was not right to send these children to do that dangerous class of work. We have been told that a good

deal of pillaging took place before the so-called national workers were engaged on the wharf. A conference was held not very long ago dealing with Interstate shipping, and particularly in regard to Harbour Departments. For the information of hon. members, I will read an extract from the statement made at this conference by the secretary of the Fremantle Harbour Trust at the time when this matter of pillaging was under discussion. I am confident that every hon. member, provided he is not biased, will after hearing this come to the conclusion that the insinuations made in the article of the "West Australian" on 13th October are without foundation, and that the thieving and pillaging which are supposed to take place upon the wharves at Fremantle are not applicable in the way that the newspaper sought to show. We know that pillaging has taken place amongst the employees of private firms, and that pillaging has also taken place on the wharves. Only last week a man was caught robbing a soldier's kit which was coming back with him from the Front. This man was not prosecuted. He was a national worker, so-called, and the authorities did not want the public to know about it. This man was caught in the very act of taking photographs out of a soldier's kit bag.

Hon. P. Collier: That is justice.

Mr. Munsie: These loyalists are respectable people!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Unfortunately, people of this type are found in all sections of the community. I mention this to show that the so-called national workers are not exempt from any charges of pillaging that may be made.

Mr. Munsie: They are scabs, purely and simply.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Dealing with the question of packages for which receipts were given by the Harbour Trust, Mr. Stevens said—

We give a receipt for the number of packages, but we argue that whereas tallying is a difficult matter at any time, it is almost impossible by artificial light to discern the many trickeries there are in fixing packages up to get them past a tally-clerk. I have an interesting museum in my office, showing the contents of packages, which have been opened in the sheds, where we have in many cases given clean receipts. The consignees have in some of these cases, too, given us a clean receipt, and afterwards the packages have been opened up. I heard of a case of a package which was supposed to contain a motor-car, which when opened was found to be minus the motor-car.

Several delegates: What was in the case?

Mr. F. Stevens (Western Australia): Pieces of pig iron, odd ends of railway rails, blocks of wood, etc., enough to make somewhere about the required weight. We have had instances where we have given clean receipts for cases of spirits—brandy, whisky, and the like—which when opened were found to contain bottles of bilge water and even worse. Cases of soap filled with blocks of wood and rubbish from New York, cases of olive oil from Naples filled

with pumice and scoria, cases of cheese from Denmark filled with paving stones, and so forth. The versatility of the cargo pillagers is unending, but their work invariably points to the fact that they have had ample opportunity and time to effect their purpose undisturbed, and whereas this can sometimes be done on board ship, it is equally often done before the goods are shipped. Manifestly, a motor-car cannot be taken out of a case on board ship, and neither can it be done on a wharf, not at any rate on our wharves. I had an instance not long ago where a case containing boxes of Havana cigars, for which we had given a clean receipt, was found to be pillaged of about £45 worth of the contents, and in place of the boxes missing there had been placed a shed broom, a storeman's apron, and some straw, to prevent rattling, but there was also a tell-tale confectioner's paper bag bearing the name of a Hamburg tradesman. The case had lain in a transshipping shed at Hamburg. These are the instances in which I consider myself justified in refusing a claim in spite of a clean receipt.

It will be seen that a good deal of the pillaging for which the workers at Fremantle are condemned, really takes place before the ship commences her voyage, or on board the ship prior to the arrival at her destination, but for all that, the lumper is the man who is condemned all the time and held responsible for everything.

Mr. Teesdale: Not the motor-car, surely.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I really cannot say. I have given to hon. members the statement as it was made by the secretary of the Harbour Trust at this conference. If there is any trouble, the lumper gets the blame and is classed as a thief and vagabond throughout the State. This has been said so often that people have begun to believe it. In my opinion these men have been unjustly condemned.

Mr. Green: The present crowd down there would steal a ship.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Mr. Stevens goes on to say—

In the year ending 30th June, 1905, our expenses were £23,500, and our receipts £23,900, while our claims were £132.

Mr. Teesdale: For 12 months?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. The secretary of the Harbour Trust continues—

In 1906, our expenses were £21,500 and our receipts £23,400. The claims paid were £44. In 1907, our expenses were £20,200 and our receipts £22,400, while our claims were £94. In 1908, expenses £21,200, receipts £22,400, and claims £36. In 1909, expenses £18,600, receipts £20,000, claims £100. In 1910, expenses £25,500, receipts £27,700, claims £110. In 1911, expenses £30,300, receipts only £21,000.

Mr. Stevens then went on to explain that the difference between receipts and expenditure represented the gross amount, and that out of this the Trust had to take administration charges, including claims. He continued—

Our claims were £190 in 1911. In 1912, our expenses were £35,300, and receipts

£35,400, and our claims were £179. In 1913, our expenses were £44,300 and our receipts £48,300. The claims were £255. In 1914, our expenses were £49,000, our receipts were £51,000, and claims £141. In 1915 our expenses were £39,500, our receipts were £41,200, and our claims were £75. In 1916, our expenses were £51,000, our receipts £50,000, and our claims £94,000.

I would point out that it is not the custom of merchants to take delivery of damaged goods.

Hon. J. Mitchell: They often do take their cases away in that condition.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They certainly watch them very closely.

Mr. Stewart: The Harbour Trust absolves themselves of liability after 5 o'clock at night.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Quite right too. I introduced a Bill to alter this hour, but the merchants were against it. If the light is laid at night time, and the Harbour Trust, who are acting on behalf of the Government, cannot examine a case properly, especially when it is landed from overseas, so that they can give a receipt that everything is in order, they should not be called upon to take further responsibility. Very often, too, their employees are working after hours in order to get a ship away at due time. These are the claims which have been made upon the Harbour Trust, as quoted by the secretary of that body, and should be conclusive proof that the statement which appeared in the "West Australian" in regard to the "Dimboola" is entirely wrong.

Mr. Munsie: That statement was put in at the time of the strike.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was put in to cause a disturbance, as far as possible. During the industrial crisis at Fremantle every effort was made to induce these men to kick up a row. This was one of the events desired by those who were opposing the men. They wanted to get the men angry so that they would cause a disturbance, as they knew well if they could bring this about, that the little sympathy which was being extended to them would be immediately withdrawn. These men have put up with a great deal that no member of this Chamber would have put up with. The statement was even made "We have you in the dirt, and we will roll you in it," and big upstanding men have simply walked by those who had been making that statement without saying a word, keeping quiet and preserving order, and assisting the police in every way they could. Any disturbance which has taken place has been less than was seen under normal conditions. One or two cases have been brought before the court, but in almost every instance the case arose because of the provocation brought about by persons who should have avoided anything of that nature. One man was fined £3. He pleaded guilty at once. He was a small man, but when two of the national workers attacked him he knocked both of them out. In the circumstances he willingly paid the fine. Even at this late hour the Government should do something to bring about better conditions than at present prevail at Fremantle. Orders have gone forth



that the national worker shall come first, the soldier second, and the ordinary lumper third.

Mr. Teesdale: You do not believe that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is true.

Mr. Munsie: It has been done. There is no question about its not being true.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not say that the Government are responsible for this, for I do not think they are, but the fact remains that these orders have gone forth at Fremantle.

Mr. Teesdale: By whom were they issued?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: By the man who is charged with picking up the men required.

Mr. Teesdale: Not Cox.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A committee has been appointed. A gentleman who is connected with shipping—not a lumper or a wharf labourer—said to me the other day, "If you went down to-morrow and registered yourself as a national worker, you would get preference in employment before the lumpers' union." Some of those who are the biggest employers of labour at Fremantle to-day are not in accord with the manner in which labour is being taken on. The committee which is working conjointly on behalf of the Federal authorities and the State authorities and sometimes takes its instructions from the Federal authorities, forgets that we have in this State sovereign powers and that we are governed by a State Government. The position is that the national worker and the soldier get the preference. The so called national workers are not the national workers who went to the assistance of the Government during the time of the trouble. I think I can safely say that there are only about 70, or at the outside 80, of the original national workers remaining there. The others now there have come since the original trouble was settled. From information in my possession, I am prepared to take an oath in a court of law that there are no less than 65 unnaturalised aliens registered to work on the wharf.

Mr. Teesdale: It is a shame.

Hon. P. Collier: And there are any number of naturalised Germans.

Mr. Teesdale: They ought to be dismissed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In reply to a question I asked the Premier, that hon. gentleman gave me information which has been supplied to him. He was not in a position to check it; he could only reply according to the information furnished to him by the officials to whom he applied. From whom he obtained that information, I do not know. The number of aliens who are not naturalised at all was given in the Premier's reply as 16. But from reliable information in my possession, I am prepared to take my oath that the number is 65. I say there are 65 persons not British subjects who are employed on the Fremantle wharves. I do not object to the 77 naturalised British subjects so much, but I do object to these 65. Greeks are there earning £5 or £6 per week, and without kith or kin in Western Australia. They are sending their money out of the State, while the lumper with perhaps a large family, who may have been earning his live-

lihood on the wharves for 30 years, is, together with his family, unable to obtain the necessities of life. That is what is happening in Fremantle to-day. What I have stated are facts, and not in any way exaggerated allegations. Let me say again that I only ask the Government to use their influence to prevent the continuance of such a state of things.

Mr. Teesdale: What is the remedy?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I can give the remedy, which, if carried into effect, will prove a very quick remedy—that the Government ask the Harbour Trust to resume immediately the old conditions; that is, to pick the best men for the work.

Mr. Green: Irrespective of who they are, so long as they are Britishers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What about the preference to unionists?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is no preference to unionists now. That has been wiped out by the Federal Arbitration Court. Let the Fremantle Harbour Trust take the initiative and employ the best men for the work. In that case, I assure hon. members, it would not be long before all the old lumpers were at work again. Only a few days ago the sight was witnessed of three or four slings full of goods hanging over the side of a ship with no one to receive them because the men employed on the wharf were not equal to the work, were not quick enough to take the goods from the slings. The State is paying for that delay; not the ship owners. If there are any losses incurred by the Harbour Trust in working cargo, there is less revenue for the Treasurer; because any surplus revenue received by the trust is paid into the Treasury. While the foremen have to employ men whom they do not want because it is known that they cannot do the work, the business cannot be conducted satisfactorily. I ask any hon. member, would he put up with such a state of affairs in his own business?

Mr. Green: And the Fremantle Harbour Trust are the largest employers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. That state of things could be remedied in a very little while, with advantage to the State financially, as well as removing any difficulty which may exist at Fremantle. Let me say, too, that the Fremantle Lumpers' Union are quite willing to work with the nationalists. I have told the Premier that already.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But not with the foreigners.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I agree with the hon. member that they ought not to be compelled to work with the foreigners.

The Colonial Treasurer: Is it from the men that you are giving this assurance?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They have given the Premier that assurance already.

The Colonial Treasurer: But this happens to come under me at present.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The secretary of the union told me point-blank that the men did not object to that at all, because preference under the Arbitration Court award is gone. All that the old lumpers ask is that they should

be given the same chance as the others—not one first, and then a second, and then, “You can go home.” I have said before, and I say now, that I realise some of the nationalists honestly believed that what they were doing was in the interests of the State. I say again that some of the nationalists went to the wharves from a truly national standpoint. They were honest in doing that work. They believed that the action which had then been taken was detrimental to the best interests of the State, and they tried to relieve the position. But when the trouble finished, they left, they went away from the wharves. According to statements recently published by Ministers in the Press, there were 2,000 or 3,000 national volunteers registered for work. Seeing that out of that number only 70 or 80 remain on the wharves, it follows that the vast majority must now be working in other avocations. Some of them, I am aware, were sufficiently financial not to need to work on the wharves. However, these men went away as soon as the lumps returned. The difficulty is as to the national volunteers who have come since the trouble ended, and who, if one may say so, are not true national volunteers. I again appeal to Ministers to relieve the difficulty which exists at Fremantle, and which is a very serious difficulty. Anyone who has spent a little time in Fremantle must come to that conclusion. I regret that the difficulties existing there at present are not known to the great majority of our people. Many of the men affected will go without food before communicating their need to others. There are members of this Committee who can hear me out in that statement. In the circumstances, it is a crying shame and a disgrace to this country that a British State should allow 65 unnaturalised foreigners to be registered for work on the wharves to the exclusion of British subjects, to the exclusion of our own kith and kin.

Mr. Teesdale: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know of a case in which a stevedore absolutely refused to employ a man one day, and that man was sent back to him the next day. The stevedores have no say in the matter. The foremen of the Fremantle Harbour Trust ought to be empowered to employ the men whom they know to be able to do the work. At present, they are obliged to employ men whom they know to be incapable for the work; and the State has to pay for that. I should like to have a return, though I know it would take a long time to prepare, showing what has been the cost of working cargo on the Fremantle wharves during the last month or two. I mean, since the trouble has been over; I know of course that under the extraordinary conditions prevailing during the trouble the cost was bound to be excessive. But, let me ask, what has it cost the Government since the trouble has ended, outside the £2,500? I appeal to the Government for fair play to the lumpers; and, once the men receive that, I have no doubts as to the future.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [6.13]: The Treasurer made reference, in the course of his statement, to the payment of pensions. I consider there should be no doubt about what is to happen to a man officially retired—if he is entitled to a pension, there should be no

doubt about his receiving the pension. So long as it is our system to grant pensions, the matter should not be left in the hands of any Ministry.

Hon. P. Collier: The Treasurer never mentioned pensions.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Treasurer referred to pensions and compassionate allowances.

Hon. P. Collier: The Committee is not concerned with pensions which represent statutory obligations.

The Colonial Treasurer: The pensions I referred to are pensions under the regulations.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Certain pensions will have to be paid.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. member now discussing pensions?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing before the Chair in that regard.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But there is something in these Estimates as to compassionate allowances. I suppose I can discuss those. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) mentioned the question of a compassionate allowance to a warder at the Fremantle gaol. It appears that some time ago the Fremantle warders were advised that on death their relatives would receive two weeks' pay for each year of service. I understand that is in accordance with an Executive Council order. It ought to be observed. Moreover, whatever is done in the case of one civil servant in this way should be done for all civil servants.

The Colonial Treasurer: That is how precedents are constantly being set up. By considering individuals we set up precedents which we cannot get out of afterwards.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Years ago this right was set up by a Government of this State; and until the right is rescinded we should respect it.

Hon. P. Collier: What right?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The right, on retirement, to compassionate allowances.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I was referring to the civil service and the question of retiring allowances. I do not know anything more likely to disturb the service, or create dissatisfaction, than the refusal to honour an undertaking which has been given. It should be remembered that the greater number of civil servants are not very highly paid, and when they retire on account of age, or in severing their connection with the departments in which they have been employed, we should not go back on the provision contained in the regulation dealing with retirements. We know there is general dissatisfaction in the service on account of the disparity in the salaries which are paid. Take, for instance, the accountants. In one department it will be seen that the salary paid is £334, in another it will be £336, in another perhaps £400, and in the Taxation Department, which is a fairly big department, the salary is only £276. There is a great simi-

arity in the work which has to be performed and it is difficult to account for the disparity. Perhaps the positions do not carry equal responsibility, but they all occupy attention and time.

Hon. P. Collier: They have been classified by the Commissioner.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Notwithstanding that, we are entitled to call attention to the fact. I do not propose to discuss the question of the labour employed at Fremantle, except to say that if foreigners are employed to any extent, it is a very serious state of affairs and should not be allowed to continue.

The Premier: They have not been employed by the Government.

Hon. P. Collier. The Harbour Trust is a semi-Government body.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: At any rate, we must not miss the opportunity of protesting. With regard to the Estimates generally, I do not know that any good can be served by discussing them at length. The Treasurer has told us that already considerable alterations of a satisfactory nature have been made since they were framed. We can only hope that the savings will be real and that the end of the year will show us a substantial decrease.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [7.35]: The Treasurer has pointed out the directions in which many savings can be effected. I think that by stopping the small leakages a considerable benefit will accrue. There have been many of these in the past, and in the long run they amount to a considerable thing. We know that it requires a man with a knowledge of the inner working of the departments to detect these leakages. They exist in every branch of the service, and they have been allowed to grow for many years past until they have become extravagances. It is satisfactory to know that the Treasurer has taken a step in the direction of stopping the leakages and improving the administration of the various departments. Exception has been taken to some of the remarks which have been made in connection with the service, but although we must admit there are some valuable officers in the service, it is easy to understand that they will drift into slipshod methods, and carry on their work loosely if there is no supervision. If some kind of system is in force, the officers will give the best that is in them, and the State will benefit. The criticism which has been levelled at the service can only result in good. I have not criticised any of the departments to any extent because I realise that the greater part of the year has gone, but it is as well for the Government to know that if the promised reforms have not taken place before next session, drastic action must follow when Parliament meets again. The remarks which were made by the Treasurer with regard to the compassionate allowances were quite justified, and should make us consider the conditions under which we are working. It frequently happens that a highly paid official meets with some misfortune, or dies, and his family, who should have been well provided for during the lifetime of that highly paid official, receive

generous treatment at the hands of the State. That is not the case with the ordinary working man, who may have toiled throughout his life for a mere pittance. When anything happens to him, his family drift into poverty, and when they are given assistance from the State it is in the form of charity. What else is a compassionate allowance but charity? Then with regard to pensions, if a man on retiring receives a pension for services rendered it is looked upon as a decoration, but if an old man gets a pension to which he is entitled, that is charity purely and simply. I see no difference between the two, and the sooner this matter is put on a fair and equitable basis, the better it will be for everyone concerned. The Treasurer pointed out that large sums had been voted as compassionate allowances for several people, but it is quite possible that those people did not want any financial assistance; their position may have been such as to place them beyond requiring help from the State. It is satisfactory to know that the Treasurer is going to investigate these matters. I agree with the Treasurer's remarks with reference to the Savings Bank. If the business of an institution increases, no one will object to additional expenditure, but it is when the expenditure is going up, and the business is going down, that we must move in the direction of stopping the drift. The State employs a number of inspectors, who go about the country visiting schools and buildings, but I have come across places which have been even without a fence for 10 or 12 years past, and suddenly it is found that the authorities have awakened to the fact that fences are required. Then, of course, they were erected when there was no occasion for them to be erected, and when the money might have been spent in many better directions. I know of a school at the present time which is not serving many people, and which, consequently, is of not much use, yet instructions were recently issued that certain improvements should be effected to that building. Of course the officer responsible for the recommendation knew that, unless he made some recommendation, his occupation would be gone. In these days of stress we should make every effort to bring about reforms and to economise, and public officers should be prepared to suffer to some extent just the same as private individuals. I notice that there has been a reduction in literary and scientific grants, but I hope the Treasurer will realise that, in outback centres like Wiluna, Peak Hill and Meekatharra, the small sum of £20 or £30 means a great deal. Those places should not be forgotten entirely; they are worthy of the utmost consideration, because the pioneers who have been, and are still there, have to face great disabilities and are obliged to pay the maximum price for everything they require.

The Colonial Treasurer: They are entitled to 7s. 6d. for every £1 contributed.

Mr. HOLMAN: I have experienced difficulty in getting assistance for them. The Treasurer has pointed to many savings effected in the Government Printing Office. All material

used in that department has considerably advanced in price. I was glad to hear that material, such as the paper in obsolete forms, which previously had been wasted is now being used again. Even in this department, in all probability, there are officers receiving more than they are justly entitled to. The case of Mr. Kessell has been again mentioned this evening, but there are throughout the service a number of men of his stamp.

Mr. Thomson: Did he get more than he was entitled to?

Mr. HOLMAN: At all events he asked for more than he really got. The Premier, in reply to a question, spoke of a certain returning officer, and said that he was occupying a very important position, and therefore had to be kept on. Other officers, some of whom have been to the war and returned, would very much like to be given similar positions. Not all our public servants devote their full time to their offices, and I am convinced that if this were to be inquired into it would be found that there is considerable room for reform. Many well paid officers take on other jobs, and so find it impossible to give their undivided attention to their duties in the department. Some departments we find are working well, and so are deserving of credit, but in regard to certain others this cannot be said. Next session I will make it my business to particularise on this question, and point out certain officers who, in my opinion, are not doing their duty. I think the Taxation Department is not administering taxation in mining centres to the best advantage. I mentioned this when the taxation proposals were before the House. We were then told that the Bills introduced would prevent the Taxation Department from unduly penalising the mines.

The Minister for Mines: Provision is being made this year.

Mr. HOLMAN: But it is ten years since I first brought up the question. We were then informed that certain measures would overcome the difficulty. I believe that the Taxation Commissioner, perhaps through an excess of zeal, is overstepping his administrative powers. Take the case of a mining man who has another business. I know of one who runs an aerated water works. His income from that enterprise amounts to a large sum annually. Also from one of the mines which he owns he receives a fair income. But he has spent every penny of his income, and more which he has had to borrow, in developing other mining properties. I do not think he should be penalised, seeing that he has put his money into the development of mining. That same man paid for the sinking of a shaft, which is called capital expenditure. But after sinking a shaft it may be found that the property is not worth any more than a rotten case of fruit which a storekeeper has bought. In such a case the storekeeper would not be penalised.

The Colonial Treasurer: There is the High Court decision; you cannot get away from that.

Mr. HOLMAN: But we ought to get away from it. They classify the sinking of a shaft as capital expenditure. Suppose the shaft is

sunk at Wiluna, and it has to be timbered from Three Springs; the cost of that timber put into the shaft is regarded as capital expenditure. Then extra freight has to be paid on that timber to Meekatharra, and, for carting it to Wiluna, £20 per ton; and one is taxed on the extra amount. That is unfair, and it strikes directly at the man opening up the country. The Government should take this question into consideration, because I know from experience that it is keeping some of our best men from doing necessary development work in mining. This could be largely overcome by the administration of the department; if not the Government should take other steps to see that provision is made to assist those men who have done so much in the past and are willing to do even more in the future, if given a fair chance. The Commissioner of Taxation in his administration has shown a certain amount of latitude. I give him credit for that. But if he can show latitude to a certain extent, surely he can do the rest, and refrain from penalising those men. He quoted a case mentioned by the Treasurer, the case of one of the mines on the Eastern goldfields. It was tried before the Supreme Court, and I must admit that the Commissioner met me at every turn, and gave the man a fair time in which to make his payment; although, as a matter of fact, he never had the money to make the payment, because he had to pay it all out. To get revenue for one mine they opened up an adjoining property, notwithstanding which they were penalised to the full. Yet a business man who, having two businesses, makes a profit on one and a loss on the other, is allowed to offset the profit against the loss.

The Colonial Treasurer: That is not provided for in the Act.

Mr. HOLMAN: But it is done to-day. Surely if a man makes mining his business he should be treated with the same consideration as is shown to any other business man. Certainly there is an element of speculation in mining, yet, after all, it is as much a business as any other enterprise. Under the existing condition of affairs, if his business of mining proves an absolute failure, he has to pay his taxation just the same. This condition certainly should be amended. If it cannot be done by administration, the Government should see what can be done by legislation. A good deal has been said about Royal Commissions, and the Treasurer seemed to have a very fair grasp of the situation. I think there have been too many Royal Commissions. They are allowed to build up huge expenditure which this State has to meet. We have Royal Commissions sitting to-day. Many of these, not all of them, have been built up for the purpose of giving somebody a soft job. For the first time in the history of our Estimates we find an item of £2,500 for "National volunteers' service, maintenance and other expenses." And that is not the only expenditure involved. Probably it runs to many other thousands. I am sorry the Government should lend themselves to a policy like this at such a time. Surely the Government will not overlook the past efforts of various workers in the national cause, workers who have sacrificed every-

thing, even to their very lives, in the service of their country. What is the item for? Are we not entitled to a definition of "national volunteer"? So often have we heard the term used that we begin to wonder what it means. I say that the person who takes another man's place at a time like this may be a volunteer, but is certainly not a nationalist. In times past we have called such men by very different names. At one time they were free labourers, then they were blacklegs, then non-unionists, then scabs, blue-noses, and loyalists. To-day they are called national volunteers. Under that name, I would remind the Premier, they are just the same at heart as the blacklegs and the scabs. They are the same as any other rotten apples. We cannot alter their inmost nature. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) said that many of those men were imbued with a national spirit when they went along to do certain work. I believe that to be correct. I do not blame the men who did the work, but I blame those who led them away. A great many of our prominent people led those men to make fools of themselves. The time will not be long in coming when the national volunteer shall be looked upon with the same loathing as the scab and the blackleg.

Mr. Thomson: Do you approve of the lumpers holding up shipping?

Mr. HOLMAN: No; not if they are being fairly treated, and are allowed to meet and express their requirements and receive fair consideration. Nor do I believe in any other section of the community holding up work when fairly treated. But at times they are not treated fairly.

Mr. Thomson: Was this such a time?

Mr. HOLMAN: I did not go into the question, for the simple reason that, being away, I had not any opportunity. But even so, men who will join forces with unnaturalised foreigners, and with naturalised foreigners, in some instances more dangerous than the unnaturalised, are a disgrace to the positions they hold. If an hon. member criticised those nationalists outside the House, he would have to suffer as the leader of the Opposition has suffered. It would be held that he was saying something detrimental to recruiting. What could be more detrimental to recruiting than the action of the Government in giving assistance to those men, and in keeping in their positions men who are robbing others who have their families to maintain? Even if the lumpers were misguided, the fact that they have given their lifelong services to the country and have nothing to show for it, not even enough to eat, surely entitles them to some consideration. But instead of those men being allowed to work and live and bring up their families, the work is given away to foreigners, naturalised and unnaturalised. I know many employers who shouted loudest "God save the King" and "Rule Britannia," and who, when speaking from the public platform, expressed broad nationalist sentiments, but who, even after the outbreak of war, were employing 60 to 80 per cent. Austrians in their mines. Yet those men are looked upon as leaders amongst us to-day. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has dealt with this matter

pretty clearly, and more reasonable than I could if I spoke as long as he has spoken. This is a matter that should be taken in hand at once. Even if the men at Fremantle made a mistake and eventually saw the error of their ways, that is no reason why they should not be placed in the position they occupied prior to making that mistake. They may have been taught a lesson and brought to a reasonable state of mind. The time will not be far distant in this country and throughout Australia when the name of nationalist or so-called nationalist—it is being used for political purposes—will stink in the nostrils of the people of the country. I do not want to deal longer with this matter because one is inclined to become heated, and I do not wish to delay the passage of the Estimates. I only wish to briefly refer to matters where reforms can be effected, but on some future occasion unless the necessary reforms are introduced, we shall have to find someone else who will attend to matters than the present Government. The Government will have an opportunity of going into these questions and as far as the Treasurer is concerned I am sure he will try to bring forward reforms. If this is not done, the next occasion when the Estimates are introduced the Government will not get off so easily as they have on this occasion.

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

Vote—Treasury, £11,216—agreed to.

Vote—Audit, £8,831:

Mr. SMITH: It is common knowledge that the work of this department is considerably in arrears. The Mines Department has not been reported on since June, 1915. The same remark may be applied to State batteries. It is unnecessary to point out how serious the position must be with regard to State batteries, if the accounts are not properly audited, and I believe the State batteries have not been audited for six or seven years. The same thing applies to the Registration Department and the Savings Bank, one of our most important departments, because it is entrusted with the savings of millions of pounds belonging to the people. The securities of this department have not been dealt with by the audit office in a proper manner for many years. I believe it is the practice of the Audit Department to have a look at the securities, the I.O.U.'s, and the various alleged securities they may have in the safe, but as to finding out the value of the securities, the Audit Department take no trouble in the matter at all. The Savings Bank may have advanced considerable sums of money on securities which a few years ago might represent the amount borrowed, but to-day the securities might have depreciated and be not worth the paper they are written on. In addition to adding up the figures in the books of the Savings Bank, it is the duty of the Audit Department to see that the securities are worth what they represent, or the people who have money in the bank have not the security they should have. What I say is borne out by the fact that quite recently the Savings Bank were advertising for sale by auction a vacant block of land. It came as a surprise to me that the Savings Bank were lending money on vacant land. In so doing

they are assisting the land speculator. It is no duty of the Savings Bank to indulge in transactions of that kind. If there was a proper audit system, matters of that kind would be brought to the light of day. I believe the Government Stores have not been reported on since June, 1914. We have the Treasurer's word that the Government Stores Department is very important and large sums of money may be lost sight of altogether. I am told that instead of the Audit Department paying attention to those important items like a great many departments, they are building up enormous files, spending time in writing minutes to one another, indulging in trivial matters that a business firm would get rid of in a very short space of time. In connection with the disposal of hog-wash at the Old Men's Home that has involved the creation of a file that an ordinary individual would have settled in five minutes. There is a matter of a small amount in connection with the Karrakatta Cemetery and files have been going backwards and forwards for five or six months. The time has arrived when a committee of inquiry should investigate the methods adopted by the Audit Department and see whether the department could not be placed on a better footing. When the next Estimates are being prepared, I trust the Treasurer will have an opportunity of looking into these matters.

The Colonial Treasurer: If the Estimates are to be ready by July next, there is not a great deal of time.

Mr. SMITH: I know the Treasurer will do his best and I hope what I have said will be taken in the spirit in which it is intended.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is quite possible that there has been some delay because I notice that "one inspector is at the Front, one has retired." Then again "one officer at the Front, one has retired, another officer at the Front." The Auditor General has great difficulty in getting men to fill these places. I will see the Auditor General in regard to the matters raised, but when it comes to a question of securities it is a difficult matter for the Auditor General to say what the securities are worth. A man may be a good Auditor General but when it comes to inquiring into securities to see if they are worth so much, one begins to open another department in which we do not require expert accountants but expert valuers. As far as possible I am looking into the securities myself. When I was Treasurer before, I absolutely stopped the Savings Bank lending more money on land and so forth, and some of the securities did not satisfy me, and if they did not satisfy me they would not satisfy the man who had to realise on them. Some of the securities have since been made good. I am looking into these matters and no doubt I can do as good work there as the Auditor General inasmuch as the advances made are mostly on properties in the vicinity of the City, of which I have a fair knowledge.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The information given to the Committee by the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) is really surprising if it is

correct, and I have no reason to doubt its accuracy. It constitutes a serious indictment against the Auditor General. To learn that important departments of State have not been audited for a period covering three or four years, is surprising. If the failure to carry out the work on the part of the Auditor General is due to the shortness of staff by reason of the men being away at the Front, then it is the duty of the Auditor General to bring the position before the Minister because, however various departments may be inconvenienced, by shortness of staff, that of the Auditor General's Department should not be permitted to suffer in this direction, and that fact should be conveyed to the Minister and efforts made to secure officers. We have had instances during the progress of the Estimates where accountants in the public service, who should be qualified to act as audit inspectors, had their time so little employed that they have taken on other duties, and if that is so, the Auditor General could call in the assistance of these officers in the administration of his department. It is on the Auditor General that members of the House have to rely on for information, and if we find the Auditor General not in a position to give us information of value by reason of the fact that the accounts of important departments have not been inspected, that discounts very considerably the value of the report presented to Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think members have taken the Auditor General's reports as seriously as they should have done. We have the reports year after year and I do not think we shall have a proper audit until we alter the Audit Act. Under the system now carried out by the Auditor General he points out mistakes when he finds them, but scrupulously avoids instructing his accountants how to avoid them in the future. He has been asked time and again to provide a remedy. Men do not make mistakes in their accounts on purpose, and the public service of this State has had an enviable record in this respect. I do not believe there has been a single instance in which the Auditor General has pointed out a mistake that could have been avoided, or pointed out the course which should have been taken to prevent it. Until it is understood that the State looks upon the Auditor General as a complete superintending accountant we shall not get that benefit from his branch that we should have. If this had been understood before, that which the member for North Perth has told us of would not have occurred.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did the member for North Perth get his information from Ministers? Were you aware of this?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. It is no use bringing these matters up in Committee every year unless we are prepared to deal with them in a proper manner, and until we are prepared to alter the Audit Act, extend the powers of the Auditor General, and see that he has the staff with which to exercise those powers.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not necessary to amend the Act in order to give the Auditor General sufficient staff to enable him to carry out his duties.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Those duties should be extended so that we shall get full value from the branch. We must not be satisfied with the Auditor General merely pointing out mistakes, but we should be shown how these mistakes can be avoided.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is an alteration in the manner in which the Auditor General's report is presented. He does not, for instance, show the revenue outstanding on the 30th June last, although he shows the claims outstanding. It is advisable that hon. members should have this information.

The Colonial Treasurer: I have made a note of the matter.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Compassionate Allowances, £3,549:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I wish to dissent from the views expressed by hon. members in connection with compassionate allowances. The amount expended in this respect has been almost double that which was voted by Parliament on the previous year's Estimates. The vote was £4,110 and we expended £8,700. Amongst these items are some very large sums of money, which I contend the State should not have been called upon to pay. Many hon. members seem to think that these allowances constitute statutory obligation on the part of the State towards the dependants of deceased public officers, but this is not so. The Public Service Regulations do not indicate that there is any statutory obligation on the part of the Government to pay these amounts. Section 80 of these regulations says—

The head of sub-departments through the permanent head shall immediately report the death of any officer to the Commissioner, with the information as to the amount of leave or proportion of long leave accrued, when long service leave is not due to him at the time of death. The Governor may, on the recommendation of the Commissioner, grant the money equivalent of such leave or proportion of such leave, and an allowance calculated at the rate of two weeks' salary for each completed year of service, as a compassionate allowance to the relatives dependent on the officer.

The Governor may grant this. If the Governor may grant this it follows that the grant may be declined to be made. Therefore, the payment of such allowances is within the discretion or generosity of the Government of the day. The word "compassionate" means pity or mercy, consideration for those in difficulty, and the term itself shows that the Government may grant or withhold.

Mr. Smith: There is a moral obligation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no moral obligation.

Mr. Smith: Take the case of Mr. Spencer, who died after having served for 35 years in the employment of the State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There may be a moral obligation on the part of the Government to see that the dependants of old and valued servants do not suffer from want, but there is no moral obligation to grant, say, £1,500

to the widow of a deceased officer, when she is in comfortable circumstances and already earning a good income herself. This is one of the divisions which has grown up in the Estimates in an insidious way. No doubt it began through some officer dying and leaving his dependants unprovided for, and out of compassion the Government of the day voting them a small sum of money. The precedent thereby established has been followed until the practice has become an established one. On this list of items there will be found many large amounts which have been paid to the dependants of deceased officers. Many of these officers were drawing as much as £1,100 and £1,200 a year at the time of their death, and had been doing so for a number of years. It is absurd to say that the dependants of such officers should have any claim on the compassion or the charity of the Government.

Mr. Smith: What would such officers get if they retired in the ordinary way?

Hon. P. COLLIER: They would be entitled to a pension. An officer who has spent 45 years in the public service and retires at the age of 60 is entitled to a pension of say £200 or £300 a year, as the case may be. If such officer dies a week after his retirement his pension at once ceases and his dependants do not get one penny by way of compassionate allowance, whereas if he had died a week before his retirement they would have been entitled to, say, £1,500. I would instance the case of Warden Troy, who spent 40 years in the service of the country. He retired at the age of 63, in poor health, on a pension of, I think, £4 a week, but he only lived for about a year in which to enjoy it. On the other hand the dependants of officers who have died at middle age have drawn considerably more than Warden Troy was able to draw. That is an injustice and unfair.

Mr. Smith: It is not right.

The Colonial Treasurer: Where are you going to draw the line?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The position is not right. Where are we going to stop? Take the case of the late Public Service Commissioner, who spent about 20 years in the service and who up to, and for some time prior to, his death was drawing a salary of about £800 a year. His widow, who is a medical practitioner, and is already well provided for, gets £1,500 by way of a compassionate allowance. There are thousands of persons who are not under the Public Service Act, and thousands who are in private employment throughout the State whose dependants would, in the event of the death of their persons be left to the mercy and charity of the cold world. The only Government assistance they could hope for would be a weekly payment of 3s. or 4s., or at the most 7s. 6d., a week for each child from the Charities Department. If one happens to be a Public Service Commissioner or some other officer enjoying a good salary one can be sure that one's dependants will have provided for them on the Estimates a comparatively princely sum by way of compassionate allowance. There is no justice in this. My point is that there would be no breach of any

undertaking between the Government and their employees, if it became the declared policy of the Government to-morrow to cease the payment of compassionate allowances. There is no statutory obligation to pay them. That is clearly shown by the use of the word "may" in the regulations—"the Governor may grant." The allowance should not be granted unless the dependants of the deceased public servant are in absolute need. But in cases where an officer with a number of years' service leaves a widow and children in indigent circumstances, the Government, I agree, should not be niggardly.

Mr. FOLEY: The payment of compassionate allowances, as a principle, is entirely wrong. The smaller amounts on these Estimates probably no member will begrudge. But the differential treatment as between officers at the top of the service and those on the lower rungs cannot be defended. If the word "may" in that regulation is invariably to mean "shall" in the case of higher paid civil servants, it should likewise invariably mean "shall" in the case of lower paid officials. I consider, however, that compassionate allowances should be cut out of the Estimates altogether, and that a system of national insurance should be instituted for our public servants, and indeed for all outside workers as well.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Every public servant has to insure now.

Mr. FOLEY: But the system should be extended so as to become an all-round system of national insurance. Then, when any worker, whether State or private employee, lay on his death bed, he would have the relief of knowing that his dependants would not become subjects for charitable relief. Under such a system all would be on an equality, and payments into the insurance fund would be on the basis of income. The items in this connection, however, do point to differential treatment which is defensible.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Public service regulation No. 80, which deals with compassionate allowances, has been read by the leader of the Opposition, who, however, is not seized of the fact that the family of every officer of our State service who dies while in the service is entitled to an allowance of two weeks' pay for every year of his service. A circular to that effect was sent to every public servant on the 20th February, 1907.

Hon. P. Collier: That circular should not have been sent.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not saying that it should have been; but I believe the reason was that various public servants who had been under the Public Service Act were at that time deprived of the benefits of that Act.

Hon. P. Collier: The regulation does not justify that circular.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The circular reads as follows:—

I am advised by the Public Service Commissioner that His Excellency the Governor in Executive Council has approved of the principle of granting the equivalent of two weeks' salary for each year of service as a compassionate allowance to the family of an officer who dies whilst on active service, and

that application in pursuance of this must be forwarded to the Public Service Commissioner. (Signed) D. B. Ord, for the Under Secretary.

The Colonial Treasurer: But that circular refers to active service.

Hon. P. Collier: That means active service in the department.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. There was no war then. Thus, the principle has been adopted, instead of a practice having grown up gradually.

Mr. Thomson: Do the railway servants get that concession?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. Railway servants work under a special Act. We cannot, of course, dishonour our promise to pay. But if the Government think it wise to discontinue the system of compassionate allowances, a new circular should be issued advising public servants accordingly. Then those entering the service after the issue of the suggested circular would not be entitled to that benefit.

Mr. THOMSON: I have no desire to injure the rights of any public servant under the regulations; but if the circular quoted by the member for North-East Fremantle is to override the regulations, how is Parliament to administer the affairs of this State? To date, Western Australia has paid in compassionate allowances a total of £43,193; and it seems time to cry a halt. I agree with the leader of the Opposition that these allowances should be purely and absolutely compassionate allowances. Certainly, the large amounts granted to the families of higher paid public servants represent an undue tax on outside employees. Those employed on the railways are outside the Act and do not get anything, and there are countless other employees outside the Government similarly situated. What is the position of the private employee? A man may give the best of his life, but the employer will not at the end make a compassionate allowance of £1,500. The member for Leonora made a good point when he said we should have national insurance. That would overcome the difficulty. We are not under a moral obligation to pay compassionate allowances, and under existing conditions we should only pay them to those who are absolutely entitled to receive them, and to no others.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: After hearing the member for North-East Fremantle I intend to lay the position which he explained before the Solicitor General, so as to ascertain exactly what the position is. I do not think it is the desire of the Parliament to do anything unfair, neither would the House tolerate any Treasurer, no matter how hard-hearted he might be, declining to assist the family of a civil servant if the necessity really demanded that that family should be assisted. If the members of the service are fulfilling their obligation, every one who came in after the passing of the 1904 Act has a right to be insured, and the provisions were made so stringent that I am going to inquire whether they are insured. The reason I brought the matter of the compassionate allowances before the House was because I thought the



custom was growing. The member for North-East Fremantle said that it was a custom which was established in 1907. I want to stop it going further, but on the understanding that the Government does not forfeit the right to do that which is really and truly compassionate. Therefore, any such allowance in the future will require to stand on its merits and not as a matter of right. Let us have a re-commencement if necessary. At the same time, if we have an Act like the Public Service Act, giving a great number of privileges, it is very hard if, by regulation, we are going to create other privileges and make them mandatory on the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Government did this themselves.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes, one Government did it, and the other Governments followed it right through. I want to see now how far it is binding.

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

Mr. TEESDALE: I was glad to hear the Treasurer say that he was prepared to keep faith with the cases referred to by the member for North-East Fremantle, but I was surprised to hear the member for Katanning advocating the other way.

Mr. Thomson: I advocated justice to those who were entitled to it.

Mr. TEESDALE: I consider that the promises made should be kept no matter what the expenses might be. I made inquiries during the tea hour, and found that members were ignorant of the position, understanding as they did that these were statutory allowances, and that they must perforce be paid. I trust when the next Estimates are brought along, we shall see at any rate a more uniform list than that which is before us at the present time. Some of the amounts are out of all reason, considering, too, the condition of the State's finances. I hope that next year these sums will be reduced considerably, and that no compassionate allowances be granted in cases where officers were drawing over £300 a year. Like the leader of the Opposition, I agree that an officer in receipt of a good salary should, during his lifetime, make adequate provision for his family.

Mr. HOLMAN: Will the Treasurer make inquiries to ascertain whether an Order in Council was issued?

The Colonial Treasurer: I am going to do that.

Mr. HOLMAN: I have looked up the "Gazette" for 1907, but have failed to find a record of the Order in Council.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There can be no breach of a contract in the case of a man joining the public service under the conditions set out in the Act and regulations, if a letter such as that which has been read and which may have been written by a clerk in a department, is brought into existence.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This is a Governor in Council Order.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Even so, it merely indicates the policy of the Government of the

day. Probably Cabinet said that as a matter of policy the Government would undertake to pay a fortnight's wages for every year of service, but if an Order in Council indicating the policy of the Government is put through, it can be reversed in the following week by putting through another order. The payment of these amounts is merely a matter of policy of the Government of the day.

Mr. Holman: It holds good until it is countermanded.

The Colonial Treasurer: It seems quite strange that every individual officer should have a copy of the letter.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Government Savings Bank, £21,595:

Mr. SMITH: The Treasurer in his Budget speech declared that he would be glad if we could show him where to rake in a little additional revenue. In my opinion the Government Savings Bank could be considerably improved. It is making a handsome profit at present, but I think that profit, splendid as it is, might well be enlarged. The initiation of a publicity campaign in connection with the Savings Bank might well result in the placing at the disposal of the Treasurer of a considerable sum of money. By such a campaign we might induce people to get the habit of saving. It is common knowledge that the people of Perth are enjoying unprecedented spending money, and it is time the Government made an effort to induce those people to save some of that money for a rainy day. I feel quite certain that a campaign of that sort would result in a very substantial sum being placed in the Government Savings Bank. This would have the two-fold effect of giving the Government that extra sum to handle, and of supplying help for the people when hard times come along, so that they should not be running to the Government for financial assistance. I think this hint should be sufficient for the Treasurer. Before the Treasurer can launch out on a scheme of that sort, it will be necessary for him to popularise the Savings Bank. A great many little restrictions which obtain in the bank might be removed, and the system brought up to date. By attending to this, the Treasurer would popularise the bank and induce people to patronise it to a greater extent. One of the principal reasons why the general public have not only refrained from depositing money in the State Savings Bank, but have actually withdrawn money from that institution, is the nationality of the manager of the bank.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is an old story now.

The Colonial Treasurer: No doubt there has been a surprising difference since he left; I do not know whether it is merely a coincidence.

Mr. SMITH: Whether he is still there or not, the fact remains that Mr. Leschen is still on the "Public Service List" as manager of the Savings Bank, and one cannot get the people to believe that there is not some idea of reinstating him after the war. If the Government could give a distinct assurance that the Savings Bank has seen the last of Mr. Leschen, no doubt a lot of the old customers who withdrew their deposits from the State

bank, and put them into the Commonwealth bank, would return to the State bank.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What justification is there at all for the two banks?

Mr. SMITH: I think it is a good thing to have the two.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is a duplication of effort.

Mr. SMITH: It is a very excellent thing. At any rate, there is no reason why the State should give up a profitable business to the Commonwealth without compensation.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There is no reason why it should not be agreed to have the one institution to do the business.

Mr. SMITH: It is an advantage to have the two banks, because the one competes against the other and the public get the benefit of the competition.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member means that it is better to have the two banks than for us to give up our bank.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It ought to be capable of being adjusted at the Premiers' conference. It is a scandal.

Mr. SMITH: I also suggest to the Treasurer that it might add considerably to the usefulness of the Government Savings Bank if that institution inaugurated a system of issuing annuities. Western Australia is one of the few civilised countries where State annuities cannot be purchased. Seeing that we have a very capable actuary in Mr. Bennett, I have no doubt that he could readily devise a scheme for the sale of annuities through the Government Savings Bank which would bring in a considerable sum of money and be of great benefit to the public.

Mr. Davis: Could he compete with the A.M.P.?

Mr. SMITH: He could not only compete with the A.M.P., but he could beat that institution hollow. The public have not the same confidence in private enterprises that they have in State enterprise.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Come over here.

Mr. SMITH: Here again a little competition would be of benefit to the public. I hope the Treasurer will look into these suggestions. I am sure that they would place him in possession of a quarter of a million pounds in the first year.

Mr. GREEN: I believe the Government might well take steps towards popularising the Government Savings Bank. If practicable, it would be a good scheme to allow depositors to write cheques on their accounts. This would encourage business people to put in the State Savings Bank accounts which are in the Commonwealth Bank to-day. The Commonwealth people have not treated us too well, but I certainly regret that we deemed it impossible to join hands with them and have only one savings bank, which would be of benefit to the people. However, I believe that if it could be arranged to allow depositors to write cheques on their private accounts in the Government Savings Bank, as in an associated bank, it would do much to popularise the State institution. Moreover, we could gain something by adopting some of the methods of the Commonwealth Bank. I

have tried to observe the difference in the rapidity with which business is transacted in the Commonwealth Bank as against the slower procedure which obtained some time ago in the State bank. Whether the State bank has been brought up to date and now deals more expeditiously with its business, I know not, but I know that the methods of the Commonwealth Bank to-day as compared with those of the State institution 18 months ago, are infinitely superior.

Mr. DAVIES: I would like to offer a suggestion somewhat on the lines laid down by the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green). Friendly societies and trade unions having current accounts at the Government Savings Bank receive ordinary bank interest on those accounts, and are allowed to write orders which are equivalent to bank cheques; but if those cheques are paid into an associated bank, exchange is charged on them. At Midland Junction, whenever I desired to pass in such an order or cheque to a private bank, they asked for sixpence exchange, or by way of collection fee, whether the cheque was for £1, £5 or £10. I made representations to the manager of the bank in Perth and over the telephone he arranged for those cheques or orders to be accepted without exchange. But I understand that the general practice is for the private bank to collect sixpence collection fee or exchange upon each of those savings bank orders or cheques. If possible, a general order should be issued for the associated banks to accept cheques or orders payable at the Government Savings Bank without collecting that sixpenny fee. I agree with the hon. member that it would be a great convenience to the public if they could operate on their accounts in the Government Savings Bank by cheque. Of course, if this privilege were granted, depositors could scarcely look for the ordinary rate of interest on their current accounts. In a private bank no interest is paid on current account; indeed, an annual keeping fee is charged, whereas the only charge made by the Government Savings Bank is that of 1s., no matter what the amount of the account. Therefore, if depositors desire the advantage of being able to draw on their account by cheque, they should be prepared to forego interest.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have not yet had time to go into the Government Savings Bank. When I previously occupied the position of Colonial Treasurer, on a health trip to the East I put in something like six weeks studying the savings bank system of Victoria and South Australia. I may say that up to that time the books of the Government Savings Bank in his State had not been balanced; consequently I got rid of the manager and appointed another. On my return from the Eastern States, I endeavoured to see to what extent I could simplify the system. There is a good deal of force in the suggestion that we should try to popularise the State bank. Of course, we must not get insecure in popularising it. There are many things which can be done in an associated bank which it would be difficult to do in the Government Savings Bank. However, I agree with the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith)

that we might go into a publicity campaign, I agree also with the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen). . . If we could possibly save the people from the payment of two sets of costs, I would like to see it done, but I do not wish to see it done at the expense of the State. I maintain, from every record that can possibly be put up, that it was as nearly as possible a direct infringement of the constitution and of State rights by the Commonwealth Government when they opened their Savings Banks. I am going to talk this matter over with Mr. Denison Miller when he comes to this State in order to find out if there is any solution of the matter, but I want the solution to be my way if possible. With regard to the question of exchange, I am afraid we have no power to see that associated banks shall not charge exchange when they take orders for the State Savings Banks. Reference has been made to the late manager of the State Savings Bank, Mr. Leschen. I may say at once that he is not going back to the Savings Bank. With regard to annuities, I am not well up in the subject, but would point out that Ministers have not only to make suggestions but we have to go into all the details as well in order to make the suggested scheme as perfect as possible. Unfortunately, however, we cannot get into one day all that we have to do in one day, at this juncture. I intend to go quietly into this matter of the popularisation of the State Savings Bank. I do not like to think that a million pounds of our savings are in the hands of the Commonwealth Bank, and if we can get that money into our own banks, by enabling the people to realise that in putting the money into their own banks they are helping to develop the country, the result will be a good one alike for them as for the State.

Mr. HOLMAN: We might well adopt the procedure of the Commonwealth Bank in regard to the lodging of deposits in our own banks. The Commonwealth Bank has offices in various towns, and when a deposit is lodged the deposit slip is duplicated and sent to headquarters and the bank balances are recorded from them. In our State Savings Banks we have to send our pass books in, which involves not only delay, but a certain amount in postage. If this method were adopted in our State banks it should tend to popularise them to a great extent. I believe that our banks are doing good work. The officers employed are always attentive to their clients and are kept well occupied. I hope that the accountant of the head bank, who has been managing the State Savings Banks for some time past and doing the work very well, will be recompensed. His salary is only £336, but I see no provision for any extra emolument.

Mr. HARRISON: It has been stated that it would tend to popularise the State Savings Banks if the system of cheques was introduced. I would point out that if this system is introduced we shall be up against the chartered banks, at all events in the country districts, for these banks are acting as agents for the State institution, in opposition to the Commonwealth Savings Bank

whose agents are the post offices. I hope this point will be taken into consideration.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Government Stores, £8,815—agreed to.

Vote—Literary and Scientific Grants, £10,470:

Item, Grant to W.A. University to cover salary of Professor of Agriculture (six months) £350.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Has the matter of the amount to be set aside in connection with the Chair of Agriculture at the University been adjusted yet?

The Colonial Treasurer: We paid the money last year, but the University authorities are going to pay it from now on.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Will the Colonial Treasurer inform us as to whether the Government will get a reconp for last year.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No. We are paying £350 this year. No one can find in any of the files any actual commitment showing that the late Sir Winthrop Hackett was to pay for this Chair of Agriculture. I think the University authorities started legal proceedings, but as a compromise I believe they have agreed to pay this amount from now on.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You have paid £1,000.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes. The member for Forrest is quite right.

Mr. Holman: Not one student has been put through yet.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is quite possible.

Hon. P. Collier: The University people are going to pay this from now on?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Is it worth while continuing this Chair of Agriculture, especially as not one student has been passed through? Parliament should be in possession of some accurate information with regard to the number of students who have qualified at our University. I understand that this particular professor has only had three students for the greater part of the year, and sometimes only two. Although the matter is now adjusted it has been adjusted only after the State has paid away £1,000, owing to a promise not having been fulfilled.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The question is, should this Chair of Agriculture be retained, but this is one for the governing body of the University to decide. We come into the matter, however, when Government funds are voted year after year. It seems a waste of money for this professor to be retained in order to teach one or two students. Since he has been in the State only four or five students have been under his tuition, and not one has passed. If the State is going to contribute a proportion of this professor's salary there should be some reciprocity between the Government and the University, by which his services could be utilised for the benefit of the State. We have already got rid of two expert officers of the Agricultural Department, and we might arrive at some understanding which would enable us to call upon the services of this professor for the Agricultural Department when required. Under these conditions we might even

agree to continuing the payment of a portion of his salary I understand that Professor Paterson is a highly trained and qualified man. His investigations and analyses regarding the soils of the Esperance district, at the instance of the Royal Commission, demonstrated that he is better qualified as an authority in these matters than some of the officers on our permanent staff.

The PREMIER: The Government are endeavouring as far as possible to make use of Professor Paterson in the matter of agriculture. He himself is very anxious that the State should utilise his services.

Hon. P. Collier: I have no doubt of that.

The PREMIER: He does a large amount of work outside his ordinary University duties. He delivers lectures in the agricultural districts, and is always ready to take up work of that nature. He has often acted as adviser to the Agricultural Department without any remuneration.

Mr. Brown: He charged £100 for his report on the Esperance lands.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Is it correct that after preparing his report on the Esperance lands Professor Paterson demanded £100 for his services, in addition to his salary as a professor? Did the Government pay that money?

The Colonial Treasurer: The Royal Commission paid it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Who found the money for the Royal Commission?

The Colonial Treasurer: The Government found the money for the Royal Commission.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We have heard a great deal about the patriotism of public officials, but I must say it is a patriotism of a very queer type.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Professor Paterson did the work during his holidays, and tried to get out of doing it. However, insistence was made that he should do the work.

Mr. O'Loghlen: And he collected the £100?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. Smith: He demanded payment before he would hand over his report.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That does not appear on the files.

Item, Grant to Western Australian University for extension work, etcetera, £1,620.

Mr. FOLEY: What is the meaning of "etcetera" in this item? The item shows an increase of £1,120 over last year. If there is one direction in which expenditure can be saved at the present time, it is in extending the university buildings. We are miles ahead of our requirements as regards the University.

Mr. O'Loghlen: "Extension" refers to University extension work; not to extension of the University buildings.

Mr. FOLEY: In the present financial circumstances no extra money whatever should be paid to the University. The services of the professors could be more advantageously utilised, for the period of the war at all events.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: This is one of those things which I have inherited from my predecessors; otherwise it would not appear on the Estimates.

Item, Acclimatisation of fish, birds, and animals, £75.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Has the Treasurer obtained the sanction of the Chairman of Committees in another place for the reduction of this item? What are the operations of the Acclimatisation Society? Have any good results followed on the society's work? How are the herd of red deer getting on in the South-West?

The Minister for Works: They are playing havoc with the farmers' crops.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I consider the Acclimatisation Society should be encouraged; and I regret that, even in the present financial circumstances, this item has been decreased. The stocking of our rivers with fish has been of great benefit to the settlers. As regards the deer, they might be transferred to the heavily timbered country in the South-West, which would afford them a sanctuary.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Acclimatisation Society have done good work in introducing deer into the far-distant Wiluna district, where the animals are thriving and multiplying. The introduction of fish into inland waters, like Lake Violet, would prove advantageous. All permanent inland waters that are fresh ought to be stocked with fish. I do not cavil at the £100 per annum which keeps the work of acclimatisation in progress.

Mr. FOLEY: The work of the Acclimatisation Society should not be depreciated. Only last week an officer of that society was questioning me regarding the inland waters 300 miles east of Wiluna, which district I visited recently. The permanent waters there are inhabited by the turtle, and where turtle live many varieties of fish can live. A gentleman travelling by motor to that district is now taking a supply of spawn there. The Acclimatisation Society have done excellent work in the eradication or reduction of the mosquito pest, by placing fish in every pool in the Chinese gardens and in all stagnant waters throughout the metropolitan area, as well as in the deep drains. The fish eat the larvae of the mosquito, and by this means not only is the pest kept down, but the cost of kerosene or other oil, which had formerly to be used, is saved. Thus the ratepayers have benefited financially, by the reduction of municipal expenditure. Moreover, I am informed that, thanks to the efforts of the Acclimatisation Society, there is scarcely a river in the southern portion of Western Australia that is suitable for fish but has been stocked with them, and that in a few years these rivers will contain an inexhaustible supply of fish.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The report of the Acclimatisation Committee is on the Table of the House. It deals with what they have done. They regret they had a shortage of money; they started with £90, received a grant of £100, and closed the year with £121 4s. 7d.

Mr. SMITH: As a member of the Acclimatisation Committee, I was pleased to hear the remarks of hon. members. It is the desire of the committee to continue the good work they have been engaged upon, but the £75 a year granted by the Government is of very little assistance. The reason why we did not spend more money last year was because we

could not spend it effectively. We are trying to accumulate our funds so as to do something later on worthy of the society. We have stocked many lakes and rivers with excellent results. We have also, as the member for Leonora stated, liberated fish wherever it was possible for those fish to destroy the larvae of the mosquitoes. We would like to extend our operations in that direction. I hope next year the Treasurer will make up the shortage of the past. The reduction of the Zoological Gardens grant by £125 will handicap the committee.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: On a point of order, the Zoological Gardens item has been passed, and cannot now be discussed.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member discusses that item he will be ruled out of order, but he may discuss the subsequent item referring to Zoological Gardens special grant.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is no number against that item, and it is only a last year's vote.

Mr. Teesdale: I was ordered to sit down when I tried to discuss a similar vote, against which there was no number in the margin.

Mr. SMITH: I have no intention of discussing the item which has been passed. I was only going to protest against the special grant being cut out this year. The Zoological Gardens committee intend to make better use of the natural supply of mineral water which flows from the bore, so that returned soldiers and many others may avail themselves of it. Many people who come from Ceylon and India and who go to New Zealand to take mineral baths, might be induced to stay here if better accommodation were provided. At the present time this is quite inadequate, but the Zoological Gardens committee propose now to erect a suitable building, and the cutting out of the special vote will considerably handicap our efforts. This matter might well be reconsidered, seeing the revenue which the ferries derive because of the existence of the Zoo at South Perth. I understand that the ferries are paying handsomely.

The Colonial Treasurer: Are they?

Mr. SMITH: Most of the credit for that happy result should be given to the Zoo. I hope next year the Treasurer will reinstate that special grant.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not think the Treasurer will, and that is the end of it. It was a special grant last year, and I am going to object to special grants being repeated every year. If it is a special grant it can only be for one year, not for every year.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Lithographic, £5,592—agreed to.

[Mr. Stubbs resumed the Chair.]

Vote—Printing, £40,758:

Mr. GREEN: In the Printing Office there is considerable slackness of work, and I would suggest that more Commonwealth work might be done in the State. I know that a good deal of it comes from Melbourne, particularly Defence Department printing. We know, of course, that when the printing is done in large

quantities it can be turned out at a lower cost.

Mr. Smith: What about school books?

Mr. GREEN: Whenever our prices compared favourably with those of the Eastern States the work might well be done here.

The Colonial Treasurer: I will look into that.

Mr. SMITH: The Treasurer accused me of being faddy in connection with the printing of the "Government Gazette," and then he showed his inconsistency by stating that it was in the small things that savings could be effected. In my opinion the "Government Gazette" can be turned out at considerably less cost. There is always an enormous margin.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is wanted like that in a court of law, and moreover you should not have paper of a poor quality.

Mr. SMITH: I am not only complaining about the "Gazette," but it is the same thing in connection with other publications. Take our own Notice Paper, for instance. There is always a considerable waste of space, and members must know that paper is four or five times as expensive as it was a year or two ago. I think the Government Printer should be given to understand that he should turn out these publications more economically. I have here also a Bankruptcy Act form printed in 1916, on which there is a great amount of waste space. Recently a special issue of the "Gazette" was published merely to record the fact that a bank holiday had been proclaimed at Collie. That seems to me to be a great waste of money. I think a considerable saving could be introduced in the Government Printing Office. The printing committee of this House has been able to effect a saving of something like £800 in their annual bill, and that being so, I am certain that similar savings could be effected throughout the departments.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have discussed that with the Government Printer. Indeed, I am afraid I have been making his life a misery lately, holding bi-weekly conferences with him. We are to a great extent giving the Government Printer authority to say what shall and what shall not be printed, but it takes a long time to break down custom. One Minister cannot go around to all the heads of departments and say, "You must do this this way." All these reforms take time. There is certainly an apparent waste of paper in the margins of these forms, but the difficulty is to work in three forms in the place of two. We cannot cut the paper; the paper is already cut into certain sizes. The Government Printer has a lot of paper on hand. That is the reason why "Hansard" is still printed on good quality paper. The Federal "Hansard" is printed on wood pulp paper, while ours is printed on paper of a much higher class, because we have it in hand, and we could not buy the cheaper article as cheaply as we once bought the better class line. In respect of the "Government Gazette," we are arranging to do away with the duplication of notices, and we are

doing away with what occupies an inch of advertising space in ordinary newspaper. I refer to the name of the official, which can be dispensed with. We are going to make a big saving in these several reductions. When we can bring the printing bill down by £7,484 while paying £532 in increased wages under the Arbitration Court's award, it shows that we are doing something. But we do these things against a great deal of opposition.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Taxation, £17,864:

Mr. HOLMAN: The Treasurer has not yet given me any idea as to the attitude of the Government on the question I brought forward earlier this evening. That question is of the utmost importance on the mining fields to-day, and we should be given some idea of the policy of the Government.

The Colonial Treasurer: I promise the hon. member that when I am introducing the Taxation Assessment Bill, I will show him the exact provision made to meet the position.

Mr. SMITH: I think this department spends too much money in collecting the revenue under the various Acts which it administers. In regard to land taxation, I see no reason why we cannot adopt the system of municipalities and roads boards. At present every landholder has to send in a return to the department. He is supposed to do that at the end of the year, but generally he occupies two or three months in the process. After he has filled up an elaborate form and sent it in, the department requires from three to six months to issue the assessment. That brings us to the middle of the year, or later. Then generally the taxpayer is unable to pay up for about three months, and so anything from nine to 12 months will have elapsed before the department collects its money. Under the simple method of the roads boards and municipalities, the department would send out its assessment to every landholder at the beginning of the year. Indeed, the department could get the local governing bodies to insert on their forms an extra column for the department, and issue a notice on behalf of the department, and even collect the tax and hand it over to the department, charging a small percentage for collection. That would be a businesslike way of dealing with the matter and would save the irritation inseparable from the filling in of the department's elaborate returns, while it would cost much less in labour, in printing, and in postage. If the Treasurer cannot see his way to adopt that suggestion, I will remind him of the method of the Federal authorities, which is to dispense with the elaborate form when there has been no alteration in the holding of the land, and simply ask the taxpayer to fill in a small form stating that there has been no alteration in his holding. He is then taxed the same as in the previous year.

Hon. P. Collier: That ought to apply to the income tax as well.

Mr. SMITH: If the shorter system suits the Federal department, it ought to suit the State department also. The great bulk of the taxpayers make no alteration in their holdings from year to year. In regard to the

collection of income tax, I think the system could be considerably improved with benefit not only to the taxpayer, but to the Government. I suggest a simple system of collection by means of a stamp tax. I understand the Treasurer has a scheme of the sort in view and will place it before members later on. It has come to my knowledge that many of the foreigners, Greeks, Chinese, and the like, do not pay the income tax they ought to pay. In many instances these Greek and Chinese shopkeepers will not supply proper answers in their returns. They keep no books, and it is impossible to find out what they ought to pay. All protest from the departmental officers they meet with "no savvy."

The Colonial Treasurer: We are making provision in the new Bill to meet that.

Mr. SMITH: I am pleased to hear it, because I understand it is quite the exception for those people to pay proper taxation. Seeing the wholesome respect the average foreigner has for a uniform, I suggest that the Taxation Department copy the Customs Department and supply its officers with uniforms.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I agree with the remarks of the hon. member in regard to the simplifying of taxation returns where possible. All the Taxation Commissioners met in conference at Melbourne and came to a decision with regard to the preparation of returns, so that the same returns would apply to Commonwealth and State alike. Incredible as it may seem, the Commonwealth Government had a Taxation Bill printed and were going to introduce it that very night, a Bill in which they absolutely ignored the suggestions of the whole of the State Treasurers, with which they agreed. Now the suggestions is that those forms shall be identical as far as possible, so that a man can send in State and Commonwealth returns on the same form. However, that does not satisfy me. This matter of taxation returns is the most difficult task I have had to tackle. This is the sort of return I think we ought to be able to give the public, even the business community: Let us say in the margin "This is what you can deduct." And the taxpayer can then make a declaration lower down and say "After deducting the allowances made in the margin and no other, my income last year amounted to £350." Then he could be taxed on that. What the taxation officers are so frightened of are the 16 or 17 per cent. of the people who are going to beat them anyhow. I am concerned with the 80 per cent. who are going to send in legitimate returns. Take my own case. I represent seven or eight companies. Their balance sheets are audited by public auditors, yet I have almost to keep a clerk to fake these balance sheets and try to make them agree with the taxation returns. We ought to be able to have this matter simplified. As the member for North Perth has pointed out, if a person's income or land has not altered, why not utilise the previous year's return. There are many people who would sooner pay the tax than make out a return. The suggestions made by the mem-

ber for North Perth have been talked over frequently.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I quite agree with what has been said by the member for North Perth. It seems that the officers who devise these taxation returns are actuated by sheer enstedness in order to aggravate and tantalise taxpayers. There are so many squares and forms and dates and footnotes right from A to Z which would puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer to fill in. I have been paying 6s. 8d. (unfortunately for me) for years past, for land tax and last year I neglected to send in a return and I was fined more than the 6s. 8d. for my neglect. I do not know what we can do with the Taxation Department or the officers. Their excuse is that taxpayers will escape paying if they can. There seems to have grown up an atmosphere in the Taxation Department that every taxpayer is a rogue and will evade paying taxation if he can. Therefore, we have to pay £17,000 for the upkeep of this department every year. Referring to the question of the amalgamation of the Taxation Departments, it is an absolute reflection on our intelligence that we should maintain separate Taxation Departments in all the States and in the Commonwealth in addition to the local governing bodies, when we pride ourselves on our capacity for government. The question of the amalgamation of the Taxation Departments has been set down for consideration at every Premier's conference since they have been held. Yet, with the combined intelligence of the Premiers and Treasurers and Commissioners of Taxation, State and Federal, they cannot devise a scheme by which we can save expenditure. I am convinced that no Government can get much assistance from the officials especially if we are going to wipe out some departments and abolish good billets. I should not blame the taxpayers if they rose up one day and wiped us all out of existence if we do not devise some scheme. The people of Australia are going to carry some heavy burdens which are occasioned by the war, in addition to the burdens already imposed by the Federal and State Governments. Then there is the local taxation, the road boards, the municipalities, and the health taxes. I am not a wealthy man, in fact I am a poor man, but these returns worry me. First one gets the roads board rates notice. Then the health rates notice, then the water rates, State income tax returns, land tax returns, Commonwealth land and income tax returns; until they have eaten up the few pounds which one draws in salary. We ought to protest on every possible occasion, and what applies to the Taxation Department applies to other departments as well; electoral and so forth. There are different staffs doing similar work; there is extra work put on the taxpayers. No sooner have we done with one taxation return than another comes along.

Member: I do not know what I have to pay until the summons comes.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have just paid a fine this year. I protested and appealed to the Commissioner, I did not like to go so far as

to approach the Treasurer. The reason that we have not accomplished something in the way of amalgamation is the lack of sympathy on the part of the Commonwealth people. If we were to look up the first notice paper of the first Premiers' Conference, it would be found that three-fourths of the questions set forth were the same that year (12 years ago) as they were last year, showing that no finality has been come to.

The Premier: On this occasion we were unanimous on every point.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I attended one Premiers' Conference and the only thing we were unanimous about was that we would hold another conference the next year. If we keep on meeting year after year and fail to bring about some genuine reform in matters of this kind we ought to abandon the matter or we shall hold ourselves up to the ridicule of the people.

Mr. PICKERING: I agree with the member for North Perth in regard to the amalgamation of the State and Federal land tax returns. These land tax returns ought not to be made out every year if they are the same. I also endorse the remarks of the leader of the Opposition in regard to the amalgamation of State and Federal Electoral offices.

Mr. MONEY: Without repeating what has been said, I agree with the amalgamation of the Taxation Departments.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Workers' Homes Board, £3,241:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Members will have been pleased to hear the statement by the Treasurer as to the Workers' Homes Board and the successful operations of that body. We were told when it was established that it was a wild-cat scheme of the Labour Government and I am pleased that it has turned out successfully. The Workers' Homes have been in operation for some years and the testimony given by the Treasurer ought to satisfy those pessimistic members who a few years ago condemned the scheme roundly; it has turned out a success. There has been no loss to the Treasury and this year there has been an income of over £1,000.

Mr. THOMSON: I am pleased to support the remarks of the member for North-East Fremantle as far as the financial operations of the Workers' Homes is concerned. Those who have taken up homes under leasehold conditions should in my opinion be given an opportunity of converting them into freehold if they so desire. By an amendment of the Land Act we have given the people who own leasehold land the right by application to convert into freehold and we should also give leaseholders under the Workers' Homes scheme an opportunity if they so desire to convert into freehold. It is only common justice. This was promised by Mr. Wilson when Premier, but that of course did not bind the present Government. Still we should be consistent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: People could have had freehold in the first place if they so desired.

Mr. THOMSON: Perhaps people were not in a position at the time, but they were desirous of having a home. Now they have established themselves, perhaps they would like

to convert their leaseholds into freehold, in deed and truth.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot see anything under this vote which has to do with the freehold or leasehold principle.

Mr. THOMSON: We are dealing with workers' homes, and this is the only place where we can discuss this question.

Mr. SMITH: I support the remarks made with regard to the leasehold principle. The Premier promised to introduce a Bill to give leaseholders an opportunity of converting their holdings into freehold, and I am surprised the Bill has not been brought down. I am glad the operations of the board have been so successful. It seems to me that the secretary receives a very paltry salary compared with the salary of other departmental secretaries. He only receives £264 a year. If this is such an important department, as we are given to understand it is, we are doing this officer an injustice in paying him only this amount of salary.

Mr. MUNSIE: I, too, am pleased at the results achieved by the Workers' Homes Board, especially in view of the criticism which was levelled at the scheme by members opposite at the time of its introduction. The success of the scheme is attributable largely to the fact that a number of these homes are on the leasehold system. I hope that leaseholders will continue to be leaseholders, and will not convert their properties into freehold. I am sure that if one of the leaseholders in the block of workers' homes at Leederville ever converted his property into freehold, the other persons on that block would very soon follow suit, and I am equally sure, from what took place in Victoria some time ago, that it would then not be long before every one of these holders of workers' homes had lost his property.

Mr. Davies: Have not the freeholders already an opportunity of getting into the hands of money lenders?

Mr. MUNSIE: In North Perth there were six or seven workers' homes built on the freehold system, but not one of the individuals for whom they were built is now living in them.

Mr. Davies: Why?

Mr. MUNSIE: In some instances the properties were too heavily mortgaged, and in other cases the people left the State.

Mr. Thomson: Did these people take their homes out of the hands of the board and mortgage them?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes.

Mr. Thomson: And so paid more interest?

Mr. MUNSIE: They had borrowed money because money lenders were willing to let them have it. Although the scheme at present is almost at a standstill I cannot help thinking that the secretary of the board, who is an agreeable and energetic officer, and at all times willing to give every possible assistance to the public, is entitled to a larger salary than he is now receiving. I hope the Government will take this question of salary into consideration.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Miscellaneous services, £47,814:

Item, Erroneous payment by Treasury to some person impersonating F. G. Potter, £32.

Mr. MUNSIE: Will the Colonial Treasurer kindly explain the meaning of this item?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I will endeavour to supply the information later.

Item, Entertaining distinguished visitors, £225.

Mr. THOMSON: I desire to have a general discussion on members' salaries. We have cheerfully passed all items connected with Parliament; but the Treasurer, I understand, is desirous of obtaining an expression of the Committee's opinion.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss that matter on the question now before the Chair.

Item, Parks, recreation grounds, etc.—grants for maintenance and improvements—King's Park Board, £1,900; other grounds, £400; £2,300.

Mr. SMITH: On every occasion within my knowledge, when this item has come before the Committee, members representing districts containing other gardens, have asked why the King's Park is favoured and their particular parks are ignored. I suggest that the King's Park should be handed over to the municipal authorities. The expenditure could easily be borne by the Perth municipality.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): But the King's Park belongs to Western Australia.

Mr. SMITH: Many of the Honorary Minister's constituents have never seen King's Park, and probably never will see it. The people who derive the most benefit from King's Park live in the Perth municipality, and therefore the Perth municipality might well bear the expenditure. As for a precedent, only recently Monger's Lake reserve was handed over to a municipal authority. When Subiaco becomes, as no doubt it eventually will become, portion of Perth, the whole of King's Park will be within the Perth municipal boundaries. Here is an opportunity of avoiding that duplication of work and of expenditure of which the leader of the Opposition said we ought to be ashamed—duplication of secretaries, head gardeners, and so forth.

Hon. W. C. ANGWYN: I am heartily in accord with the last speaker. The park should be handed over to the Perth municipality for the purpose of avoiding duplication of expenditure. The Perth municipality would hold the park, not to do as they pleased with, but in trust.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Has the £400 remaining after the £1,900 for the King's Park, yet been allotted?

The Colonial Treasurer: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The grants for parks in other portions of the State have been considerably reduced, year by year. Of the £3,250 expended last year, £2,000 went to King's Park, £200 to Monger's Lake, £50 to Mundaring Weir, and £100 to Point Walter. Those were the only grants made throughout the State, under this heading. On the golf-fields the upkeep of parks is very costly. The