

ing law on this point should be altered. The present system is that of a flat rate, and it has worked for many years. The alteration would bring about sticky-beaks rather than practical results. The Bill proposes to increase the rating power of the local authorities. I am not sure whether the local governing bodies in conference assembled have asked for an increase.

Member: They have not.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If they have asked for it, I will hold my peace. However, I am not sure that they have made the request. The present law provides a minimum rate of 1d. and a maximum rate of 3d. in the pound on the unimproved value, but with the consent of the Minister the maximum rate may be as much as 6d. in the pound. The Bill proposes to raise the first maximum to 4d., and then, subject to the Minister's consent, it may go to 6d. in rural districts and to 9d. in agricultural districts. If the increase is warranted, it should be granted. We ought not to be hidebound as regards rating powers. Rather should we be liberal in the rating instrument we hand to local authorities. A reference to the minutes of the Road Board Conference should demonstrate whether those bodies have asked for this innovation. I have carefully read the whole of the Bill, and have compared it clause by clause with the sections of the parent Act. Subject to the few exceptions I have mentioned, I consider that this House can safely pass the Bill, and that the measure will be a material improvement on the existing law. That is what the Legislature should be desirous of achieving when it sets out to amend the instrument handed to the local authorities. I hope that the Bill will pass except as regards the two or three innovations to which I have drawn attention. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

On motion by Hon. W. T. Glasheen, debate adjourned.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [9.45] in moving the second reading said: The Act passed last year provided that when a building line was declared by the City Council, if any

building projecting outside of that line was removed for reconstruction the Council then had power to resume the piece of land between the old alignment and the new for the purpose of widening the street. But it appears there is a doubt whether this would apply to any vacant land on which no building had previously been erected, although the intention is obviously clear. The Bill is for the purpose of removing that doubt, so that vacant lands will come under the provisions for the new alignment when a building is erected thereon, in the same manner as applies to land on which a building was previously erected and taken down for the purpose of erecting a new building. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

House adjourned at 9.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 4th November, 1926.

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

QUESTION—VERMIN RATE, REVENUE.

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Agriculture: What is the estimated amount of revenue from the vermin rate fixed under the regulations published in the "Govern-

ment Gazette" on the 5th February, 1926, and laid on the Table of the House on the 3rd August, 1926?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: replied: It is estimated that approximately £30,000 will be obtained from this rate.

BILL—WIRE AND WIRE NETTING.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [4.35]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [4.36]: Has the Minister consulted the Crown Law Department as to whether the amendments made in two clauses are sufficient to enable freeholders to come under the operation of the measure? The hon. gentleman during the Committee stage promised to do so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I promised to consult the Crown Law Department on that aspect, and if necessary to have amendments made in another place. I may add that I have already had amendments drafted relative to freehold land.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

HON. J. GUNNINGHAM (Honorary Minister—Kalgoorlie) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is rendered necessary by some badly drafted legislation which was introduced a year or two ago by a private member and was sanctioned by both Houses of Parliament. The State Children Act of 1907 applies to illegitimate children if they become State children received into an institution, but not otherwise. Proceedings by the mother of an illegitimate child not being a State child were, however, taken under the Bastardy Act 1875. Thus there were two Acts dealing with the subject, one which concerned itself about State children, and one which had been in existence many years and which concerned itself about those who were not State children. The amendment Act of 1919

provides that the Children's Court shall hear and determine all complaints and applications made under the Bastardy Act. In 1921 a private Bill was introduced in the Legislative Council amending the State Children Act. By that Bill the Bastardy Act was repealed, and Part V. of the principal Act relating to maintenance of children by relatives was amended by the deletion of the word "State" before the word "children," so that the part of the Act relating to maintenance applied to all children, whether State children or not, and whether legitimate or illegitimate. The Bill for the Act of 1921, as I previously stated, repealed the Bastardy Act; and it was advisable to have some words inserted in Section 64 of the Act of 1907-19. The section stands as No. 74 of the reprint of the Act of 1907-21, and especially confers on the court jurisdiction to adjudge the defendant to be the father of the illegitimate child. The omission of these words has led to quite a deal of trouble. Certain decisions by the Children's Court in cases in which the State Children Department were not concerned, were appealed against on points which questioned the power of the Children's Court to adjudicate. Mr. Justice Burnside, who heard one of these appeals, referred to the Full Court the following questions:—1, Whether the Children's Court had jurisdiction to adjudge a man to be the reputed father of an illegitimate child? 2, Whether the State Children Act, 1907-21, conferred jurisdiction on the Children's Court to hear a complaint by the mother? 3, Whether there was any provision for making an order for payment to the mother? 4, If there was jurisdiction, was not evidence of ability to maintain, in the case of an illegitimate child, a condition precedent to making any order? The following condensed report of the proceedings appeared in the "West Australian" on the 3rd September last:—

Although the appeals were dismissed, the Chief Justice remarked that it was very difficult indeed to construe the State Children Act, 1907-21, so as to give all its sections a consistent meaning; but he had been able to come to the conclusion that the Legislature had shown an intention that the provisions of the Bastardy Act, 1875, should be re-enacted in the State Children Act. The Legislature obviously intended to put something in the place of the repealed Bastardy Act, and the court had to say whether there were words to be found in the State Children Act which were sufficient to carry out that intention. In the Act as it now stood two things were thrown together without any attempt having been made to keep them

separate. It dealt with applications in which State children were concerned, and it also dealt with applications by women asking that a person be adjudged the father of an illegitimate child in cases in which the State was in no way interested, and where the department had no right to interfere. In view of the difficulty the court had experienced in dealing with the cases brought before it, and the certainty that other points would arise in the future, he thought that it would be well for the Legislature to consider whether the Act could not be made more intelligible than it was at present.

The cases referred to were taken by the reputed fathers of the illegitimate children against orders for maintenance of their offspring made against them by the Children's Court. There is obvious necessity for legislation to remove all doubt in regard to the questions referred to the Full Court. The "West Australian," in commenting on the appeal cases, dealt with the matter very clearly. An article published by that newspaper made the following comments:—

Some importance attaches to the recent decisions of the Full Court in dismissing certain appeals against judgments by the Children's Court in respect of cases having to do with the maintenance of illegitimate children. The ground of appeal was that the bench which tried these cases had no jurisdiction, and, if the letter of the law had been observed, that contention must have held. It appears that when the Bastardy Act was repealed, and when the venue for determining whether the putative father of an illegitimate child was responsible for maintenance was changed to the Children's Court under the State Children Act, a vital clause conferring the necessary jurisdiction on the new tribunal was, owing to faulty draftsmanship, omitted. As, however, the intention of the Legislature, when it passed the State Children Act, was plain, the Full Court, by a majority verdict, dismissed the appeal. Had the verdict gone otherwise, an interesting question would have arisen as to the liability of the Crown to refund moneys, amounting by this time to a very considerable sum, which have been paid to the State Children Department by way of maintenance under orders of the Court. The comments of the judges certainly point to the urgency of an early amendment of the law, so that the intention of Parliament may be statutorily expressed. There is need, also, for amendment of the State Children Act in other directions, and notably in the direction of substituting for the present composite Children's Courts in the metropolitan area a special stipendiary magistrate. It is not to derogate in any way from the credit of the honorary magistrates, whose services are now given to the Court, to say that the multiple rotary bench is not, and cannot, in the nature of things, be satisfactory. It is inherently fatal to judgments being marked by that consistency which should, in fairness to the parties, characterise them.

The cases referred to, as I pointed out, were taken by the reputed fathers of

illegitimate children. By the Bill words are inserted in Section 74 of the Act, 1907-21, expressly conferring on the court the jurisdiction of adjudging the defendant to be the father of the illegitimate child. Under the provisions of the principal Act, 1907, the court consisted of a special magistrate, but in his absence the jurisdiction might be exercised by two justices. By the amending Act of 1919 provision was made for the appointment of members, male or female, of the Children's Court.

Mr. Mann: Is not that the weakness of the Children's Court, that you have to rely on honorary justices?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I will deal with that later.

The Minister for Lands: Do not pass any reflection on justices.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, we have had enough of that this session, especially from your side.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Provision is made for special magistrates to be appointed to the Children's Court.

Mr. Mann: In that court, sometimes, highly technical points have to be dealt with by laymen.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: It was enacted that the court should not be compelled to exercise jurisdiction unless a special magistrate was present or at least two members; that if the court was divided in opinion the opinion of the special magistrate should prevail, but in the absence of a special magistrate the opinion of the senior member should prevail, and that in all cases under the Bastardy Act the special magistrate should be one of the members of the court. By the private amending Bill of 1921 the proviso, that in cases under the Bastardy Act the special magistrate should be one of the members of the court, was repealed. The result of this repeal was that in the case of an illegitimate child the proceedings might be heard and determined by any two members of the court, and in the case of a disagreement the defendant might be adjudged to be the father of the child on the opinion of the senior member present subject, of course, to the right of appeal. The senior member—by reason of the fact that he was no longer appointed—would thus have twice the power of the other members, who might be much more intelligent than he or she and have a wider knowledge of the matters that come up for

decision in the Children's Court. In the Bill it is provided that in any case where the court is equally divided in opinion, the opinion of the special magistrate shall prevail; but if a special magistrate is not present the case must be re-heard and determined in the presence of a special magistrate. These cases are looked upon as being very important. A man's whole career might be clouded by a foolish decision. There are upwards of 64 children's courts, and it is impracticable to provide that a special magistrate shall be present in all proceedings of this nature. The case will be determined by the majority of the members of the court present—as in the case of offenders dealt with under the Justices Act, including indictable offences dealt with summarily—but if the court is divided in opinion the special magistrate must be present, and if necessary the case will be adjourned so as to provide for the presence of a special magistrate. The Act is defective in another aspect. Some further amendment becomes necessary in view of the court having jurisdiction to adjudicate on the complaint of the mother of a child that is not a State child, enabling the court to order payment to the mother instead of the department, and to enable the clerk of the court to enter caveats, issue warrants and attend to other proceedings, so as to enforce payment where the department is not concerned. These amendments, so far as is necessary, are made retrospective. To this there can be no objection, as the cases have been adjudicated upon on their merits with the right of appeal, and existing orders should not be invalidated on technicality. One provision of the Bill is a matter quite distinct from the remainder of the measure. Section 20 of the State Children Act gives the Children's Court jurisdiction in hearing and determining cases of proceedings against parents of children under the Education Act for not sending their children to school. This was a desirable provision in order that such cases might not be taken into the precincts of police courts. The further amendment now introduced has the effect of giving the State Children's Court jurisdiction in respect of proceedings against parents of blind, deaf or mute children, for not providing an efficient and suitable education. It is equally undesirable that the cases of such children should be heard in police courts, and it is apparently an omis-

sion that provision to enable the Children's Court to hear such cases was not previously enacted.

Mr. Mann: Why did you not include mental deficient's?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I do not know that it would be advisable to provide under the Education Act to enforce parents to send mentally deficient children to school. The State provides other institutions for the reception, detention, and care of those children.

Mr. Mann: The trouble is they do not send them to those other institutions.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: It would be useless on the part of the Education Department to compel mental deficient's to attend school at all. Provision should be made for those children in some other direction. I do not intend to say any more on the second reading. It will be recognised that this important amendment to the State Children Act is very necessary. Like most amending Bills, the amendments here provided can be more fully dealt with in Committee. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Sampson, debate adjourned.

BILL—JETTIES.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1926-27.

In Committee of Supply.

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

Department of Agriculture (Hon. M. F. Troy, Minister).

Vote—Agriculture, £77,090:

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [4.56]: The speech of the Minister for Agriculture last night was in striking contrast to that he made as Minister for Mines on the previous day. I am glad to notice that the Government side of the House are beginning to recognise that agriculture is a nation's business. This year the total estimate for agriculture is £84,570, whilst that for mining is £78,059. On many occasions have I contended that in Western Australia agricul-

ture is the nation's business. Out of 29¼ million pounds worth of wealth produced in 1924, nearly 19 millions was from agriculture, pastoral and dairying, the balance being from forestry, mining and manufactures. Our friends on the Government side are well advised to be setting their house in order in respect of agriculture. I notice they are embarking on extensive tours of the country, educating the farmers up to the belief that they are the farmer's friend, the true-to-type merino amongst all the friends of the farmers. A great deal of propaganda going on just now consists of half-truths of activities that any Government would have to undertake. I shall not labour that point now, but on a later occasion I may deal more fully with it. I had the pleasure recently of accompanying the Minister on two occasions, one being the Merredin field day. We had there a very striking illustration that the efforts of the department are being appreciated by the farmers, and that those farmers are receiving valuable instructions from the State farm. Great credit must be given to the manager of that farm, Mr. Langfield, and his assistants for the fine work they are doing. The second occasion I refer to was the visit to the Muresk College of Agriculture. I have paid two visits to the college and was particularly struck with the principal's appeal to the boys to make the college one of high tone, build up good traditions and assist the department in their worthy aim to make the institution the finest of its kind in Australia. For the planning of the college great credit must be given to the Chief Architect.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member may discuss that on the next division of the Estimates.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I merely wish to say that I think the college has been designed on right lines and that the gift of £20,000 by the business people of Perth was a fine one that should lead to much valuable research work. Looking back we must appreciate the work of men like Liebig, who made possible the use of superphosphate which has been the means of adding to the wealth of Victoria alone something like half a million of money annually. Other valuable research work includes that of Wm. Farrar, who came from Cambridge, and settled in the Canberra district and evolved certain varieties of wheat, more particularly fed-

eration, which is said to have increased the wheat yield of Australia by 7½ million bushels annually. As the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) remarked at the opening of the College of Agriculture, we have directed our efforts too much to acreage without paying sufficient attention to the yield per acre. When looking through the statistics the other day I noticed that in this State wool ranks second in the list of products. The man who is in control of that department, Mr. Hugh McCallum, sheep and wool inspector, is receiving a salary of only £432, whereas the man in charge of the fruit industry receives £636, the botanist £576, entomologist £480, dairy and pig expert £600, and the Chief Inspector of Rabbits £630. Those gentlemen may be well worth the money paid them, but I am quite satisfied from extensive knowledge of the wool inspector that he deserves greater recognition. I have met him in all sorts of places and at all times of the day and night, riding on goods trains and on his motor bicycle. He had an accident when riding his motor bicycle that has maimed him for life. I shall have more to say about the salary paid him when we discuss the items.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: He is one of the best officials in the department and is doing most valuable work.

Mr. Lindsay: He is certainly very enthusiastic in his work.

Hon. G. Taylor: And he is a very capable man.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The outlook for agriculture is bright and everything in the garden appears to be very nice. While prices continue to be good, no doubt everything will be well, but no effort should be spared to increase the yield and adopt better methods so that when lower prices return, farmers will be able to face the situation with equanimity. Everybody speaks of the farmers doing well and receiving this, that and the other price for their wheat and wool; they are supposed to be in clover. The Minister for Works often refers to the great number of motor cars seen in the country, particularly at country shows. The motor has become almost a necessity for a man situated at a distance from a railway, but many of the farmers who have motor cars would have been better off had they waited until their financial position was stronger before buying them. Motor cars often mean an overdraft.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is better to have a motor car and an overdraft than an overdraft and no motor car.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It has been stressed that one of the great disabilities of the mining industry is the high Customs duty of 40 per cent. and more on mining machinery. I do not know whether members realise that if there is a Customs duty of 40 per cent. on mining machinery, there may be a natural protection of anything from 15 to 40 per cent. in addition. Mining machinery is said to be subject to the highest rate of duty and certainly it must be very near to the highest. On the tariff list, however, there are five agricultural implements on which 38½ per cent. Customs duty is charged. On those implements the natural protection consisting of the freight from America to Melbourne and Fremantle, cost of packing and insurance, ranges from 15.29 to 31.39 per cent., making a total protection of 55.14 to 66.35 per cent.

Mr. Marshall: What about the cost of collecting the tax?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: On one implement, Customs duty to the extent of 47.9 per cent. is charged and the natural protection is 10 per cent., making the total protection 59.41 per cent. On another implement the Customs duty is 49½ per cent., the natural protection 27.6 per cent., a total protection of 79.71 per cent.

Mr. Marshall: What is the cost of collection there?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have heard members quote the remarks of the Minister for Customs (Mr. Pratten) as to the small amount of duty charged on farm implements and how little it represents per acre, together with other elaborate calculations. In Toronto a 13-disc drill costs £33 5s., while in Australia the same implement costs nearly £69. The granting of shorter hours in the city must result in an increase of primary production costs, which cannot be passed on, and so we are moving to the stage when our statesmen will have to face the position, particularly if the farmers have to accept lower prices for their produce. I spoke somewhat fully on agriculture during the general discussion of the Estimates and I do not intend to speak at length this afternoon. One thing I should like the Government to do is to arrange a visit to portion of the Eastern districts, say, Bodalin, Walgoolan, Westonia and Carrabin and see the problems with which the settlers there are confronted.

At the same time they should inspect the mines which are under water and which might possibly be got working again, thus providing a good local market for the produce raised in the district. There is an opportunity to recover something like a quarter of a million pounds worth of money represented by gold in a reef that has to be not explored but simply unwatered. All that is required to make that wealth available is capital and enterprise. I hope that this season we shall realise the estimate of a 30,000,000 bushel harvest, which will be a great thing for the State, and that we shall be able by the help of research and the adoption of scientific methods, to increase the yield per acre. Even to-day we are a long way behind the other States in that respect, though we have to remember that so much of our land is new, while that in the other States has been brought into better working.

MR. C. P. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [5.13]: With other agricultural representatives I rejoice with the Minister at the very satisfactory position disclosed by his speech. I shall not traverse the whole of the Estimates, but there is one particular item in which I am interested, the Muresk College of Agriculture, for which the vote for plant and equipment is £5,803.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member may deal with that when we reach the particular division.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I wish to deal generally with the question. Members will have noticed that during the past three years I have persistently asked questions dealing with lime supplies for agricultural purposes. I am far from satisfied with the replies I have received from the Minister. While I recognise that the replies were put up by the Director of Agriculture, Mr. Sutton, I fear that the question of lime supplies for soil fertility is not receiving the attention that it should from the Director of Agriculture. I will read a few remarks that are contained in a little blue book No. 486 on hints on soils and fertilisers by R. A. Power. I wish specially to deal with the chapter on soil acidity, as this is the basis of my arguments in connection with the use of lime. The writer says—

It seems to be a common experience of many farmers that their land fails to grow certain crops as well as in previous years. Of course, there may be various reasons for this state of affairs, but one of the most frequent and im-

portant, in the humid climates at least, is the absence of lime in the soil. Crops like alfalfa and clover, for instance, are often failures in humid climates for no other reason than a lack of lime. These particular crops do not succeed because the bacteria (which we have mentioned before as working in the roots of these plants and converting the nitrogen of the soil air into nitrogen that the plant can utilise) cannot work in a soil that is not up to the standard in lime. We term such a soil deficient in lime, an acid or a sour soil. There is only one practical way by which this sour, or acid, soil can be sweetened and that is by applying lime in some form. But this liming aids in other ways, incidentally, besides neutralising the acidity of the soil. It adds plant food in the form of lime, which is used quite heavily by certain plants. Strange to say, other plant foods existing in the soil are made more available by the addition of lime. Lime also improves the structure of the soil, thus causing the soil to be more easily worked. It is not an uncommon experience for a farmer to try to get a start in raising alfalfa, which is without doubt one of the best forage crops that we have. He may choose his best piece of ground, and may take ever so many other precautions, but if the land is acid he will have poor success, because, as stated before, the bacteria in the soil, so essential to this crop, cannot exist in an acid soil. The only way in which he can succeed in raising this crop, providing he has a well-drained piece of land, and has the bacteria introduced into the soil, if not already present, is to apply lime on this land. If this is done, the chances are very much in his favour in securing a good stand of alfalfa. The next problem that confronts us is the manner of determining the acidity of our soils. How can we tell if our land is acid or not? There are various methods of reaching a conclusion in this matter. The old method consisted of using a small strip of blue litmus paper and bring this in contact with some moist soil. If the blue colour of the litmus paper changed to a reddish hue, then we would know that the soil was acid. But a weak acid soil would change the colour of this blue litmus paper just as much as a strong acid soil would. Hence by this method the farmer did not know how much lime should be applied to correct the acidity.

I wish specially to draw the attention of the Minister to these words—

Within the last few years, however, the Truog acidity test has become available and it is now a matter of but about five minutes' time to determine accurately not only how acid the soil is, but a chart is also provided showing just how many tons of lime should be applied to the acre for that particular field. Most State experiment stations have this test, or a similar one, and any farmer can either send a small sample of his soil to his State experiment station, or agricultural college, and they will run the test off for him. Possibly the county agricultural agent has one of these, and as he is in the county for such purposes, every farmer who is anxious to determine the acidity of his soils should take the proper steps to obtain a reliable answer to his problem. The luxurious growth of certain weeds is almost a sure sign

of acid soils. Such weeds as the common plantain, sheep sorrel, corn spurry and horsetail all thrive best on these acid soils. There are many different forms of lime that can be applied to the soil to correct the acidity. Ground limestone, burnt lime, marl, marble dust, pulverised corals and shells are different forms of lime that may be used. However, the first two are the forms most commonly used. Ground limestone is a reliable form of lime to use, although not quite as quick in its response as the burnt lime. In many communities there are large deposits of lime rock that are capable of being crushed and ground finely enough for agricultural purposes. When this can be secured, it will probably be the cheapest source available, unless the distance of hauling is too great. A farmer might plan to haul this lime during the summer or fall, but as he generally will not have the time for such extra work, he may safely leave it for the more leisure winter days, without a serious loss of results. Another form of agricultural lime is lump or burnt lime already mentioned. This is made by heating the limestone to an intense heat, in specially constructed kilns, thus driving off the impurities, and leaving the common lump lime. When this lime in the lump form is finely ground, it is ready to put on the land. There are many companies that make a business of preparing this lime and selling it in car load lots to groups of farmers. In regard to the time of applying the lime on the land, it might be said that the sooner it is applied the better. If it can be put on during the fall, after a crop has been harvested, and allowed to stay in the soil over winter, much better results will be obtained than putting it on the land just before the crop is put in, in the spring. Whenever lime is put on, fall or spring, it should be thoroughly worked into the soil, rather than allowed to remain on top.

Some of these remarks apply more to Canadian conditions, but in some of our older districts the same conditions apply to-day. I could not wish for anything that more clearly expresses to members and the Minister the points I am so anxious should be dealt with. I particularly desire that the Minister should, if possible, see that a plant is erected at the Muresk Agricultural College for the application of the Truog acidity test. By this means the farmers of the Avon Valley and elsewhere will have an opportunity of getting their soils tested. I gather that such a plant would not run into very much money. There is no doubt that in the older settled districts lime has been leached out of our soils by the use for many years of superphosphates, and that this has tended to give poorer returns from the point of view of wheat production. Perhaps we are getting it back by way of fodders and sheep feed, but the addition of lime to our soils must prove of great benefit not only to the soils themselves, but in the way of building up a better type of

stock. I would draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that Professor Lowrie, Professor Paterson, and Professor Hendrick of Scotland are emphatic in maintaining that lime must be applied to the soil if we are going to get the best results from it. In reply to questions that I asked, the Minister indicated that the Director of Agriculture is not sufficiently seized of the importance of this question, because the answers did not encourage the opening up of lime deposits either by companies or private individuals. I hope the Minister will consider the advisability of giving more attention to this matter than has been done in the past. I believe that in the central districts we are on the verge of the discovery of a lime deposit of considerable value. I am not yet in a position to speak as to the quality of the lime, but will have the information in the course of a few days. I hope by that time to be in a position to ask for some assistance in the matter.

The Minister for Lands: The Minister cannot enter into State trading in the matter of lime.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I do not know that anything of that kind will be necessary. We will take that fence when we come to it. I urge upon the Minister to add a Truog acidity test to the equipment at the Muresk College.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [5.24]: There is no doubt that agriculture is an industry upon which the future development of the State depends. I can speak with some knowledge on this subject. There is no doubt that the experimental farms, particularly in connection with the breeding of seed wheats, have done a great deal for our wheat-growing lands. One cannot help, when travelling around the wheat farms, being struck by the favourable manner in which they compare with Eastern States farms, because of the cleanliness of our crops and the uniformity of the wheat. This is brought about by the action of the Agricultural Department in breeding wheats on their farms. A few years ago we could not tell what kind of wheat we were growing. There were so many mixtures of wheat that we could not say what they all were. Agriculture is a natural industry that we can develop without diminishing the inheritance of future generations. The more we develop it, the more we increase the value of that inherit-

ance. We shall be judged in future by the way we have dealt with our lands. The Minister referred to the wheat yields on the Merredin experimental farm last year. It was a dry year, particularly during August. He stated that the average rainfall for the six months was 564 points, and that the average yield was 10.5 bushels. In 1911, when a great many crops failed, the rainfall for the year was comparable with that of last year. It is entirely owing to an improvement in farming methods that we were able to produce what we did. Mr. Sutton stated at the Merredin farm that it was possible to produce three bushels of wheat for every inch of rain that falls in the six growing months. That is very important with respect to the opening up of our far eastern wheat lands. We see to-day what has been going on in the past in connection with the development of our wheat lands. A man wants land, and goes out further than either the departments or the Government think he should go. This has been going on for the last 20 years. Even in the old days Dowerin and Wyalkatchem and other places were regarded as deserts. The same kind of thing is going on at Southern Cross to-day. The people in that district are trying to develop land concerning which the department is still pessimistic, and are employing the methods that were used 20 years ago 100 miles further west. Although we have been successful in our primitive methods, I am doubtful if the same success will be met with in the far eastern areas. The shorter the rainfall, the better should be the methods of farming. I do not think those settlers should be encouraged to farm on their present methods. The farms which have been established east of Southern Cross should have been established many years ago. It would then have been possible to prove the country, and indicate the best way of putting the land to use. The Agricultural Bank would also have been able to advance money in that district, as is the case with districts further west. It only advances now up to 50 per cent. of the value of the improvements. As these settlers have not sufficient capital of their own, they are forced to employ primitive methods, which, unless the seasons are very good, must result in failure. The Minister also dealt with the Wongan Hills light land farm. A few years ago it was said in Parliament that these light lands

were of no use. Shortly before the farm was taken up many millions of acres of similar land were regarded as useless. The Minister now tells us that in the first year of its operations the farm averaged 17 bushels of wheat to the acre. I am still not satisfied with the methods that were adopted on the farm, just as I am dissatisfied with the methods adopted on other light lands.

The Minister for Agriculture: They were very rough.

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes. Despite the primitive methods, the average yield was nearly 17 bushels to the acre. This should cause us to wonder whether what we said about our light lands is right or wrong. We should not begrudge money to the Agricultural Department. We are developing huge areas in an extensive way. It is a question of acreage. The time is long overdue when we should give more consideration to the subject of production. The Agricultural Department has given much assistance to the agricultural community in the past, but in my opinion it could have given still further assistance. I recognise, in view of the limitations upon the finances, that the activities of the department have had to remain within certain bounds. Despite that, the department has done a good deal for the farmers. Apart even from the experimental farms, experimental plots have been conducted in various parts, in conjunction with the farmers themselves. Those experimental plots have been a source of considerable education for the farmers. Again, crop competitions have been established, and I can say from my own experience that those competitions have had a wonderful effect upon surrounding districts, in increasing the yield per acre. Naturally, if farmers hear of exceptionally good returns having been obtained, they want to know all about it, and thus their education is extended. I trust that this system will be adopted even more generally in the future. The question is often raised as to how far eastward we should go with our cultivation. Comparisons are drawn between our light lands and those of the Eastern States. There is a difference between the rainfall that we experience and that registered in the Eastern States. Our rainfall is more regular and more reliable.

Mr. Latham: I suppose it is a bit different among the groups!

Mr. LINDSAY: I am not talking about the groups now; I am talking about agriculture.

The Minister for Agriculture: Quite right; you were discussing experiments!

Mr. LINDSAY: It is true that in some parts of the Eastern States the rainfall at times may compare favourably with that registered in Western Australia, but it has to be remembered that in the East the rainfall varies considerably. Some years they may have droughts, and other years excessive rainfall. In Western Australia, on the contrary, the seasons are more even and the rainfall more reliable. The Minister pointed out that at the Merredin State Farm an average of $10\frac{1}{2}$ bushels to the acre had been harvested, with only 565 points of rain. That shows that even with such a small rainfall, we are able to produce payable crops under our improved methods of cultivation, securing results that would have been impossible in years gone by. The reason for that is that we have introduced new classes of wheat and improved methods. While I was in Victoria recently I learnt from the officials of the Agricultural Department there, that the ideal they had before them was to grow $3\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of wheat to the acre for every inch of rain that fell during the six growing months. Although that objective has not been realised yet, I ascertained that in some instances more than three bushels to the acre had been produced for every inch of rain that had fallen during the growing season. That will give hon. members some idea of the extent to which we can extend our wheat belt in Western Australia provided we use proper methods. Of course it is necessary to have a reasonably good season during the preceding year, so that the moisture may be preserved to enable operations to be carried on. If drought conditions obtain during the first year, it will be necessary to have a heavier rainfall in the second year, if success is to be assured. When I speak on this subject, I do so with experience. When Mr. Sutton made a statement regarding the possibilities of wheat production here, during a speech at Merredin, the instance he quoted in support of his contentions was that furnished by my own results. With 7 inches of rain, provided it falls during the six growing months, it is possible to produce three bushels of wheat to the acre for every inch of rain. I say that because I have produced that quantity myself. That

in itself will help the Committee to realise the great future ahead of agriculture in this State. I hope the Minister will push on with his experimental farms, and particularly with the one at Southern Cross. I believe, despite the pessimism of many people regarding those eastern districts, that there is a fair chance of success there. In the past they have not had a fair chance. If success follows there, I shall expect to see prosperous and thriving farms established over large stretches of country and that will assure still further prosperity for an increased population. That will be to the great advantage of agriculture throughout Western Australia generally. I have other matters that I will deal with when the items are before us. In the meantime, I have much pleasure in supporting the Estimates for the Agricultural Department.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [5.35]: My sole desire in speaking on these Estimates is to emphasise, in common with the Minister, the importance of providing proper expert advice for those engaged in the dried fruits industry. Considerable areas of land in various parts of the State have proved the capability of the soil to grow crops second to none in any part of the world. I fear, however, that a large number of men engaged in the dried fruit industry either do not understand the proper method of treating fruit in the drying stages, or there are some screws loose in their methods of packing. Recently I noticed in the Press that a squeal had gone up from one part of Victoria to the other, because the Western Australian growers had sent over consignments of dried fruits that had competed successfully with the products of the viti-culturists of Victoria. I think the agitation went so far as to condemn the action of growers here, because they were exploiting the markets of Victoria in competition with the local growers. I do not know whether the attention of the Minister was drawn to the agitation, or whether any action was taken in Victoria to prevent the Western Australian growers from engaging upon the trade with the public there.

The Minister for Agriculture: We drew the attention of the Federal Government to what we regarded as a violation of the Federal Constitution. Although two communications were despatched to the Commonwealth Government, no reply has been

received from them so far, and we take it they are acquiescing in the position.

Mr. STUBBS: I hope the Minister will follow the matter up. There are immense possibilities ahead of the growers of Western Australia. Certainly we can grow fruit of first-class quality, capable of being turned into an excellent product, if properly treated. I will give hon. members one or two illustrations to show the effect of putting up and selling a good article, with the result that good prices are received. I know it is customary for a great number of people to say that the industry is not worth bothering about because good prices cannot be obtained. If any hon. member were to go to Boan's Ltd., or to any other of the big shops and ask for a pound of raisins, he would be charged 1s. 6d. a lb. for a first-class line. If we were to ask a grower in the Swan Valley, or in any other part of the State where vines grow well, what he would be prepared to take for his crops, he would be told the grower would be glad to get half the price I mentioned for his fruit. Surely Boans Ltd. do not ask for a profit of 9d. a lb. on local raisins! Who is making the money out of the deal? It appears to me that very few growers know how to prepare an article for sale.

Mr. Panton: It is possible to buy raisins for 4½d. or 5d. a lb.

Mr. STUBBS: I paid 1s. 6d. a lb. I know that it is possible to purchase lines at from 5d. to 9d. a lb., but those lines do not represent good produce. I know you can get currants and raisins at from 8d. to 10d. a lb., but if one desires to get dried fruits of excellent quality, it is necessary to pay a higher price. I believe that the growers in the Swan Valley and elsewhere can market fruit of an excellent quality, if only they have the proper experience. I notice that there is an item included in the Estimates referring to a viti-culturist whose salary is given as £432 a year. Does that officer travel round the various vine-growing districts, giving advice to the growers as to the treatment of the fruit during the drying stages? I hope the Minister, when replying, will give us some information as to what is being done in the interests of this industry. Immense sums of money have been advanced by the Agricultural Bank to assist men engaged upon the cultivation of the vine. It will be a thousand pities if that industry is allowed to decline

for want of attention and care, particularly in connection with the drying processes. There are one or two other items on the Estimates to which I will refer at a later stage. One of these relates to important work that is being carried out by the wool inspector, for it can be said with truth that his work has resulted in greatly increased wool production in Western Australia. I have in mind something that occurred a few years ago when representatives of one of the leading departments of this State reckoned that certain parts of the Great Southern districts were no good and that they were tired of advancing money to the farmers there. Amongst other Government officers who paid a visit to the district concerned was the wool inspector. Acting on his advice, a number of men who were on the bread and butter line seven or eight years ago are now on the high road to prosperity. He told them that the grass prevalent in the district was such as would lend itself to the growing of the best merino wool, and he said that if the farmers went in for that class of sheep, they would prove that their districts were some of the best for that type of wool in the State. I pay a tribute to the Agricultural Department, and to that officer in particular, for the splendid services rendered to the wool industry of Western Australia.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [5.43]: The Minister for Agriculture has to shoulder a grave responsibility as head of this Department, because agriculture may be looked upon as the key department of the Government activities. We have the Lands Department, which we may term the foundation department, providing the land. Then surveyors cut up the land into areas of the required size. The Public Works Department constructs bridges, roads and so forth, and then the Railway Department comes along with lines through various areas. So it goes on, the various Government departments carrying out varying phases of governmental activities. It is left almost entirely to the Agricultural Department to ensure the success of production throughout the State. It is almost exclusively the duty of that department to advise upon methods of production, to provide experts to give advice, and to guide the administration of the department in the direction of achieving results to which we look for the prosperity of the State. Already agriculture has be-

come the most important industry in Western Australia. It was for this reason that in previous years Parliament has not begrudged money for the carrying on of the work of the Agricultural Department. Minister after Minister has been told that if the funds voted by Parliament were not sufficient, additional moneys would be made available. Members have recognised that the activities of the department were in the right direction and therefore increased expenditure was not denied. The officers under the Minister's control seem to have been very careful, because last year the Government were voted £74,991 for this particular department, but only £70,487 was expended. Thus a saving of £4,504 was made. That compares very favourably with the results shown respecting the working of the Mines Department, the Estimates for which we discussed last night. The Mines Department spent £78,000 instead of £62,000, which was voted by Parliament. Thus the Mines Department showed an excess of £16,000 as against the Estimates for the year, compared with the saving I have mentioned regarding the Agricultural Department. When we consider the relative importance of these two departments, it must be realised that the Agricultural Department is of increasing importance because the agricultural activities are extending, whereas the Mines Department controls an industry that is gradually declining. At any rate, these figures disclose the fact that the heads of the Agricultural Department have certainly not been spendthrifts regarding the money under their control.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is not a fair comparison.

MR. ANGELO: Agriculture is extending from one end of the State to the other and is rapidly improving. So long as the Minister is satisfied that there is no undue curtailment in the department, I too will be satisfied, but I consider that with the increase in the activities of the department we should be able to augment the number of experts. We might also consider the advisableness of improving their calibre if it is found that they are not exactly what they should be. Judging by the small salaries that some of the experts are receiving, they cannot think too much of themselves to remain in their positions, when, with the knowledge that they have, they should be making a competence for themselves outside. The other evening on the Lands De-

partment Estimates we heard two splendid speeches delivered by the Minister for Lands and the Leader of the Opposition. We also had a fine oration last night from the Minister for Agriculture, but I cannot help thinking that those three gentlemen must have forgotten a very important matter. The Minister for Lands supplied the House with a map showing our territory from the southern shores to Geraldton. There was nothing whatever on that map to indicate that there was a North-West, nor was there any reference to that part of the State in his speech. The Leader of the Opposition seemed to forget that the North-West had ever existed and then the Minister for Agriculture followed suit. Is it a conspiracy of silence in regard to the North-West, or did the hon. gentlemen forget that two-thirds of the area of this State, constitutes the North-West? If an argument were required to enable the Federal Government to say that they should take over the Northern part of Western Australia, it was certainly furnished by the Minister for Lands, the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Agriculture in the speeches that they made, speeches which omitted all mention of the North-West. The speeches of the Ministers practically admitted that the Government are not, perhaps I should not say capable, but on account of the financial position, I will say they are not able to do anything for the North-West.

The Minister for Agriculture: What has become of all your schemes up there?

Mr. ANGELO: I shall refer to those. We require an expert to advise us. The Department of Agriculture was created not only for the southern parts of the State, but for the benefit of the whole of Western Australia, to supply the expert knowledge to those who sought it. It is a most extraordinary thing that one item in this department for which a vote was provided last year should be missing. I refer to provision for a tropical adviser. After some years of urging by North-West members the Government of the day appointed a tropical adviser and we had the benefit of his services for some time. Unfortunately the salary he was receiving was so small that when he was offered a better position by an employer who understood his capabilities, he accepts it. Since then attempts have been made to replace that officer, but no one has yet been appointed. I suppose

the vote last year was absorbed by the southern parts of the State.

Mr. Sampson: Can we grow any tropical products?

Mr. ANGELO: The hon. member must know that we can do so, but it is very difficult.

The Minister for Agriculture: Pineapples can be grown in England.

Mr. Clydesdale: Bananas can be grown in the North.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes, but unfortunately a pest made its appearance and ruined the plantations. If we had been given the advice of one versed in tropical agriculture the position might have been different. Recently, and without the help of the department, some men who understood tomato growing got to work, and they are now sending tomatoes to Melbourne and receiving as high a price as 35s. and 40s. a case.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: And as soon as the Melbourne people wake up they will stop buying the tomatoes.

Mr. ANGELO: As is known, the tomato has to be packed just prior to being shipped, and as vessels make their appearance on the North-West coast about once a fortnight only, the result is that many cases of this product are ruined. What I ask the Minister to do is to make a determined effort to see whether he can secure the services of a tropical adviser and also to establish an experimental farm in the North-West. I know of men who have spent thousands of pounds in carrying out experimental work. I have lost thousands of pounds in doing work that ought to have been done by the department. Being laymen and not knowing how to deal with pests, the people in the North-West have been seriously handicapped. When the tropical adviser was employed by the State he did excellent work. He advised the people what to do and what not to do. Often it was of service to be told what not to do. At the Gascoyne, Mr. Coe is struggling along with a very little money doing experimental work which should be carried out by the State. The Minister for Works and Mr. Stileman, the Engineer in Chief, had an opportunity a few months ago of seeing what this man was doing, and they were absolutely astounded. One thing about which he was able to satisfy them was that there was an unlimited water supply at the Gascoyne, a supply that would enable tropi-

cal agriculture of a certain magnitude to be carried out. I am not going to say anything further except again to ask the Minister to try to secure the services of someone to act as tropical adviser, and to establish a few experimental plots in the North-West. I do not intend to suggest where they should be located. Let them be distributed throughout the North-West. Certainly there should be one near Wyndham where we are told a good deal of land has been surveyed for cotton growing.

Mr. Teesdale: Not only cotton.

Mr. ANGELO: No, many other products as well. We have proved that we can grow bananas, but unfortunately, as I have already stated, a pest made its appearance and the laymen did not know how to cope with it. I wonder what the wheat farmers would have done if the services of experts had not been placed at their disposal to deal with diseases when they made their appearance.

Mr. Latham: What diseases?

Mr. ANGELO: Various diseases that appeared from time to time. On the occasion of my last visit to the Eastern States I met a gentleman who was interested in the export of eggs and he impressed me with the value of the export trade. I read one or two accounts of lectures that he delivered at the request of the Victorian and New South Wales Governments. He apparently knows his subject intimately and he also knows how to advise the farmers to get the best results. I went through his packing sheds in Melbourne and I was surprised at the extent of his operations and the thoroughness of his methods. I asked him whether he was ever likely to visit the West, and he replied that he had not been here, but nothing would give him greater pleasure than to be invited to come to this State. He said he would do so in an honorary capacity if the Government cared to have his advice. I suggest that the Government might frank his passage.

The Minister for Agriculture: It will perhaps surprise you to know that last year we exported between 80,000 and 90,000 eggs to England and got the highest price for them.

Mr. ANGELO: This gentleman might be invited to come here and deliver lectures to poultry farmers who at the present time may be looking on egg production as a sideline.

The Minister for Agriculture: We have a very good man in the department.

Mr. ANGELO: But we are paying this very good man only £264 a year.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is his classification.

Mr. ANGELO: If he is such a jolly good man, why pay such a small salary?

The Minister for Lands: We pay a higher salary here than they do in Victoria.

Mr. ANGELO: Anyhow it is only a suggestion that I throw out. I can provide the Minister with this gentleman's name and no harm would come by extending to him an invitation to visit Western Australia. Such a visit might do a lot of good.

MR. LATHAM (York) [5.58]: I will not ask pardon for offering a few words on these Estimates, because I consider there is no more important industry in the State than agriculture. We are all aware of what agriculture has done for Western Australia. I sometimes wish we could make others outside realise the importance of the industry just as much as we do ourselves. Looking at the figures in the last "Quarterly Abstract" I find that in the year that the Leader of the Opposition went out of power the area under cultivation produced no less than £11,183,000 worth of wheat. In a State like this, this must be regarded as a wonderful accomplishment. Besides that our production from the pastoral areas was worth £6,000,000. In view of the enormous production from agriculture and the pastoral industry, we must acknowledge the claim those activities have for further development. The salvation of Western Australia depends on them. I was greatly interested in the Minister's announcement that he will push out experimental farms into new areas. I think the hon. gentleman suggested that that should have been done in the past; but the development of the agricultural areas could not have been so rapid as it has been, if we had had to await results from experimental plots. The scheme of the present Leader of the Opposition, to send out settlers and let them know what money would be advanced to them by the Agricultural Bank, has done far more for the State than any other system could have achieved.

The Minister for Lands: Experimental farms existed in Western Australia before the present Leader of the Opposition entered Parliament.

Mr. LATHAM: I did not know that their origin dated so far back. My first recollection of the Merredin State Farm is that it was a bed of wild oats.

The Minister for Lands: It was not a bed of wild oats when I saw it in 1904.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not questioning the value of the experimental farms. They are doing good work, especially by breeding the right kinds of wheat for growing in this State. The troubles of the past arose not because our farmers were indifferent, but because the wheats employed were not suitable, more especially having regard to our short season, which calls for quick-growing wheats. Moreover, wheats used here should be able to stand up against dry spells. Wonderfully good work has been done by the experimental farms in that respect, and we owe a great debt of gratitude to the expert officers of the Agricultural Department. We must look to them for help. Ministers come and go, but the departmental officers remain and make a lifelong study of their work.

The Minister for Lands: That is what they are paid for.

Mr. LATHAM: Of course they are, but some people give more of their time and attention to their work than others do. I venture to say that some of the officers I refer to continue their work at night in their homes. It is a matter of regret that the Government have not brought down a Bill to control the sale of copper carbonate. This is a finey ground copper bluestone intended to prevent the spread of disease in wheat, particularly bunt and smut. It is so easy to have foreign matter in copper carbonate; hardly anything lends itself more to such admixture. In the Avon district farmers showed me smut in their crops, and there appeared to be iron rather than copper in the mixture they were using. This is a subject to which the Government might well give consideration. Most of the Australian States have laws controlling the sale of copper carbonate. A good deal of the usefulness of the mixture depends on the degree of fineness to which the bluestone is ground. I have discussed the matter with experts. While they admit that there are different grades of copper carbonate, it appears that little testing has been done. I hope the Government will see fit to appoint an agricultural chemist. If experimental farms are to be put out, we should secure the scientific assistance to

be obtained from an agricultural chemist. I do not suggest that our soils are poor or inferior, but some soils are better than others, and if we can provide a cheap agent for building up soils deficient in lime or phosphate or nitrogen or potash, we should do so. The only way to obtain the necessary information is to appoint an agricultural chemist, who would assist our farmers to produce more wheat per acre than is being produced to-day. I hope the Minister will look into my suggestion. I have said here repeatedly that there does not seem to be that degree of co-ordination between the Agricultural Department, the Lands Department and the Agricultural Bank that ought to exist. Those three big departments should be working as one. In one sense they have nothing to do with each other, but they certainly depend upon each other for success. The Lands Department makes the land available, the Agricultural Department should be able to advise what the land is suitable for, and the Agricultural Bank ought to be in a position to make advances to the settler. That position does not seem to obtain at present. When I first came to Western Australia, the Lands Department being then administered by the present Leader of the Opposition, every block of land available was shown on the departmental plans together with a statement of what the block was suitable for and what advances would be granted on it.

The Minister for Lands: I do not think the use of the land was shown.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes. The plan stated whether land was suitable for wheat, for instance; and there were also references to water supplies and water conservation.

The Minister for Agriculture: I am sure that information was not given with regard to my block.

The Minister for Lands: Nor with regard to any other block.

The Minister for Agriculture: I have seen the advances mentioned, and also the classification, but nothing else.

Mr. LATHAM: Such details as distance from a railway, water supply, and timber were shown. If the plans now gave information regarding advances available from the Agricultural Bank, it would stop many settlers from taking up land without sufficient capital. The Minister for Agriculture stated to-day that the estimated revenue available this year for the destruction of dingoes was about £30,000. The

figure, of course, can only be an estimate; but with £30,000 we should be able to do a great deal to get rid of vermin. If we can rid ourselves of the dingo in the eastern and northern parts of the State the people there will be able to run a great many more sheep. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) has said nothing about the North-West, but if he gets into touch with the people there he will learn from them that the kangaroo does a great deal of damage. The kangaroo should be declared a noxious animal.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is the case. This fund, however, is not to be used for the destruction of euros and kangaroos.

Mr. LATHAM: It is a pity the Minister will not use the money for the destruction of kangaroos.

The Minister for Agriculture: Parliament has not given me authority to do so.

Mr. LATHAM: I regret it. If by the destruction of the kangaroo we could enable the North to carry more cattle or sheep, it would be a great advantage. The kangaroos live on the rivers, and when the stock want water in dry times, the kangaroos have eaten out all the feed there. I understand that the Agricultural Department have recently sent their experts to the Eastern States to buy cattle. I am sorry that more encouragement is not given to cattle breeders in Western Australia. This State can produce just as good dairy cattle as are to be found in the Eastern States. But no encouragement is offered to local breeders. Last year young heifers could hardly be given away. Our breeders should be encouraged by the offer of reasonable prices.

The Minister for Lands: We bought all we could in this State last year.

Mr. LATHAM: No effort was made to buy locally.

The Minister for Lands: That is untrue.

Mr. LATHAM: I know of plenty of cattle that were offered to the Government.

The Minister for Lands: We bought thousands of cattle here last year.

Mr. LATHAM: No attempt was made to buy outside the Great Southern district.

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Mr. LATHAM: We can to-day run cattle where we cannot run sheep.

The Minister for Agriculture: Mr. Baron-Hay spent half his time last year buying cattle locally.

Mr. LATHAM: In reply to one offer of cattle the Agricultural Department said that the cattle were too far away, but that they could be sent to Perth for inspection, and that if they were found unsuitable for the department they could be sold in the open market. Our dairy experts should encourage cattle breeding in areas where the necessary feed exists and sheep cannot be run.

The Minister for Lands: Some of the cattle coming from dry areas are not suitable, and the groups will not buy them.

Mr. LATHAM: Why are they not suitable?

The Minister for Lands: Because they go dry too quickly.

Mr. LATHAM: Many of the cattle offered to the department locally were heifers which had never been milked. I admit that if a cow is not milked for the full period, she may go dry more quickly the next year; but that excuse does not hold in the case of heifers.

The Minister for Lands: I have more confidence in the experts than I have in you.

Mr. LATHAM: Occasionally experts may not feel inclined to swallow unwise words which they have uttered hastily.

The Minister for Lands: Some of these statements were made last year and replied to then.

Mr. LATHAM: This vote is of the highest importance, and the duty of everyone in the State is to promote the industries connected with the soil.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [7.30]: Undoubtedly the Agricultural Department is playing a most important part in the development of Western Australia. Over 30 years ago, when first I started growing wheat in this State, I had just as good methods of cultivation as we have to-day, notwithstanding which I could produce only seven or eight bushels per acre on the average. We had then no phosphates and no drills. By those aids we have now increased the yield on good land to 25 bushels and 30 bushels per acre. That farm on which I was 30 years ago has since produced as much as 30 bushels per acre although, as I say, in those early days we were not able to get more than seven bushels or eight bushels. Apart from wheat growing, we are now using phosphates in top-dressing

for pastures. A little time ago I saw an experimental plot put in, not by the department, but by a private firm. I was agreeably surprised to find that, where 2 cwt. of phosphates to the acre had been used, the clover growing was wonderfully fine, whereas where no phosphate had been used, only a chain or two away, there was hardly any clover growing at all. It would pay our farmers to go thoroughly into the use of phosphates. Some members on that side think the railway freights are too cheap. For my part I hope the Minister for Agriculture will see to it that the freight on phosphates is reduced as low as possible. We have been told that phosphates are carried on the railways at a loss. But when we consider what phosphates are doing for Western Australia, we realise that it would be good business to carry those phosphates on the railways at a minimum freight. By so doing the railways indirectly would reap immense returns. Over a considerable portion of the State we have a sufficient rainfall to warrant the cultivation of subterranean and other clovers. Anybody with a knowledge of agriculture will admit that subterranean clover is going to play an important part in stock production. Because of that I should like to see phosphates carried on the railways just as cheaply as possible. Moreover, I contend that the maximum time should be given a farmer to take delivery of his phosphates. When we have a shortage of trucks it is sometimes impossible for the railways to deliver phosphates, and this of course involves a considerable handicap on the farmer. If ever I were tempted to support a State trading concern, it would be a State manure factory.

Mr. Richardson: You are slipping all right.

Mr. BROWN: I do not say it would be advisable, but I am afraid I should have to support it, for the price of phosphates is very high.

Mr. Davy: Does the use of phosphate put money in the farmer's pocket?

Mr. BROWN: Most decidedly.

Mr. Davy: Then why cannot he pay railway freight on it?

Mr. BROWN: He is paying railway freight.

Mr. Davy: You want it carried for nothing.

Mr. BROWN: No, but I say it is good policy for the railways to throw a sprat to catch a mackerel.

Mr. Davy: What about the farmer doing the same?

Mr. BROWN: It is good business on the part of the railways to carry phosphates as cheaply as possible.

Mr. Heron: It costs £11 to get one ton of wire up to Leonora.

Mr. BROWN: I notice an amount of £1,984 allocated for a veterinary surgeon. I do not know whether it will require a veterinary surgeon to discover the cause of the mortality amongst our sheep. I do not see in the Estimates any amount for laboratories. The Minister for Agriculture appointed a pathologist or veterinary surgeon at considerable cost to discover what is causing the mortality in the sheep, but apparently we are no nearer the solution of the difficult problem. In my opinion this is not a question for a veterinary surgeon at all. Nearly all men who have watched the complaint have their own theories about it. My theory is that it will require a chemist or a botanist-pathologist to discover the cause of the mortality.

Hon. G. Taylor: You will have to discover the man first.

Mr. BROWN: I suppose there are highly qualified chemists and botanists somewhere in the world. If such a man could be brought here it would be of great benefit to the State, for the economic loss caused by sheep mortality to-day is immense.

Mr. Stubbs: Is that going on now?

Mr. BROWN: Yes, it has been going on all the winter. A peculiar thing about the disease is that one man will lose a lot of sheep whilst another just across the fence is losing none. Consequently, I think the herbage has something to do with the disease. I am pleased to note that the Government are in earnest in respect of experimental farms. This must be of great interest to all, more particularly to the Minister for Lands. Our light lands are now producing highly payable crops. Last year the experimental farm on the sand plain at Wongan Hills produced nearly 17 bushels of wheat to the acre. This year I have seen crops on sand plain that will return up to 20 bushels to the acre. We have within easy distance of our railways a tremendous area of light land that could be put under profitable crop. It has been proved that we can grow three bushels of wheat to the acre on every inch of rain that falls. Therefore, by proper methods of cultivation, and by working the fallow as it ought to be

worked, we can grow payable crops on 7 inches of rain, provided it falls—as it does—at the right period of the year. That being so, just consider the tract of country that we have within the 8-inch or 9-inch rainfall! The demand for land is greater than ever before, and it is of the utmost importance to the State that we should satisfy it. The agricultural college, doubtless, will do good work and as the result of experimenting in wheat will be able to point out to us the right variety of wheat to grow in a given locality. That question of right variety of wheat is playing an important part in our agriculture. The wheat we were growing 30 years ago is not known to-day, for it has since been adapted to the climate. The chief inspector of stock, by his lectures and practical demonstrations, has done valuable work in putting the farmer on the right track as to the class of sheep to grow. In consequence we have an improved utility sheep to-day, giving 10 or 11 lbs. of wool and having a much larger carcase than had the type of sheep we used to grow. The work that officer has done amongst the farmers is invaluable, and I should like to see him in receipt of a much higher salary than he is drawing to-day.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is he getting to-day?

Mr. BROWN: About £400. I do not know whether he gets any allowances. For a man of such ability, holding so responsible a position, the salary is quite inadequate. Indeed, whatever his salary might be, he could and does earn it tenfold. Prof. Lowrie, by the introduction of phosphates, pointed to the farmers of South Australia the way to increase their average yield from 7 bushels to 15 bushels. We are only following out the good work started by Prof. Lowrie. In no other part of Australia is phosphate so urgently required as it is in our soil. It has been proved conclusively that some of our land can stand up to 2 cwt. of superphosphate per acre.

Mr. Lindsay: Our experts told us otherwise until this year.

Mr. BROWN: Well, we are learning. If with the expenditure of 5s. or 10s. per acre on superphosphate we can get a three-fold return, it is money well spent. Another important factor is the feed that grows after superphosphate has been used. I could show members sandplain that was growing nothing but scrub, but after it was broken up and treated with superphosphate

the quantity of good sheep feed that sprang up was astonishing. I hope the Government will give the utmost consideration to my requests, because it would be good policy to do so.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [7.46]: Agriculture, says Gibbon, is the foundation of all industries. It is remarkable that wider recognition of the great importance of this industry does not prevail. Undoubtedly some of the farmers do well, and in this State for the time being they are doing considerably better than are many farmers in other parts of the world. Long may such prosperity continue. A question frequently asked is why the rural workers are not paid as well as are workers in the city. It is a fact that many orchardists, although they possess the necessary land and equipment, do not secure what is regarded as the basic wage, and this notwithstanding the long hours they work and the large amount of capital they have spent. It can well be said that agriculture is more than an industry; it is a science. Often it is a gamble. The producer is subject to the elements, and if these are unfavourable, it is always possible that he will receive less than would be regarded under the most favourable conditions as a living wage. A matter that might well form the subject of discussion is that where production is large, the returns are usually low. When requirements are overmet, prices drop greatly, far in excess of the small surplus produced. A writer recently discussed this matter and dwelt at length on a comparison of pig iron and pigs. There is not much affinity between those two subjects: the writer had no difficulty to prove that there was a very wide dissimilarity. For pig iron there is a stability of price that is unaffected to any extent. Weeks, months and years elapse and the price of pig iron continues stable. The owner of a pig, however, is the victim of a market that varies in a most extraordinary way. One day he finds that the price quoted is reasonable, but a fortnight later the price may have dropped to such an extent that he might well conclude that the work of producing pigs is unprofitable.

Mr. Mann: That has not happened in the last couple of years.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is happening all the time. The analogy drawn between pig iron and pigs might be applied to any product

which is the result of a secondary industry as compared with a primary product. There is a wide variation in the one instance and comparative inflexibility in the other. This brings me to the question of marketing. If the many problems surrounding this vexed question could be solved, the difficulties that confront the man on the land would, to a large extent, be things of the past. During many months I have taken opportunities to refer to the work of the Committee of Direction under the Fruit Organisation Act in Queensland. It is encouraging to note that the work of those who have set out to stabilise the price of fruit in the north-eastern State is meeting with a good deal of success. To instance one line, let me refer to pine-apples for canning. The returns secured as a result of the committee's work have increased by no less than 70 per cent. I am aware that in many instances comparative failure has resulted in regard to certain other crops, but when one realises the outstanding difficulties of the pine-apple producers of Queensland extending over many years and the position today, those who supported the Primary Products Marketing Bill last session might well take heart and urge that a measure on similar lines be again introduced.

The Minister for Lands: The apple growers are now asking for it.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is inevitable as time goes on that all producers will realise the need for and urge the enactment of a measure of control. Later on I hope to refer to the efforts made in different countries to stabilise prices, which is possible only under an Act of control.

The Minister for Agriculture: Why cannot it be done voluntarily?

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister knows as well as I do that even the comparatively liberal measure he introduced met with violent opposition. That, however, was the result of lack of knowledge on the part of the people who opposed it. As the Minister might explain, if he were so minded, the voluntary wheat pool is in active operation and is meeting with wide-spread favour because of the success achieved by the compulsory wheat pool that preceded it. I could go further and refer to the B.A.W.R.A. and show that under the combined marketing scheme made possible by that organisation, the pastoralists of Australia received a very much better price for

their wool, simply because they adopted collective instead of individual bargaining.

The Minister for Agriculture: Why did not they continue it?

Mr. SAMPSON: It was a war measure. I might also refer the Minister to the efforts made by the trade unionists, wisely in a limited degree, whereby they meet and decide that their labour shall be sold through collective bargaining. If collective bargaining is good for them, surely it should be good for primary producers.

The Minister for Agriculture: But they do not get statutory powers of organisation.

Mr. SAMPSON: In spite of the absence of such legislation they are able to make progress. However, I had better not continue on that line of argument, as I notice that the eye of the Chairman is glinting in my direction. In Queensland there has been a good deal of opposition to the efforts made to improve the status of the fruitgrowers. Opposition is of course inevitable. Whenever an effort is made to improve the lot of any section of the community, opposition will always be encountered. As a result of an action in the Full Court, it was found that the Committee of Direction had exceeded the powers that it was competent for the Queensland Parliament to give them, but it was always intended by the Queensland Parliament that the committee should control fruit within the State as well as Queensland fruit sent outside the State. For many months the committee carried on their work and developed new markets in Victoria and New South Wales. The Full Court, however, held that the Committee of Direction did not have the power to do what they aimed at doing outside the State. Accordingly the work of the committee suffered a set back. Under Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act an injunction was granted barring the committee from continuing certain portions of their work. In spite of that, much benefit has been secured to the growers by the work of the committee. Recently a ballot was taken amongst the producers of pine-apples for canning on the question whether they desired the measure of control in respect of their product to continue. The result was that 80 per cent. voted in favour of continuance. At Stanthorpe, which is regarded as the capital of the granite belt, in which centre a good deal of opposition was voiced by a body terming

itself the League of Freedom, and at Applethorpe and Glen Aplin, close to Stanthorpe, I am advised that the people are realising more fully every day that there are advantages to be secured by the control, and the assistance which the Committee of Direction have been able to give. We have to thank the Minister for Agriculture for bringing down the Primary Products Marketing Bill. I fully believe it would have proved a good measure. Always without exception, I have urged that it should be passed, and that the growers should be given an opportunity if they so desire of controlling their own business. Prior to the last elections, the Premier, then Leader of the Opposition, stated that if his party were returned to power he would introduce a measure along the lines of the Queensland Fruit Marketing Act. I take it the measure introduced by the Minister for Agriculture was in fulfilment of that promise.

The Minister for Agriculture: It was introduced in accordance with that promise.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have always acknowledged that the Bill was a good one, though it lacked some of the principles set out in the Queensland Fruit Marketing Organisation Act. In Section 3 that Act made it impossible for a pool to be formed. I assume that as the result of the experience gained in Queensland the Minister was advised that it would perhaps be better to start with the Bill that he brought down. I hope in view of the statement of the Premier that this Bill will again be introduced.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is out of order in discussing on the Estimates required legislation.

Mr. SAMPSON: I should have said I hope the Minister for Agriculture will seek the approval of the Premier and Cabinet to enable him to bring down this measure. Success is seldom assured on the first occasion.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Will it meet with better success than it did last time?

Mr. SAMPSON: I believe so. There is evidence in various parts of the State of a belief that control is necessary, that those who produce certain commodities should have some say in their own particular industry. To-day that is not the case. The producer neither buys nor sells. He is given a price for his products, and if he likes he can take it or reject it. In the vast majority of cases he cannot state what he requires and secure that price. Neither is the price which he is given based on the cost of pro-

duction. It would be useless for a fruit grower to set out to establish a schedule of costs, and base his selling price upon it. If he did that I am convinced there would be no market for his fruit.

Mr. Marshall: Why would there not be a market based on the cost of production?

Mr. SAMPSON: Because a majority of people are oblivious to the elements which enter into the cost of production. Accordingly, those who did so act would find that their products would be left on their hands. This would follow because of the absence of co-operation. There cannot in this particular industry be co-operation unless it is of a compulsory nature.

Mr. Marshall: You believe in compulsory preference to unionists?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We leave that to you.

Mr. Marshall: You can do that with safety.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope if the suggestion is made to bring down the Bill, the Premier will agree to this being done.

The Minister for Agriculture: I hope you will agree to convert your own side first.

Mr. SAMPSON: Control is extending. It does not matter what happens in our immediate locality. Control is coming in all over the world in the distribution of food products. The Minister for Lands referred to a meeting of fruitgrowers held at Kojouup when a resolution was carried affirming the desirability of an Act to control the export of fruit.

The Minister for Lands: To condemn the Federal control.

The Minister for Agriculture: The same people who condemned the State control last year are now supporting it.

Mr. SAMPSON: I believe in control. Until the fruitgrowers have control they will always be found to occupy a sort of serf-like position. There is a steadily decreasing area under fruit trees in Western Australia. Is anything calculated to prove the statements that are made more than the fact that in this industry the area devoted to the production of fruit is gradually decreasing every year?

Mr. Marshall: What is the reason for that?

Mr. SAMPSON: It is a non-productive industry. It does not produce a living for those who are engaged in it.

Mr. Marshall: Why is that?

Mr. SAMPSON: Because of the lack of marketing facilities.

Mr. Marshall: If I buy a pound of fruit I have to pay an exorbitant price for it. Why does it not pay the grower?

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not know what the hon. member terms an exorbitant price.

Mr. Marshall: If the grower receives the price that I pay, less the cost of distribution, would there not be a profit in it for him? You are boosting up the guinea pigs of St. George's Terrace.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is no reference to guinea pigs in this matter. The fruit growers are not organised members of the community. They stand alone and bargain by themselves. If they were supported by a few of the guinea pigs the hon. member speaks of, they might be more successful.

Mr. Marshall: They will never be successful while they have a representative of your character.

Mr. SAMPSON: Apple growers have had a bad time during the past season.

Mr. Marshall: They have been exploited.

Mr. SAMPSON: The net return for a dump case of apples sent overseas amounted, I understand, to approximately 2s. a case. If a committee were organising this industry they would take a wider range for the distribution of the fruit. Probably shipments would not be limited to one port. Advice might be received that there was a strike or some other disturbance at a particular port. There has been a coal strike in England which has had a bad effect upon products leaving this State and being marketed there.

Mr. Sleeman: Apparently you do not want the workers to have control; you want the producers to have it.

Mr. SAMPSON: This partly explains the small returns received by the producers. The great difficulty they have to face will thus be realised. No better apple is produced than that grown in Western Australia. The climate is admirably adapted to the industry. Apples can be produced here cheaper than in most parts of the world. New Zealand is a good apple-growing country, but the care and attention essential to secure a crop there are largely in excess of what are necessary here. In New Zealand the trees require to be sprayed six or eight times a year. The cost of production and the efforts of labour are considerably greater there than they are here. The trouble is not production, but distribution.

Mr. Sleeman: Why do not the consumers get any of the benefit?

Mr. SAMPSON: Because of the lack of organisation. I am not here to speak in an antagonistic way of the agents. In any well organised scheme of marketing the agent is a necessity. There should be a concentration of intellect, of representatives of growers on the matter, the result of which would decide the markets to which the fruit would be sent. At present each individual acts for himself.

Mr. Marshall: You know the ramifications through which fruit has to pass when going to London.

Mr. SAMPSON: I desire to read a few lines of the report of the Imperial Economic Committee. I commend this publication to the notice of the hon. member. It will afford him the very knowledge he is so anxious to obtain.

Mr. Marshall: You are badly in need of it yourself.

Mr. SAMPSON: If I had as little knowledge as the hon. member I should have more confidence. I wish to read an extract from this report.

Mr. Teesdale: Ask the deputy chairman first.

Mr. SAMPSON: The report says—

We recommend that the dealers and their organisations in the several ports should take such action as will clear their calling from the suspicion which is prevalent amongst overseas producers that they are making a deliberately hidden additional profit. They are, as salesmen, rendering skilled and valuable services to the community, and are fully entitled to adequate remuneration. But we are strongly of the opinion that consolidated handling charges should be capable of detailed and satisfactory analysis into the several items of out of pocket expenses, and that such analysis should always be available to the shipper. Further, we think that the commission should be sufficient to cover all other expenses incurred in connection with the business.

The next quotation I will make from the report of the Imperial Economic Committee relates to the use of synthetic substitutes for fruit juices. I have been advised that there are on sale in Perth certain drinks alleged to be composed of the product of fruit juices, but which are not in accordance with that description.

The Minister for Agriculture. You should discuss that on the Health Estimates!

Mr. SAMPSON: But the matter is dealt with in the report of this commission.

The Minister for Agriculture: It cannot be introduced under this heading; it is purely a health matter.

Mr. SAMPSON: I had intended to ask the Minister for Health some questions regarding the matter, but this is an opportune time to ventilate it. The report says—

Our attention has been called to complaints which have been made in regard to the sale of synthetic substitutes for fruit juices. Although we have no reason to suppose that the admixture of a proportion of an artificial product with a genuine juice, is dangerous to health, it should be pointed out that such synthetic products do not contain the valuable vitamin qualities of the fruit juice. We recommend that nothing should be sold as a fruit juice, or under a name indicating it is a fruit juice, if it contains more than a small proportion of other ingredients. If existing legislation is not adequate for this purpose, we recommend that the question of amendment should be considered in the interests both of the consumer and of the producer.

As the Minister for Agriculture has mentioned, this may be a matter for the Minister for Health to look into, and I hope he will give consideration to the position as I understand it exists in Perth to-day. The information that came to me was an unsupported statement, but it is well worth looking into to ascertain whether synthetic substitutes are being used in the way I have indicated. Reverting to the question of control I would remind hon. members that during the present week a report appeared in the "West Australian" of a meeting of growers in Tasmania. That is a State always regarded as having very conservative ideas. That meeting of growers passed a resolution requesting the introduction of legislation to control exports.

Mr. Marshall: Tasmania has regained its sanity under a Labour Government.

Mr. Davy: That is an irrelevant kind of a remark!

Mr. SAMPSON: Was the interjection by the hon. member a charge against the Minister because the Bill of last session did not become an Act. I would not dare to make such an accusation.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SAMPSON: I regret that the Primary Products Marketing Bill did not become law.

The CHAIRMAN: I have already told the member for Swan that he is out of order in discussing proposed legislation.

Mr. SAMPSON: But the Bill I referred to was considered, and was defeated in another place. That Bill would have been of great assistance to various groups of primary producers in this State.

The Minister for Agriculture: You have already said that a number of times.

Mr. SAMPSON: But I have not referred to the poultry people before. Had that Bill been agreed to, it would have been of great assistance to them. Another group of producers, the bee-keepers, have asked for assistance. Up to the present, the bee-keepers of Western Australia have not been regarded with that amount of consideration or respect that I submit is their due. In Western Australia there is an abundance of flora from which the flow of nectar is considerable. People qualified to speak on the subject say that hundreds of tons of nectar are wasted each year simply because the bee-keeping industry has never been properly developed. To speak in support of the bee-keeping industry is as a voice crying in the wilderness. The time will come when the great possibilities ahead of that industry will be fully recognised. There are, I understand, at least two apiarists in Western Australia whose profits reach between £2,000 and £3,000 each year. That shows what can be done.

Mr. Angelo: They are busy bees!

Mr. SAMPSON: No very considerable capital is involved and in view of the fact that two men operating separately can achieve results such as I have indicated, the possibilities that exist for future developments must be apparent. I notice that a small amount is provided on the Estimates for the provision of bulletins giving particulars regarding the production of various primary products. I submit that an increased amount could very well be spent in this way. I do not suggest any very expensively printed booklets. Those that are issued now are valued highly by the producers generally, and I hope the Minister will take steps to see that pamphlets dealing with as great a variety of subjects as possible are made available. I refer to the small bulletins of eight to 16 pages. I understand that the Minister, when introducing the Estimates, stated that it had been decided to introduce a Bill to control the dried fruit exports.

The Minister for Agriculture: I said it was under consideration and that I recognised the necessity for such legislation.

Mr. SAMPSON: I understood the Minister to say that a measure would be introduced.

The Minister for Agriculture: I said it was probable.

Mr. SAMPSON: At any rate, I had the pleasure a few days ago of hearing the Premier say that such a Bill would be introduced, and therefore I am safe in saying that we will soon have an opportunity to deal with it. Reference has been made to what we regarded as the disabilities under which local growers laboured because of the existence of control in South Australia and Victoria. Personally I do not agree with that view. If it were not for the control that exists in South Australia and Victoria, the dried fruit producers here would be in a much worse position. The sale of their products would be undermined and they would be in competition locally with the products imported from Victoria and South Australia. I will quote from a report submitted by Mr. A. Yeates, the representative of the growers of Western Australia on the Commonwealth Dried Fruits Control Board. In the course of his remarks he said—

The board regretted that the States of Western Australia and New South Wales had not yet seen fit to pass legislation on similar lines to that enacted in Victoria and South Australia. The absence of uniform State legislation was the more regrettable in view of the fact that producers in Victoria and South Australia were compelled to export a large percentage of their products and thereby accept the lower prices ruling outside Australia, while their fellow producers in New South Wales and Western Australia were not under any obligation to carry their proportion of the burden of the export trade.

So that it seems to me if the Western Australian growers had behaved as they should have done they would be in a different position. The major portion of the growers voluntarily gave their support to their fellow growers in Victoria and South Australia, otherwise they might have found themselves in competition with the produce of the Eastern growers. I am hopeful that the Minister will make provision for the erection of cool storage sheds on the Fremantle wharf. Those facilities are much needed; they would be of great assistance to those who export fresh fruits. In addition, louvre vans would be invaluable for they would keep the fruit at a comparatively low temperature during transit. Under the existing conditions the fruit, when it arrives

at Fremantle after travelling long distances, is in a very heated condition. Experts say that fruit so over-heated cannot be brought down to a proper temperature until several days have elapsed. The result is that the fruit is damaged and when it arrives in England, it is not in prime condition. It is interesting to know that efforts have been made to grow tropical and sub-tropical fruit plants in different parts of the State with varying degrees of success. Those plants were imported by me from Queensland but I regret that in most instances success did not follow the experiments. The custard apple has made some progress, and the mango has been partly successful. I hope that next year, or at any rate, during the following year, I may be in a position to inform the Committee that the early progress made with these tropical fruits has been maintained and successful results achieved. I hope that it will be found possible to cultivate many tropical fruits in different parts of Western Australia.

MR. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [8.28] I wish to briefly support the remarks of the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) regarding tropical cultivation. I recognise that a considerable sum of money has been spent in the North by various people in order to demonstrate that tropical products will grow well in certain parts. Lately I have received samples of tropical products grown at the Drysdale Mission, where, I am glad to say, there are one or two men who are always experimenting. They do not receive any pay for their work but take an interest in it, without assistance in any shape or form. They are endeavouring to show what can be grown in the North. It may be of interest to members to know that they are growing the whole of the tobacco that is given to the natives at that place. We have heard about tobacco grown in the South-West on one of the groups, and no one was more delighted than I was when I heard about it. I have not had any information about that undertaking recently, because, I understand, that grower was not too pleased because I took an interest in his work. I think he was given to understand that the matter had nothing to do with the member for Roebourne, and at any rate, I have not had any reply to the communications I have despatched to him. I am very glad to know he is still trying. He was given a little help last season and he put in a

bigger area than he had in before. At the same station they are growing the castor oil bean and from it they are getting a higher extraction value than is obtained from any of the Indian oils. Everyone knows that that plant grows profusely here; it is almost a curse in people's back yards. It will grow well without any trouble and without water. Wherever the seed grows a good strong plant comes up. Mr. Le Souef has taken a lot of trouble in growing this particular seed at his gardens, and I have it on good authority that the oil extraction is considerably higher than that obtained from the same type of seed grown in India. Is there any reason why we should not have that industry looked into? There are many miles of country on which nothing has been attempted up to the present time, and no harm would be done by putting in one or two experimental plots to see what proportion of the seed could be grown to the acre. I would also like to record that this particular oil has been found to be the best that can be used for aeroplanes. We are aware that that market will be increasing every year and it is satisfactory to know that we have the opportunity of growing a seed that will be remunerative if we supply the oil obtained from the plant to the air squadrons that are expected to come into existence. I cannot miss the opportunity to tell you, Mr. Chairman, that I have received information from Queensland that all is well with the cotton crop in that State. Since the bounty has been granted, I am assured that the growers will not be able to supply sufficient cotton for local requirements. We need not be jealous of Queensland's success in that respect. The huge mill that has been erected in Sydney is working full time and now a second mill is being erected at a cost of £80,000 in another part of that State. Every bit of the local cotton will now be dealt with at those two mills and it is satisfactory to know that eventually we shall have many articles of clothing, to say nothing of sheeting and towelling manufactured in Australia, and that it will not be necessary to import these things from Home. That has been a drag and a drain on the people here, but with the local article being manufactured by local labour in extensive factories, everyone should be satisfied with his proportion of the benefit that will be derived.

Mr. Davy: Except the man who has to buy it.

Mr. TEESDALE: You must then deal with the tariff; I cannot help that. At the present time it seems to be the correct thing to give a small bonus to enable manufacturers to keep on their feet. At any rate it is satisfactory to find that the local article is to be used in Australia. Knitting wool, which is used extensively now in Australia, is being supplied to the retail trade at 50 per cent. below the price of the imported article, and that allows of 25 per cent. profit for the retailer. I am glad to know that because it will stop any juggling in prices in connection with that product. A fixed rate has been arranged and the wool must be sold at that rate. It is fair and reasonable to expect, when a retailer can get 25 per cent., that it will not be sold at a higher price. I would like it to be recognised that we sent a particular sample of cotton to England—three or four bales—and that the sample obtained the highest price in the world's market. My Queensland friends wrote to say that they want the cotton, a sample of which we sent them. They declare that they can find a splendid market for it because they themselves cannot grow a similar quality. I hope that the Government have completed the survey and classification of the blocks in the Elephant district near Wyndham. I hope also they will recognise that the North as well as the South has a little claim on the Minister for Agriculture for one or two small experiments in the shape of farms to see what particular products will be successful. We do not require a big staff of expensive scientists to be engaged; we want one man, preferably a man who has been a worker. I prefer a worker to all the experts on God's earth. The man that puts the seed in and looks after it, and knows what to do, is the man that is required. If this Government, or any other Government, should appoint a tropical expert for the North, I hope they will secure the services of a practical man, one with a knowledge of the industry from the commencement to the time the produce is harvested and exported to the world's markets. I have had a painful experience of some of these experts, men who fly around in aeroplanes and discuss the possibilities of our huge tracts of country. We do not want any more of that sort. I would rather see the North remain in its present state of inaction than have such curses about. The

effect of these people is merely to destroy everyone's confidence. Their presence does more harm than good, and it takes us years to live down the harm they do. The pronounced silence of the Estimates in regard to the North-West augurs well for that part of the State. I consider the time is not far distant when the members for the North-West—not the present members—will be addressing people who will listen with interest to what is being said, people who will be enthusiastic and who will recognise the huge possibilities of the North. We shall not then be talking as we have been talking for the past nine or ten years to practically deaf ears.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [8.40]: We have heard a great deal about marketing. I wish some means could be devised by which growers of fruit could get a reasonable price for their product. When one buys fruit retail quite a high price has to be paid for it, but that is not to say that the producer gets a fair price. Of course there are difficulties in the way, such as high rents and various charges. From time to time we have heard many suggestions about marketing, but we have not gone any further forward. Of course it is impossible to take the fruit from the orchard to the consumer without cost. It does not matter whether or not there is a co-operative concern, there are salaries to pay, or wages to pay, and charges as well, especially where fruit is put through the ordinary channels. It all means expense. The trouble with our fruit is that it is scattered all over the country. There are not sufficient quantities in a particular locality to enable a factory to be started. If we had 30,000 acres of fruit in one centre we could use every bit of it. To-day the fruit that can be sent to the shops is sold, but inferior fruit finds no market at all. We tried to establish a factory at Bridgetown but a good many of the apples that might have been used had to come from Mt. Barker, and others from other distant centres. There were not sufficient at Bridgetown of an inferior quality to keep the factory going. If, outside Fremantle, we had 5,000 acres under peach trees, we could have a factory there. Probably with apricots also we could do as well as they do at Mildura under high irrigation costs. If we could grow our pears in large quantities we could also do something with them,

but these fruits cannot be carried into the city or long distances to a factory. That has always been the trouble and will be the trouble until we concentrate a bit more. There is only one place in the world where they have a real pool that does cover everything. That country is Persia. The Persian Government buy all the wheat grown there and distribute it. Should there be a shortage, the Government have to go out.

Mr. Marshall: You would like that to apply here just at present.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There will not be a shortage in this country, at any rate not in regard to wheat. When we deal with wheat, we deal with an article that is not a perishable product. With fruit, it is a different matter. I do not wish to speak at any length on these Estimates, but I would like to impress on the Minister and on the House that the department is an advisory department, that it is there to advise agriculturists on all matters connected with the industry. The department are capable of doing it well, whether it be in respect of wheat growing, fruit growing, or anything else. In the way of protecting the country from the spread of insect pests, the department have also done well. The department also handle the rabbit and other pests. The officers do excellent work, but their job is to advise and also to administer various Acts, and not nearly so much to engage upon the business of farm making or farm control, except so far as is necessary for experimental purposes.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is so. Our business is to educate and advise and protect.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and to produce suitable seeds. The production of Nahawa wheat has proved of great advantage to practically all the farmers of this State. Nahawa or another of the wheats produced by our Agricultural Department is to be found on nearly every Western Australian farm. The best farmer in the country will not, of course, be found in any department of this State, just as the best Victorian farmer is not to be found in any Victorian department. I suppose any one of the 10,000 or 20,000 farmers of Victoria is a better wheat grower than any Victorian official. The official's business is to give the farmers advice which will be of real benefit to them and the State. He furnishes them with information which they cannot obtain for themselves. People who grow

things are not people who have been trained in departments. It is natural to some people, especially ladies, to grow things. Wherever the work of growing fruit or flowers or vegetables is given to a lady, she carries it out as a natural industry. Helped by departmental officers, however, growers do much better. Exactly the same thing happens in connection with the breeding of stock. We have put pounds on to the average fleece of our sheep during the last few years. I remember when the sheep in the Great Southern district, one of the best sheep districts we have, cut 4 lbs. or 5 lbs. Then their owners were not well off. To-day the sheep in the Great Southern district cut twice as much wool, and the owners are well off. The change is due largely to the officers of the Agricultural Department. The position is all right as regards sheep breeding, because many of our sheep breeders use stud stock; but the position is not all right as regards horse breeding, draught horses more particularly. I do not know why, but all over the State people have gone out of horse breeding. At one time travelling droves of young stock could be seen throughout the country, even in new districts; but to-day one sees very few indeed. Probably not a fraction of the number of horses bred three years ago will be bred this year. Horses will certainly be wanted again; in fact, they are now being brought in week by week from the East. I do not know what can be done to encourage horse breeding, but I commend the matter to the Minister's consideration. I hope he will instruct his officers to look into the question. Farmers must from time to time replace horses that have grown old, and hundreds of thousands of acres are being cleared each year, and in that connection horses will be needed. I do not propose to speak of the North-West to-night; the subject has often been debated. If we are going to do anything with the North-West, we shall have to bring out special people for the work. Probably we could get some from Malta, which is a British possession. Maltese could be obtained for fishing and cultivation in the North. Very likely settlers could be secured from Italy also. The sea wealth of the North will give it its lift. Fishing combined with agriculture ought to do very well there. I should like to see these industries given a chance in combination. As regards agricultural education, it is important that our young people who

intend to follow agricultural pursuits should be properly trained, so far as it is possible to train them. The time they must give to education may just as well be devoted to the study of agriculture at Muresk. As we have secondary schools in Perth and in country towns, so we have agricultural colleges at Muresk and Narrogin. Agriculture is the greatest industry of all that we are likely to engage in, and our young people should be prepared for it. In Professor Paterson, the Professor of Agriculture at the University, we have a most capable man; and I hope his advice and services will be utilised at Muresk. I doubt if there is in Australia to-day a more capable man than Professor Paterson.

The Minister for Agriculture: He is on the advisory committee.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am glad of that. He is the one man of scientific training as an agriculturist.

The Minister for Agriculture: Mr. Sutton has had scientific training.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Professor Paterson was trained in agriculture in Scotland before coming to this country, and he is doing excellent work. The research work which should be done, and I hope will be done, at Muresk must necessarily to some extent come under Professor Paterson and Mr. Sutton. I hope that work will not be lost sight of. Two things have made possible the spread of agriculture in Western Australia. One—which should not be overlooked, seeing that it has a considerable bearing on the development of agriculture over a great part of this State—is that we have natural mulch, which means that evaporation through the roots of trees is prevented. The trees are killed and the land is stirred up, and then there is no further evaporation. Few spots possess this advantage, but Western Australia is one of those spots. The fact adds greatly to the value and productiveness of our lands, and it means that after one has got over the first year or two and the soil has become fairly charged with stored-up moisture, which is not used by the crop, one can grow crops with a less rainfall than is needed for the first or the second time of sowing. That is the secret. The moisture is stored by the mulch, just as moisture is retained in orchard lands by continuous working. It is a fact that to-day crops can be grown in, say, Bruce Rock or in salmon gum and gimlet country with less rainfall than

was required a few years ago. It is fortunate that that is so. Land thus served is more productive under our conditions than it would otherwise be.

Mr. Lindsay: I have not seen much natural mulch in forest country yet.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Other people have. I did not say the hon. member had. I made no such accusation against him. I do not think he would suggest that I did. However, from what I have seen of the back country, and from what I have been told by people who have investigated the point, I am enabled to make this statement. When the land at Southern Cross has been tilled for a few years, the growing of crops there will be more certain.

Mr. Lindsay: That is due to consolidation.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Mr. Forrest farmed at Southern Cross successfully for years. I do not think he had a failure even in 1914. Of course he got his start without the aid of a bank, though he might have obtained financial assistance, seeing that Southern Cross was a considerable town. Selling butter and milk, together with mixed farming, gave him his start. I am sure that a few years hence the results obtained at Southern Cross will be much better than they are now. The natural mulch is a great thing for the back country. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) will agree with me that crops have become better than they were.

Mr. Lindsay: That is because of consolidation. The ground is getting solid.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It always was fairly solid. A great deal of the land away from morrell country is fairly solid. In the early stages, when cultivation was light, the land soon became solid. I know that in salmon gum country the land works from soft to firm, just as in York gum country it works from a hard surface to a surface fine enough to accept the seed. Having this natural mulch, we should be able to go ahead with confidence. The higher price of wheat renders available much land that could not possibly have been cultivated when wheat stood at 3s. Such land can be used with wheat at 5s., because to get back the cost of production, 30s. per acre, one requires only six bushels at 5s. as against ten bushels at 3s. The increase in the price of wheat has made possible not only the use of land generally referred to as light, but also of sand plain country, which could not be used at all a year or two ago. That fact

must be borne in mind. It has opened up a situation that will result in a tremendous increase in the area of crop production.

The Minister for Lands: Some light lands give better crops than some heavy lands.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But that would not be so for long. Wheat could be grown at Fremantle for 6s. per bushel. The Minister, when he goes farming, had better take up the best land. If he cannot do that he can take up lighter land and do very well from it, but not year in and year out. We have still a great deal of very good land to be cleared, and a great deal of really satisfactory second-class land. Of course our costs have been increased 50 per cent. by the tariff, but fortunately for us the world's demand for wheat has kept up, with the result that we are getting 50 per cent. more for our wheat than we got a few years ago and so we can meet this artificial impost that we have to pay. In this country fruit is very expensive to market, and I hope the member for Swan and the Minister will be able to devise some means of reducing that cost. I do not know whether these things can always be accomplished by legislation. I think, with the Minister for Lands, it can better be done by co-operation along reasonable lines. I understand that the Muresk College cannot be discussed until we reach the next division, when I shall have a few words to say.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet—in reply) [9.3]: Before the items are discussed I should like to reply to some of the comments made. It is not fair that members should attempt to make a comparison between the Agricultural Vote and the Mines Vote, for the two departments are not comparable. The Agricultural Department is an advisory department in relation to land settlement, and much of the work of land settlement is carried on by the Lands Department, by the Industries Assistance Board and by the Agricultural Bank. So it is not to be expected the Agricultural Vote should be anything like the Vote for the Mines Department. The Mines Department has included in its administration a chemical branch. Several members have declared the necessity for an agricultural chemist. We have one already, but he is paid under the Mines Vote; because the chemical staff are amalgamated, and the branch does the work of all departments. We have a supervising

chemist and all the chemists and analysts who serve under him. Again we have the public batteries, the administration of workers' compensation in relation to the Miners' Phthisis Act, the geological survey and so forth. The work of surveying, of course, is done by the Lands Department for the Agricultural Department. Then there is the inspection of machinery for the whole of the State, including machinery on farms and in factories. All that is done under the administration of the Mines Department. So the Estimates of the two departments cannot be compared. The Agricultural Vote is increasing year by year because we are extending the functions of the department. During the time the Government have been in office we have appointed a number of new officials to give attention to the agricultural industry. The principal and staff of the Agricultural College will be discussed later on. We have a veterinary pathologist, two veterinary surgeons, a stock inspector and a viticulturist. This officer devotes the whole of his time to helping those engaged in the viticultural industry.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He is doing good work.

Mr. Stubbs: A tremendous lot of poor stuff goes on the market.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We cannot prevent the orchardist from marketing such products. We have appointed seven agricultural advisers and quite a number of agricultural cadets. Nine of those cadets attached to the department receive a thorough practical and scientific training in agriculture. They have to put in a two years' course at the department, whilst pursuing their studies at the University. Later on all these young men, probably, will be included in the departmental staff.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: During the last seven or eight years we have produced many good agriculturists from amongst the students.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There are no fewer than 47 officials in the Agricultural Department, all advising on the agricultural industry. That does not include the cadets under training.

Mr. Teesdale: You haven't one or two for the North, I suppose.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The member for Roebourne and the member for Gascoyne referred to the North. Their

ambitions are all right, but the programme they advance is not practicable under present conditions.

Mr. Teesdale: You now have the land surveyed up there, and I hope you are going to use it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member always paints a rosy picture, and I am ready to believe he does it conscientiously. However, the member for Gascoyne is not nearly so sanguine about tropical agriculture as he likes to appear to be; for he has had experience of it and it has failed signally.

Mr. Teesdale: For want of expert advice.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The previous Government put some settlers on the land in the Carnarvon district, but those settlers failed.

Mr. Angelo: Because the promised expert did not come along.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This is all piffle, this talk about experts. It seems that before a man can go on the land he must be led by the nose by an expert.

Mr. Angelo: Well, you have 47 of them down here.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Under present conditions tropical agriculture at Carnarvon is an economic impossibility. Carnarvon has not a tropical climate; it is tropical only in respect of heat; it lacks the tropical rains without which there can be no tropical agriculture save by costly irrigation. In my youth I was steeped in tropical agriculture. I was in the sugar industry, in the maize industry and in the banana industry all the days of my life before I came to Western Australia, so I had a perfect knowledge of those industries.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Could you not go up to Carnarvon and give them some advice?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have advised the member for Gascoyne that the only practical method of closer settlement at Carnarvon is to cut up the stations and enable a larger population to grow sheep. Then, established on a sheep basis, they could dabble in experiments with other propositions. That is the only practicable proposition for that district, and the hon. member knows it.

Mr. Angelo: I do not. You are just romancing.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I went out and saw the banana plantations

at Carnarvon, and I realised that one might just as well try to grow sheep in the Arctic Circle. The conditions were utterly unfavourable to tropical agriculture. I do not deny that bananas can be grown there.

Mr. Davy: They can be grown at the North Pole, if you are prepared to spend enough money on them.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the position at Carnarvon. All those things can be grown there, but not economically. The member for Gascoyne declares that magnificent tomatoes have been grown in the district. Of course that can be done, because there is the water there. So, too, with oranges and dates and bananas. But the test is, can those things be grown commercially. Of course they cannot. The hon. member gave away the show when he said, "we can grow splendid tomatoes, but we cannot market them, because they are perishable."

Mr. Angelo: We cannot market them, because we have not the steamers.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: What the hon. member ought to be discussing is, not the growing of tomatoes, but provision for their marketing. Of course that is their trouble. Thousands of cases of tomatoes could be grown under irrigation in the Carnarvon district, but the trouble is marketing. A tropical expert is not necessary to show us how to market produce.

Mr. Teesdale: You have the marketing trouble down south also.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Some years ago the Mitchell Government out up areas of land around Carnarvon and put settlers upon them.

Mr. Angelo: Three.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The result was what I anticipated, and what every other person having a knowledge of land conditions must have anticipated. The hon. member's own firm wrote a letter to the Minister for Lands—a letter that has already been quoted in this House—in which the whole proposition was condemned.

Mr. Angelo: Under those conditions.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The writer referred to the fatuous people who still thought that tropical agriculture could be carried on in Carnarvon, and recommended that all the blocks be combined in one area and utilised for sheep.

Mr. Angelo: He did not say that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I shall get the letter.

Mr. Angelo: He was referring to 160 acres and you would not grow many sheep on that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member's brother desired that the areas selected for closer settlement—he described the proposition as a fatuous one—should be combined and devoted to their proper purpose, instead of being used for agriculture. The hon. member has had too much experience in the Carnarvon district to attempt to pursue his own proposition in a practical way. In the days to come when Western Australia carries a population of 10,000,000 or 20,000,000 people and we have to make use of our rivers and water supplies, irrigation might become feasible. When we have a large local market to absorb our perishable products, many things might be possible, but that day is not yet. Therefore, why dissipate our energies and waste our money on propositions that will give no practical return? The essential need of the North-West is to make the pastoral holdings smaller and give a larger number of men an opportunity to make £1,000 a year as against one person making £10,000. The people of Carnarvon know that the hon. member's proposition is not practicable. The member for Roebourne spoke of certain products which could be grown abundantly. He is quite correct. The castor oil family will grow abundantly in Western Australia and the bean is of excellent quality. The Department of Agriculture have investigated the matter, but it is not an economic proposition. We cannot possibly compete against the product of other countries where the labour conditions are much easier. The cost of picking the bean here would be too high, and so we are not encouraging the cultivation of castor oil beans. It is useless to encourage people to embark on propositions that will not give them a livelihood. The date palm grows magnificently in the North and many will doubtless be grown in years to come, but we have to face the position as we find it to-day. I have never been a party to experimenting with the lives and happiness of people by putting them on to propositions out of which they could not make a living. I leave that to someone else. The member for Roebourne also spoke of the cotton crop. I am afraid that is not so profitable as he might think. I was in Queensland this year and made it my business to learn as much as possible

of the prospects of the cotton crop there. I had a long talk with Mr. Evans, the cotton adviser of Queensland, formerly a resident of America. He was brought out by the Government to advise on the production of cotton. He did not hold out hope of the cotton industry of Queensland being successful. I am satisfied from my investigations in Queensland that the growing of cotton in Australia is not an economic success. It could be grown commercially only by the assistance of large bounties, both Federal and State, and then it must be grown in association with some other industry that would give the settlers a livelihood.

Hon. G. Taylor: And with very cheap labour.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It might be managed by family labour. In Queensland cotton growing is associated with maize growing. Mr. Evans said "This country is admirably suited for growing cotton. I know of no country in the world where the conditions are so suitable." Those conditions do not prevail in Western Australia. In making that statement I exempt the Kimberleys, because I do not know that part of the State. I know that it has a far better rainfall than has Roebourne or Carnarvon. I said to Mr. Evans "Why do not they go in for more cotton growing?" He replied, "Because the people here are too well off. The American farmer is forced to go into it. His economic condition is worse than that of the farmers of Australia."

Mr. Davy: He has nigger labour, too.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The American farmer has to work harder and live harder than do farmers in Australia. Mr. Evans also said, "In asking people to take up cotton growing, you are asking them to embark on an industry that does not give them the opportunities that another industry does." While I think we might grow cotton in the Kimberleys, I am satisfied from my investigations in Queensland that the prospects of the industry there are not so rosy as some people would have us believe. While the Australian farmer can get a better living from some other industry he will not bother about industries that give a lower return and require more labour. The farmers in the wheat belt could produce any quantity of butter. If the necessity arose they could produce sufficient to supply all our requirements, but they will not do that while

wheat is 5s. a bushel and wool is bringing its present price. What farmer would waste his time milking cows and working on Sunday and on all other days when he can follow a more profitable occupation?

The Premier: That will come later on.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. Let us confine our attention to the industries that bring us a good return and give the people decent economic conditions.

Mr. Davy: Let us direct all our energies to the most profitable industries.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Certainly. Then when a slump comes in such industries we shall have a reserve of other industries on which to embark and carry on the State. It is of no use appointing a tropical expert to wander up and down the coast as Mr. Wise did, to talk about things and yet feel discouraged in his own heart. Mr. Wise was a good man. He knew the game from A to Z and was steeped in the knowledge of it; he possessed scientific knowledge, but he described as hopeless a lot of the schemes that the member for Gascoyne urges.

Mr. Angelo: We are experimenting at our own cost.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But what is the use of experimenting when we know it can be done? We can grow tomatoes and oranges and other things in the Carnarvon district and what is the good of experimenting? The object is to grow things that will give people a livelihood and bring greater prosperity to the country.

Mr. Angelo: Do you know that Mr. Hampshire recommended dairying up there?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If it is possible to grow the feed.

Mr. Angelo: He says it can be grown.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Why does not the hon. member take it on?

Mr. Angelo: We are taking it on.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I wish the hon. member the best of luck, but I would not advise any man to take it on in that district unless he had a market right at hand. One dairyman might get a market for his produce in Carnarvon but 20 dairymen would not. Mr. Hampshire went up there and said it was possible to grow lucerne, and of course dairying could be carried on, but he did not say it would be an economic proposition. It can be done, but the test is whether it would pay. It might pay one or two milkmen to cater for the local market and that is all.

Mr. Angelo: We want a factory up there.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Why talk such humbug? There has been a fish factory up there; and meat works were erected at a cost of £40,000 that have never exported so much as the toe of a lamb. The fish proposition—

Mr. Angelo: I had no interest in that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member talks of all these schemes and he blinks at the one practical proposition of making the stations smaller, so that 12 people could be settled where at present there is only one.

Hon. G. Taylor: You will lose some of the squatters' votes if you are not careful.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The squatters themselves know that that is a sound proposition. They know they cannot hold the country for all time.

Hon. G. Taylor: They will hold it as long as they can.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not blame the squatters. We are discussing practical means of settlement and we have to keep to practical schemes. The squatter is no different from any other man.

Mr. Lindsay: We are all land hungry.

Hon. G. Taylor: The squatter is still doing good work.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Undoubtedly. The only way to bring about land settlement in the North is by having smaller holdings.

Mr. Davy: And that would not carry you very far.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It would carry us further than we are at present. The stations in the North are not stocked up, improvements have not been carried out and the country does not carry the population it is capable of carrying. Much has been said about the agricultural industry prospering. Reference has been made to the natural mulch conserving the moisture in the land. I do not know sufficient to say whether that statement is correct; it is a matter for the scientists. We know that in some places there is a natural mulch and that the land having it requires less tillage to conserve the moisture. The price of wheat has had much to do with the prosperity the farmers are enjoying, but the greatest aid to agriculture has not been mentioned—the discovery of superphosphate. If the supply of super. were cut off to-morrow it would be the greatest calamity that could befall Australia. Great areas of

land that were once desert land have now been brought under cultivation by the use of superphosphate. That is the great factor, apart from the magnificent price we are getting for wheat, that is responsible for the development of agriculture and our great production in Western Australia. There was not much necessity for the member for Swan to make the speech he did regarding fruit organisation, and urging the Government to bring down a Bill. At the last general elections the Premier promised that the Government would introduce a Bill along the lines of the Act that has been operating so successfully in Queensland. I know it has been operating successfully there. There is now no agitation against it. When I was in Queensland this year I saw evidence all over the country that this legislation had done good to the fruitgrower, and had been generally availed of by most of the settlers. The present Government have fulfilled their promises; we introduced the Bill but it was not accepted in another place, and was not generally well received in this Chamber.

Mr. Sampson: You should not abandon the attempt at the first failure.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This party have fulfilled their promise. It is now for the hon. member to convert his own party. He is not doing a fair thing in urging the Government to again bring down the Bill. The Government made the attempt, but are unable to do anything because of the opposition of the hon. member's own colleagues and associates. He must convince them.

Mr. Davy: I do not think he has much chance.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The member for West Perth put forward the only reasonable objection to the Bill, one that exists in my own mind. I know that our agriculturists need organising. In the case of people who are so insular and so self-dependent as are the agriculturists, I am afraid it will be difficult to secure the same voluntary co-operation as is obtained amongst working men. If they get this organisation they will probably abuse it unless there exists some authority to prevent them from doing so. Wheatgrowers speak with pride of the success of the voluntary wheat pool. The first time the voluntary wheat pool fails to secure the price that other people offer, a bad blow will be administered to it.

Mr. Lindsay: That will never happen.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It would lead to loss of confidence. The voluntary wheat pool would not be in existence but for the compulsory pool, which gave producers a knowledge of and an interest in co-operation, and created that organisation which led to the voluntary pool. A voluntary wheat pool would be no further advanced to-day than the compulsory fruit pool but for the compulsory organisation which created the machinery. When the Government created the compulsory wheat pool, there were clamours throughout the country, and statements were made that the Government were confiscating the wheat and financing on it.

Mr. Lindsay: Was that system not general throughout the Commonwealth?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The State Government merely introduced legislation to conform to that passed by the Commonwealth.

The Premier: It arose as a result of a conference between State Ministers for Agriculture.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It was stated that the Labour Government were commandeering the wheat and financing upon it.

The Premier: The Westralian Farmers advised the producers to resist by force the taking of the wheat.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The farmers enjoy certain conditions to-day because of the compulsion that was brought about in the beginning. Fruit-growers will never act together except by compulsion. When they are compelled to come together and concentrate upon their own problems, they will no doubt create that machinery and intelligence that will result in better conditions and better marketing arrangements than are found to-day. Any authority of this kind that is given to the producers ought to be attended by the precaution that the Government should have the right to wipe out the organisation if it was found to be acting detrimentally to the public interest. I would never father any Bill unless it gave the Minister power to dissolve the board if it was found to be acting in opposition to the interests of the public. It would be possible for any board to have crops destroyed in order to keep the market up, and to induce producers to refuse to grow crops and other things in order to exploit the community. It is only

human nature to keep up prices, but this should not be permitted in the interests of the community. I admit the need for organisation in this particular industry, because the producers will not get the full results of their labour without it. I, therefore, introduced the Bill. I took care to provide that the Minister should have power to look after the people's interests if they were found to be unduly exploited.

Mr. Lindsay: We do not care about that sort of thing.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot understand the complaints of some members that certain officers do not receive higher salaries. The salaries are fixed by the Public Service Commissioner, and as a result of classification. They are higher than they were. Members have picked out one officer who, they claim, should receive more favourable consideration. They have referred to the wool expert, Mr. McCallum. He is a good officer, but I do not know why he should have been selected.

Hon. G. Taylor: As an expert he is rather lower paid than other experts.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I value his work. He is a good and an enthusiastic officer. But the wool production of the country does not come under him. Every sheep breeder in the Great Southern district is doing just as much for the wool production as is Mr. McCallum by producing stud rams and stud ewes. I sometimes wonder what is behind this propaganda.

Mr. Stubbs: There is no one behind it so far as I am concerned.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Letters I have received say he should have this and that consideration. He requires a motor car. I should like to give him one, but there are 45 other officers who need motor cars. This country is not wealthy. We are merely creating wealth now, but we have not sufficient to employ the hundreds of inspectors that members desire should be engaged to give advice all round the country, and to conduct the experiments that are required, and we have not enough money with which to pay high salaries and provide motor cars. The administration can only pay what it can afford to pay. We can give our officers only what the people of the country can afford. If the country advances in prosperity we will

grant better conditions. When that happens I shall be glad to give this particular officer a motor car. I should also be glad to make his services available to as many people as possible. The same could be said of many other officers. Mr. Wickens has no motor car. He administers the whole of the fruit industry. He is one of the most intelligent officers in Australia.

Mr. Stubbs: Who asked that he should have a motor car?

Mr. Lindsay: I think he needs an aeroplane to do all his travelling.

Mr. Sampson: It might pay to give him one.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It would pay to give him a motor car if we could do so.

The Premier: There is a strong tendency to overdo the motor car business in the Government service.

Hon. G. Taylor: I have never heard him complain about his position. He is a fine fellow. He would not be behind anything.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not suggest that he is. I merely ask members why they pick out Mr. McCallum.

Hon. G. Taylor: Because his salary as an expert is lower than that of others.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There are other experts with lower salaries, and some of them have been longer in the service than Mr. McCallum.

Hon. G. Taylor: But their work is not so important. He looks after the dairying and the pig industry as well.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We have nothing to do with the salaries. I cannot discuss that question, because the Public Service Commissioner classifies the officers and is accordingly responsible for their salaries.

Mr. Davy: And they also have the right of appeal.

The Premier: Many of the officers are before the appeal board now.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Minister is attacking us.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not like any particular officer to be picked out. There are many valuable officers in the department who are doing excellent work.

Hon. G. Taylor: No one has made disparaging remarks regarding any of them.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The salaries are fixed by the Public Service

Commissioner and we cannot alter them in this House. I appreciate Mr. McCallum's work. I have assisted him in every possible way, and have encouraged him in his work.

Mr. Stubbs: You should not have said there was propaganda behind it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I get more letters about a motor car for him and about his salary than I do about any ten officers in the department.

Mr. Teesdale: He is a bit of a cripple.

Mr. Griffiths: As a result of his service to the State.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. McCallum has not protested against his salary.

Hon. G. Taylor: Nor has he done so to anyone.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It appears in the press that Mr. McCallum has been again singled out. There are other officers who have done magnificent work. I will treat them all alike.

Hon. G. Taylor: I do not think the Press will take much notice of this matter.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Members do not realise how much the officers of the service appreciate the references that are made to them in this Chamber.

Hon. G. Taylor: They will get them out of "Hansard," not out of the Press.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am obliged to members for the attention they have given to these Estimates. I appreciate their support and criticism. I trust that, no matter what Administration may be in charge of the department, the good work that has been done in the last few years will be continued in the future.

Item—Sheep and Wool Inspector, £432:

Mr. STUBBS: I wish to assure the Minister that the only reason I mentioned this officer during my earlier remarks was that, on looking through the Estimates, I had noted the discrepancy between the salary paid to this officer and those paid to other expert officers of the department. Mr. McCallum has never spoken to me regarding his position, and until to-night I did not know what salary he received. I was sorry to hear the Minister say that he was afraid there was some propaganda going on. There is no truth in that suggestion so far as I know. Whoever was responsible for fixing Mr. McCallum's salary does not know

his job, because, as the Minister pointed out, there are dozens of officers doing equally good work as that carried out by Mr. McCallum. Two wrongs do not make a right. I believe the dairy expert is a first class man, but I do not think the difference between the officers should amount to £200 a year. The same applies to the fruit expert. I hope the Minister will call the attention of the Public Service Commissioner to the discrepancy.

The Premier: That is not one of the Minister's functions. The Public Service Commissioner would resent that being done, and, in fact, the Minister would not do it.

Mr. STUBBS: In my opinion the anomalies I have drawn attention to should be remedied, and nothing will convince me to the contrary. Mr. McCallum is an excellent officer, and it was because of his advice to producers to get rid of a certain class of sheep, that they have been able to double their money in 12 or 18 months. I hope the attention of the Public Service Commissioner will be drawn to this matter.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I was the first member to draw attention to this officer's salary and I wish to disclaim any knowledge of what Mr. McCallum's ideas regarding his position may be. In looking through the Estimates I noted the difference in the salaries paid to the various expert officers, and seeing that wool takes second place only to wheat production, it occurred to me as anomalous that the wool expert should receive so much less than other experts. Mr. McCallum appears to me to be a man much after the type of Mr. Sutton.

The Premier: What is the use of talking about salaries: we have no control over them.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I certainly do not desire to indulge in any propaganda.

The Premier: I do not think this sort of discussion does officers any good. The Public Service Commissioner is apt to resent this sort of thing as tantamount to instructions to him. This may have an effect contrary to what the hon. member may desire.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Whether the Public Service Commissioner resents it or not, I do not think he knows what this officer is doing.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I regret the trend the discussion has taken because, as the Premier pointed out, it is not calculated to do these officers much good.

The Premier: I am certain of it.

Mr. Griffiths: He would be a poor old Public Service Commissioner who would allow this to do an officer any harm!

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Last year this officer was in receipt of £408, whereas this year he is getting £432.

Mr. Davy: That is the ordinary £24 rise that the whole of the civil servants received.

The Premier: No, that is due to the reclassification.

Mr. Davy: Practically every public servant received a rise of about £24.

The Premier: Some got nothing, some got £12, some £24, some £56.

The Minister for Agriculture: In this instance the increase was because of the reclassification.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: At any rate, the increase is proof that the position of these officers has been considered. I do not say that the increase is adequate. On looking through the Estimates one would be inclined to think that the position of wool expert is not regarded as so important as that of experts in other branches, seeing that the wool expert is in receipt of £200 a year less than some of the other officers. For instance, the rabbit inspector gets £600. If that officer has improved the breed of rabbits to the same extent as Mr. McCallum has improved the breed of sheep, no doubt the former deserves his salary!

Mr. Lindsay: Not from that standpoint.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: In my opinion the position of Chief Inspector of Rabbits is not as important as that of the wool expert. I wish to make it clear that Mr. McCallum has never spoken to me regarding his position, his salary, or matters regarding his transport throughout the country.

Mr. TEESDALE: On dozens of occasions I have asked Ministers whether they would allow Mr. McCallum to travel through the North where the people have never received the slightest attention, nor received any advice regarding their wool production.

The Minister for Agriculture: When did you make an application along those lines to me?

Mr. TEESDALE: I can assure the Minister that the people up North would appreciate a visit from Mr. McCallum, and I think they have the right to ask for a little of this officer's attention, equally with the sheep men in other parts of the State.

The Minister for Agriculture: Well, ask for it.

Mr. TEESDALE: The people up North feel that they have been neglected. If this officer is as capable as some hon. members have indicated, we will be prepared to provide a motor car for him for a couple of months so that he may get over the country, and furnish the advice that is so necessary.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Hon. members understand that the Government cannot interfere with salaries paid to officers. The measure of a man's salary should not be gauged by the importance of the industry with which he is associated. It would be wrong to say that because an officer is concerned with an industry worth £10,000,000 a year to the State, his salary should be correspondingly greater than that paid to an officer concerned with an industry valued at £5,000,000 a year.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is a good thing for some of us that our salaries are not based on the number of electors we represent!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That interjection is very apt. Hon. members should not make a comparison between Mr. McCallum and the Chief Inspector of Rabbits. Mr. McCallum is largely a wool-classer, whereas the Chief Inspector of Rabbits is an administrative officer, controlling a large number of men and having four rabbit-proof fences to look after. Nor do I want Mr. McCallum compared with Mr. Hampshire, because the latter may have greater qualifications. The Public Service Commissioner says Mr. Hampshire has greater qualifications. Mr. Hampshire is a scientifically trained man: he purchased all the cattle for the group settlements; he is manager of the State butter factories; he engages upon herd testing. I value all these officers highly, and Mr. McCallum no less than any other.

Item—Experimental plots, including North-West, £350:

Mr. COVERLEY: What does this item mean?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We carry out a number of experiments on farms throughout the country. If we engage in experiments in the North or North-West—the hon. member made some representations to me along those lines—the money will be taken from this vote.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—College of Agriculture, £7,480:

Mr. GRIFFITHS: What number of scholars will be catered for at the college next term?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Fifty students.

Vote put and passed.

Department of Chief Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew, Minister; Hon. S. W. Munsie Honorary Minister) in charge of the Vote).

Vote—Chief Secretary, £16,058:

Mr. SAMPSON (Swan) [10.0]: Does the Minister propose to make a statement?

The Premier: No.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do not we have a general discussion on all the votes under the Chief Secretary's department?

The Premier: Yes, and there cannot then be a general discussion on each division afterwards.

The CHAIRMAN: That is the procedure as laid down in Standing Order No. 386a.

Mr. SAMPSON: I know that the Honorary Minister has been sick and is not yet thoroughly well.

The Premier: We have plenty of well men here, but we do not want to talk for talking's sake. If you request any information, it will be supplied.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope the Premier does not suggest that other Ministers have talked for the sake of talking. The votes under the Department of the Chief Secretary are of paramount importance and I would have appreciated a statement from the Honorary Minister covering the several divisions. Gaols constitute a subject of first importance in sociological interest.

Hon. G. Taylor: Take my word and keep away from them as long as you can.

Mr. SAMPSON: I was hoping to hear from the Minister that a decision had been reached to establish a prison farm. I have spoken of this need on many occasions, but it is my duty to continue to refer to it since no decision has yet been reached. I am convinced that a prison farm is essential in the interests of the prisoners and of the State. While the prisoners held at Fremantle carry out some work, they are not employed to the extent that free men are. Their hours are not as long, their work is not as arduous, and the fact of their being held in comparative idleness makes it diffi-

cult on their discharge for them to hold a job in competition with men who are used to work. Other countries have shown us the way. A number of important articles have appeared in the "West Australian" under the pen name of "J.W.E.A." setting out what is being done in America. Unquestionably the care of prisoners is one of the greatest problems that civilisation has to face. Prisoners should be engaged in work not so much for the value of the work they do as to qualify them to work when they are released. A prisoner who has been held for a period becomes less inclined to work than when he entered the prison, and when released he is a greater menace to society than he was previously. I believe the Minister thoroughly agrees with me, and I am inclined to sympathise with him that no decision has been reached to establish a prison farm. In New Zealand matters affecting penal establishments are developing and excellent work is being done. In that dominion prisoners carry out a wide range of work, including afforestation, various trades, road-making and farming. The stock farms, including piggeries and dairies, afford object lessons of what can be done. Since work of this description is insisted on, the men who are imprisoned for long terms are able on their release to engage in similar work. Viewing the question from the standpoint of what is best for the State, it will be agreed that prisoners who have served on prison farms should be given an opportunity on their release to take up land. That, of course, would be contingent upon the conduct of the prisoner having been satisfactory. In advocating this scheme, I speak for the community as well as for the prisoners. The greater the consideration given in such cases, the greater must be the advantage to the community, and gradually the number of prisoners held in our gaols would decrease.

Mr. Teesdale called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. SAMPSON: The work of the Indeterminate Sentences Board in New Zealand has progressed. There, what is known as the honour or parole system is, I believe, in full use. The results have not always been satisfactory, but in a large percentage of cases splendid results have been secured. I believe the Fremantle Prison is well con-

ducted, and that the discipline is good. The reform of the prisoners is the first object and desire of the superintendent and his officers. I cannot allow any appropriate occasion to pass without urging that a prison farm should be provided. Prior to the last Government going out of office, certain land was carefully examined. It was considered suitable for such a farm, and in the opinion of those well qualified to judge was eminently fitted for the purpose. If such a farm were established I think it would pay its way from the inception. I hope this will not weary the Premier.

The Premier: It does rather. It is only a question of money. We cannot find money for all reforms in a year or two.

Mr. SAMPSON: I would suggest that a piece of virgin country be taken up and used for the purpose of establishing this farm. The prisoners under the direction of the officers in charge might carry out the grubbing and other work required. The cost would be small, and it would provide some opportunity for the use of what is at present unutilised labour. I hope this suggestion will receive the favourable consideration of the Treasurer. I note that the ex-Harbour Master, Captain Winzar, has retired from his position. I believe he left his office under most happy auspices, having served his country faithfully and well and to the full satisfaction of every Government under which he worked. I hope the captain will live to enjoy many years of happiness and quiet restfulness.

Mr. Withers: He had the courage to disagree with Sir George Buchanan.

Mr. SAMPSON: In that respect he stands with the member for Bunbury. Certainly the remarks of Sir George Buchanan upon the port of Bunbury will not be supported by the hon. member; neither do I feel inclined to support them myself. Instead of expressing something in the nature of destructive criticism, it would have been better if that expert had given consideration to an attempt to solve what is an acute difficulty. The harbour at Bunbury is of great importance. Bunbury is the capital of the South-West, and we must persevere with necessary improvements there in order that Bunbury may retain its position as one of the leading harbours of the State.

Mr. Withers: One of the leading out-ports.

Mr. SAMPSON: I wish to make a few remarks about the Hospital for the Insane and associated institutions. Connected with

the hospital is a dairy farm. I have wondered whether an increased area, including a permanent swamp, has been taken over by that institution. The area required for the cattle at the dairy farm was not sufficient. It was deemed possible to increase that by extending the fence and bringing in this swamp, which appears to be a permanent one. I should appreciate a statement from the Minister as to whether anything has been done about a farm at Jandakot for those patients whose condition it is considered would be improved by working to some extent. Qualified alienists express the opinion that it would be in the interests of certain chronic mild cases if they were engaged in some light occupation, rather than that they should have nothing with which to occupy their minds. It is felt that if this could be done they would have a greater chance of being brought back to a normal mental state. Perhaps the Minister will say whether anything has been done in this matter. I am anxious to hear what progress has been made in regard to the long-discussed reception house and convalescent home.

The Premier: We have made great strides in that.

Mr. SAMPSON: The last thing I would do, as a rule, would be to disagree with the Premier. However, before the last Government left office, which they had held for altogether too short a period—

The Premier: Eight years.

Mr. SAMPSON: —they purchased a site at Point Heathcote, which was recognised as a most beautiful site and as one most suitable for the establishment of a reception house and a convalescent home.

The Premier: The most suitable except, of course, that place at Claremont where you intended to put the home.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Premier is referring to Point Resolution. I am of opinion to-day that it is a pity Point Resolution was not approved. However, the feeling against it was general, and the next best site had to be adopted. Point Heathcote fulfils all the qualities which were required by the Royal Commission on Lunacy, of which Mr. Angwin was a member. One special feature was that there should be a broad and ever-changing view. Situated at Point Heathcote and having a full view of the Swan River, the reception home fulfils that special condition. A person obsessed with worries, or with the problems of everyday life, or suffering from the effects of sickness, is

likely in those happy circumstances to be brought back gradually to a full state of health. What is the position to-day? Notwithstanding the passage of time that dreadful reception ward at the Perth Hospital remains. It has been spoken about frequently, but has never been described adequately. It has an outlook on the rubbish destructor upon one side, and on the morgue upon the other side. Those who find themselves inmates of that reception ward may well feel that they might abandon all hope. It is the most hellish place in Perth, and dreadfully situated.

Hon. G. Taylor: The patients are there only for a fortnight.

Mr. SAMPSON: But that fortnight is a most dreadful experience.

The Premier: The new building is going on; it has been started.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am glad to hear that.

The Premier: There was money for it on last year's Estimates, but a start could not be made.

Mr. SAMPSON: The actual construction of the building has been commenced?

The Premier: Yes. We do not delay long about these things.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am on safe ground in saying that an unjustifiable delay has occurred in the erection of a reception house. I was on the site a few weeks ago, and found to my surprise and regret that there was no commencement then. Months must, therefore, elapse before the institution is ready for the reception of those who are, temporarily I hope, abnormal mentally. The work of the board of visitors at the Hospital for Insane, I observe, continues. From all I can gather, the work is as beneficial to-day as it has ever been. It must be a satisfaction to those who are connected with the inmates of the Hospital for Insane that the well-being of the patients receives the consideration of that board. In addition, there are the Inspector General of Insane and other physicians, all of whom, so far as I can learn, are doing their work just as it should be done. I hope that when the hospital figures are before the Committee, the Honorary Minister will be able to say that the conditions relating to the nurses have been improved, and that the long hours have been reduced.

The Premier: We have reduced the hours, and we have erected a building which will afford the additional quarters rendered necessary by that reduction.

Mr. SAMPSON: One of the last things I was able to do before leaving office was to put up a recommendation that the hours be reduced.

The Premier: And that is just where it stayed.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Premier of the day approved of that recommendation.

The Premier: I had to find the money.

Mr. SAMPSON: The money had to be found. No one can question that the securing of approval has always been——

The Premier: Approval to reduce the hours? That might stay there for 20 years if the building was not put up.

Mr. SAMPSON: The approval postulated the erection of the necessary building. Consideration was, of course, given to the financial aspect; otherwise it would have been idle, and even hypocritical, to approve of the reduction of hours. I need not tell the Premier that. I know that the hon. gentleman, like Sir James Mitchell, would refrain from giving approval to a proposal unless he could see his way to find the funds necessary for carrying it into effect.

The Premier: It is quite remarkable the number of things you intended to do but did not do and left to us to do—I mean in your department.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Premier, perhaps unintentionally, is paying me a great compliment. He says, "You had the opportunity; why did not you do these things?" But the Premier knows as well as I do that in a short period it is not possible to do everything.

The Premier: You did not do anything except express your intentions.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Premier implies that we brought things to a certain pitch and——

The Premier: You brought them to no pitch at all. We started them and finished them. We started the soldiers' home and finalised it. We built the mental home and the quarters for the nurses. We have done or are doing everything that you did not do.

Mr. SAMPSON: May I remind the Premier regarding Lemnos.

The Premier: I know that well.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is the hospital for returned soldiers suffering under mental disabilities. Let me remind the Premier that the agreement referring to that hospital was worked out during the period I was in office, and that I made it abundantly clear to the Federal authorities that there was an

obligation on the Commonwealth to look after not only the Australians who were suffering from mental disabilities caused by the war, but also all Imperial soldiers similarly afflicted.

The Premier: We reconstructed the whole agreement.

Mr. SAMPSON: When reference was being made to that matter, I noticed with regret that the efforts which I put forward——

The Premier: You had practically finalised an agreement with the Commonwealth officer, and he had put it all over you in that agreement.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Premier is quite wrong.

The Premier: No. We reconstructed the whole thing.

Mr. SAMPSON: When it was stated publicly what the Government had been able to do, I noticed that the very thing which I set out to secure, and which I did initiate, was claimed by the present Government. It would have been generous on their part to acknowledge the efforts of the previous Government.

The Premier: I know the thing had been going on about two years, but nothing had been done.

Mr. SAMPSON: I agree that it took a good deal of trouble and time to deal with these matters. Many of them, however, were in hand and nearing completion.

The Premier: Nearly at the same stage as the others!

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Premier wishes me to refer to Point Heathcote, I would remind him that the land was purchased before he came into office.

The Premier: Another 12 months and you would have lost the lot!

Hon. G. Taylor drew attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. SAMPSON: Apparently this is uninteresting to members.

The Premier: I think you had better take the hint. You have been counted out twice.

Mr. SAMPSON: I cannot help that. When duty calls——

The Premier: I quite appreciate the position.

Mr. SAMPSON: I congratulate the Minister for Health, Hon. S. W. Munsie, upon the fact that he has opened a number

of hospitals during the time he has been in office. He has administered the duties of his office most sympathetically. I had the privilege of securing the necessary authority from the former Treasurer, enabling the construction of some of these hospitals to be undertaken and many were in course of construction when we left office. I am glad to know that the good work is being continued.

The Premier: By Jove, you brought a lot of things nearly to the point of completion!

Mr. SAMPSON: At any rate, they were well under way. It is recognised that we must have more hospitals and provide additional medical services where possible. I hope other districts, such as Armadale and the Bateman's Estate area, will receive some consideration in respect of subsidies under this heading. An entertainments tax was introduced in order to assist the hospitals. I opposed that measure, because I did not think that was the proper way to provide money for the hospitals. The receipts for the first year totalled £19,161. The allocation of that money was as follows: Government hospitals; matrons, £140; nurses and domestics, £2,546; contingencies, £2,106; public hospitals, £8,044, and assisted hospitals, £544. There is room for criticism. Surely the assisted hospitals are those that require funds more than the ordinary public hospitals. It will be seen that a large proportion of the money was devoted to the provision of wages and salaries. I do not know whether public hospitals are those entirely maintained by the Government.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: No.

Mr. SAMPSON: I wish the money had been devoted towards improving the existing services and equipment rather than being expended to such an extent upon wages and salaries. Last year the Government provided £165,634 for hospitals and the expenditure totalled £176,041. This year the estimated expenditure is £165,959, showing a net decrease of £10,082.

The Premier: I explained all that during the Budget Speech. There is actually an increase compared with the vote last year. I explained the reason for that.

Mr. SAMPSON: The net decrease is £10,082 and the estimated collection from income tax for next year is £28,000. The balance available from 1925-26 is £5,781 and the total amount estimated to be avail-

able £33,781. It is proposed to allocate £25,254. Possibly the Minister will amplify the statement.

The Premier: The amount provided this year is actually in excess of the expenditure of last year, although it shows nearly £10,000 reduction. I explained that in the Budget Speech.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: There is an increase of £298 this year.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is that for the whole of the department?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: No, medical alone.

Mr. SAMPSON: An increase such as that is comparatively paltry.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: There is £16,000 from the entertainments tax in addition.

The Premier: Comparatively paltry! I will quote some of the figures that obtained when you were there. The expenditure last year was tens of thousands of pounds above the figures when you were there. Last year's expenditure was quite abnormal.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, it was £176,000, and the Vote was £165,000.

The Premier: And it was greatly in excess of previous years.

Mr. SAMPSON: It was only £10,500 over the Vote for last year.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It was over £28,000 above the last year of your term.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am discussing the Estimates for 1926-27 and comparing them with those for 1925-26: It is clearly shown that the amount provided was £165,634 and that there was spent £176,041. So, roughly, it was £10,500 over the estimate.

The Premier: More than Parliament authorised.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is not a very serious matter.

The Premier: Then you don't know much about the Treasury. You make a man sick.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Premier will turn to the figures of the year prior to the advent of the present Government he will find that the expenditure was far in excess of the estimate. Since then the revenue has increased very much and hospitals have multiplied throughout the country districts. I remind the Premier of statements made when I had the honour of introducing the hospital tax. The main objection taken to that tax was that it provided a means whereby Consolidated Revenue was to be protected.

The Premier: To be relieved to the extent of £100,000.

Mr. SAMPSON: Well, protected and relieved. I want to draw attention to the entertainments tax.

The Premier: The entertainments tax has not relieved Consolidated Revenue to the extent of a penny.

Mr. SAMPSON: It has been said that the amount is £298 in excess of what was provided. The entertainments tax is to be utilised for the purpose of protecting Consolidated Revenue.

The Premier: No.

Mr. SAMPSON: A small increase of £298 is a mere bagatelle when we realise how the hospitals are multiplying.

The Premier: I have never known such a mean reference as this to our expenditure on hospitals. I will give you some figures.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have the figures.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Either you do not understand what you are talking about or you do not understand the figures. If you did you could not talk like this. I will show the public who is spending the money.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not criticising the Minister's administration. I am criticising the allocation of the entertainments tax. I submit it is being utilised to relieve Consolidated Revenue. The Minister made reference to what I did. I do not see what that has to do with it.

The Premier: It has a mighty lot. It does not lie well in the mouth of any man to criticise a Government that have done infinitely better than he did when Minister.

Mr. SAMPSON: The entertainments tax is being used to relieve revenue.

The Premier: I say it is not relieving revenue. You do not understand the figures.

Mr. SAMPSON: On the statement submitted to the House, it would be necessary for more money to be provided if the entertainments tax were not in existence. I understood that was to be additional.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: So it is additional.

Mr. SAMPSON: Well, £298 is a mere bagatelle. I think I have said enough about that.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You have.

The Premier: You have, and you will be sorry for it.

Mr. SAMPSON: I will say it again. When the hospitals tax was before the House—

The Premier: I have never known an ex-Minister complain of another Government not doing what he himself failed utterly to do.

Mr. SAMPSON: I got a sound trouncing because of that hospital Bill.

The Premier: Because you proposed to relieve Consolidated Revenue by £100,000.

Mr. SAMPSON: And it seems to me the very same thing is being done here.

The Premier: That is an utterly incorrect and unfair statement to make.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have set out how the money was spent last year.

The Premier: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. SAMPSON: Well, members may consider the figures for themselves. I say the allocation set out here does mean the use of this money, in some cases for wages.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Do you object to their getting wages?

Mr. SAMPSON: I object to the imposition of this special tax on the cheaper seats for the purpose of relieving Consolidated Revenue.

The Premier: It does not relieve Consolidated Revenue. Do not be so stupid.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Premier must not use such a word.

The Premier: You are outrageously unfair. You do not understand the figures.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have said it time after time.

The Premier: You have said an incorrect thing twenty times.

Mr. SAMPSON: It does not make me wrong because the Premier uses a word that I would hesitate to use, and I am a much younger man than he is.

The Premier: If there is anything that is irritating it is to hear a man repeating incorrect statements over and over again.

Mr. SAMPSON: The entertainments tax can be referred to by other members.

The Premier: I shall refer to it.

Mr. SAMPSON: On several occasions I have asked questions about the Wooruloo Sanatorium. Because a certain fence was not erected during the period I held office, it is implied that it should not be erected now. I do not agree with that. The sanatorium is in my electorate and I consider it my bounden duty to urge the erection of this fence.

The Premier: Perhaps it was more your bounden duty to erect it when you were in office and had an opportunity.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am sure the Premier would support me—

The Premier: It is a big national matter about which to ask 20 questions!

Mr. SAMPSON: It is a big question to a number of sick men.

The Premier: Why did not you show consideration for the sick men when you were in office and had a chance to give them relief?

Mr. SAMPSON: No request was made to me in behalf of sick men.

The Premier: And you did not know it was needed, though it was in your own electorate.

Hon. J. Cunningham: But a request was put up to you by other than a sick man.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is another question of which I have no knowledge.

Hon. J. Cunningham: You have a bad memory. You do not appear to have any knowledge of things that it does not suit you to remember.

Mr. Davy: Should the fence be erected?

Mr. SAMPSON: I challenge anyone to show that I am in the habit of making statements that are untrue.

The Premier: The whole of your speech is a series of complaints against the present Government.

Mr. Chesson: I go to Wooroloo fairly often and I have not heard any complaints about a fence.

Mr. SAMPSON: Well, I have. A fence is required. Straying stock enter the grounds, disturb the patients at night and trample down the gardens.

The Premier: The situation to-day is precisely the same as it has been for years.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have asked quite offensively that the fence should be erected. I do not wish to labour the question. The sanatorium is in my electorate and I consider it my duty to mention it on that account, apart from any other consideration.

The Premier: The hon. member says the erection of a fence is badly needed?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes.

The Premier: Well, it was your duty to have done it when you had the chance.

Mr. SAMPSON: Had this request been made to me by a patient—

The Premier: Oh, a patient!

Mr. SAMPSON: If I had heard that patients desired the erection of the fence, I assure the Premier it would have been erected.

Mr. Marshall: When you were Minister the matter of providing a hot water service was brought forward and you left the sanatorium without it for 18 months.

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member is incorrect. That work was not only approved,

but the brass piping, which had to be imported, was on the way. The member for Murchison is characteristically incorrect.

The Premier: In all the circumstances this fence is something we might be spared. You have asked twenty questions about it.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You are mistaken about the brass piping. It was copper piping for the Kalgoorlie Government Hospital. It was not used for Kalgoorlie, but was put into the Wooroloo Sanatorium instead, and fresh piping was ordered for Kalgoorlie. You did not even order it.

Mr. SAMPSON: The work was approved by the Treasurer and the Minister for Works of the time and the State Implement Works were to carry it out.

Mr. Marshall: You authorised a lot but did very little.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It was for the Kalgoorlie hospital.

Mr. SAMPSON: No, it was for the Wooroloo Sanatorium.

The Premier: Cannot you hold back your campaign speech until the election starts? It might mean a few votes at Wooroloo, but tell it to the people up there.

Mr. Teesdale: As long as he does not make a speech like one that was made last night, it will be all right.

The Premier: I do not know of any member on either side of the House who has dwelt upon a matter involving a few votes in his own electorate to the extent that you have.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the speech last night was what might be termed an electioneering speech—

The Premier: I have been 21 years in the House and have not mentioned a matter affecting my district, apart from the mining industry.

Mr. Davy: You have not treated us to a speech for some weeks.

The Premier: I wish to God some others would not worry us with so many speeches.

Mr. SAMPSON: I regret that the Minister has not spoken and cleared up some of the points I have raised.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.57 p.m.