

**Legislative Assembly,***Thursday, 29th October, 1931.*

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

**QUESTION — LIFE-SAVING APPLIANCES, PLEASURE RESORTS.**

Mr. RAPHAEL (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: In view of the tragedy that was narrowly averted at Como during the week, will the Government take steps to see that proper lifesaving appliances are provided at the various pleasure resorts?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: I am not aware that it is the responsibility of the Government to provide lifesaving appliances at pleasure resorts.

Mr. Raphael: My question was not intended to mean that the Government themselves should provide the lifesaving appliances, but that they should see that those responsible should do so.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know that we can even do that, but I will look into the matter.

**QUESTION—MINERS' PHTHISIS ACT, AMENDING LEGISLATION.**

Mr. MARSHALL (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines: Can he give the House any information as to when he will present the Bill to amend the Miners' Phtthisis Act, if the rumoured statement that such a Bill is to be introduced is correct?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: The strict answer to the question is: Yes, I can.

Mr. Marshall: Then will you tell us when you will do so?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know when I shall be able to do so, but it will be as early as practicable.

**BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE (No. 2).**

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

**BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).***Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. MILLINGTON** (Mt. Hawthorn) [4.37]: I have examined the Act and the amendment embodied in the Bill. I find that it affects Section 100A, which was enacted to empower the collection of a special tax for the payment of bonuses for certain specified vermin. The provision in the Bill will mean that instead of the Commissioner of Taxation being required to assess the value of unimproved land, he now has power, under the provisions of the Bill, to arbitrarily fix that value, and on that value he can assess for the purposes of the special vermin tax. I presume that course is necessary on account of the legislation recently passed under which taxation on holdings that would ordinarily have been assessed, was abolished. The deletion of Subsection (6) of Section 100A is necessary because the commissioner already has full power, and therefore there is no need to furnish him with instructions as embodied in Subsection (6). Thus the Commissioner of Taxation is possessed of arbitrary powers. I do not know if, in using those powers, he will take the present values or whether he will give some consideration to the altered land values due to the depression. I would like to sound a note of warning to the Minister. If the values are further decreased to any extent, it will seriously affect the amount that will be collected as vermin tax. The rates were originally 1d. and ½d. in the £, and they have been reduced to ½d. and ¼d. in the £ respectively. I do not know the position of the pool at present, but I presume it has been somewhat depleted since the decrease in the rates was authorised. There is evidently trouble ahead if the commissioner decreases values to any considerable extent, thus affecting the amount that will be paid into the pool from which bonuses are paid.

The Minister for Agriculture: Probably the rates will have to be increased, or the bonuses decreased.

Mr. MILLINGTON: That is so. But if the bonuses are decreased, that may tend to defeat the object for which the legislation was passed. It would be better for the State to maintain the bonuses at the present figure. I believe the bonus system has had the effect of controlling the spread of dingoes, foxes and eaglehawks. If we were to discontinue the practice of paying bonuses, it would mean that all the money spent and work done in the past, would be useless. I take advantage of this occasion to impress upon the Government the necessity of finding sufficient money to continue the existing bonus payments for the destruction of dingoes, foxes and eaglehawks. While the Bill is necessary, it certainly confers arbitrary powers upon the Commissioner of Taxation who will now determine, without any instructions so far as I can ascertain, what assessments shall be fixed. He has not to comply with the conditions formerly laid down under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907-1924. I draw the attention of the Government to the danger I have indicated in the event of decreased values seriously affecting the vermin tax contributions to the pool. I trust the operations of the fund will not be interfered with to an extent that will render the whole effect of the legislation abortive. The Minister for Agriculture will have to give close attention to that phase, and see that the fund is not depleted. I trust that the amount of bonuses now paid will be continued. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

### **ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1931-32.**

#### *In Committee of Supply.*

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

Department of Agriculture (Hon. P. D. Ferguson, Minister).

*Vote—Department of Agriculture, £63,612 (partly considered):*

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [4.48]: I do not intend to find fault with the department; what I have to say will rather be in praise of it. There is no escaping the fact that the officials are doing a great deal of work in the interests of the primary producers and the settlement and welfare of the State. The system of experimental farms is proving of enormous value. I had the privilege of being present at the Merredin State Farm field day, and was astounded to find the amount of good work being done there, particularly with the different varieties of wheat.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is not as good as it was a few years ago.

Mr. BROWN: I had not been there for two years.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Merredin State Farm needs close attention.

Mr. BROWN: A large number of farmers attended and they were greatly interested in the different varieties of wheat, the dates for sowing, the quantity of fertiliser used, and the yields. It had been a dry season and the greater part of the wheat in the district was hardly worth reaping, but on the State farm a very decent yield was promised. That speaks volumes for the work of those responsible. If they are able to impart their methods to the settlers in the surrounding district, much good will result. I congratulate the Minister upon having introduced the system whereby farmers may exchange a quantity of their wheat for supplies of seed wheat. To obtain seed wheat from another district is always advantageous. When I was farming in Victoria, we found that we got the best results with English barley if we obtained a change of seed from New Zealand. The growers of barley were careful not to use the same seed on the same land for two successive years. Their experience was that by obtaining seed from a distance, higher yields were obtained. Latterly many new varieties of wheat have come into use. Some of the varieties that were favoured by farmers eight or 10 years ago are hardly used now. It has been possible to hybridise wheats and make them thoroughly suitable for special districts. We now have a wheat for dry districts that will mature much

earlier than other wheats and give better yields. Nowadays wheat is liable to many diseases, and to cope with them is a matter for the plant pathologists. Disease in wheat is largely influenced by the season. A certain variety may be grown in one season and an excellent yield obtained, but in the following season the same variety may give a very poor yield. By developing different varieties at the State farms, much useful work has been done towards increasing the yield of the State. The system of experimental farms is a good one, and I commend the department for the work being done. Dairying is an industry of which I have some knowledge. I can claim to have had considerable experience of cattle. We are endeavouring to improve our dairy cattle by breeding cows that will produce greater quantities of butter fat. Much, of course, depends upon the feed provided for the stock. I recall that years ago one of the best milkers for quality and butter fat was a Hereford cow, but that breed is considered to be beef cattle rather than dairy cattle. We are trying to breed cows that will produce a good quantity of butter fat as well as beef. I am not keen on the zone system. A little while ago I inquired in the South-West how the cattle were faring, and was informed that there was a danger of their getting rickets. At certain periods of the year it was advisable to change them over to drier districts. Every settler is not able to do that, but if the cattle have to be kept in the wetter districts they become subject to disease. I do not know whether the disease is attributable to the *Zamia* palm or to the grasses growing there, but the fact remains that the cattle of the South-West are prone to certain disease. In the Denmark district we were told of a wasting disease. Cattle were dying, but the cause of the disease was hardly understood. This is a matter for investigation by the veterinary officers. A question of supreme importance is the variety of feed to be grown to make dairying payable. We have subterranean clover and many other varieties of English fodders that have adapted themselves to various parts of the country. Unless the settlers of the South-West conserve fodder to carry their stock over the long dry summer, the quantity of milk produced in that season must seriously diminish. I advise the Minister for Agriculture to consider the erection of silos. Fodder must be conserved at

the right period of the year if the milk supply is to be maintained during the dry period. The dairying industry in this State is progressing by leaps and bounds. Producers have overtaken local butter requirements, and a shipment of butter has been forwarded to London. I do not know whether that shipment has been sold, but I hope it realises the highest price. Dairying is a useful sideline on a wheat farm. Those farmers who milk five, six or eight cows have sufficient money coming in from the creamery or butter factory to keep the home in groceries. There is a fair amount of hard work attached to dairying, but it is one of the best possible sidelines for a cereal grower. The system of introducing pedigreed stock from the Eastern States is a sound one. I do not know whether it is possible to obtain all good cattle. I saw one lot of several hundred dairy cattle a few years ago that had been imported from the Eastern States, and I was surprised to find almost every breed known in Australia represented in the mob. The majority, however, were milking Shorthorns. Most of them came from Queensland, and I wondered how long it would take for them to become acclimatised. When they are put into country where the *Zamia* palm prevails, and where other fodders grow that are not the best feed for cattle, there must be considerable losses. I do not know what the losses have been, but I fear they have been great. At the time I have referred to, there were many fine cows with calves at foot in the wheat belt that could have been obtained for the South-West, but when I mentioned this to an official, he said it was impossible to get the number required. When cattle are purchased in the Eastern States, the freight and other charges involved in bringing them here must make the price considerable. It is infinitely better to send into the farming districts cattle which have previously been acclimatised to our conditions. I do not agree with the member for Beverley concerning the importation of horses. I certainly do advise the Government to purchase stallions. It is a better idea to subsidise farmers in the purchase of stallions, for this would enable them to breed suitable horses. The expense would be too great for the Government to start purchasing stallions in large numbers. They should not think of starting a stud farm for the

breeding of horses, for I am sure the result would not be satisfactory. It is not desirable to keep every colt that is bred. In some years the majority of the foals on a stud farm may be fillies.

Mr. J. I. Mann: It is nearly always half and half.

Mr. BROWN: Not half of the colts are fit to be kept.

Mr. Doney: Not five per cent.

Mr. BROWN: It would take the Government a long time to breed enough stallions with which to supply the farmers. The stallions that were purchased by Mr. Carroll were splendid specimens of the Clydesdale breed. The system in regard to dairy cattle is to secure the best pedigreed bulls that are available. We are told that under the zone system the Jersey cow is deemed to be the best for one part of the State, the Guernsey for another, and the Shorthorn for another and so on. A man who has had experience of Jersey cattle in the South-West told me they were too delicate for that part of the State and could not thrive in the cold climate. He says the Guernsey is the better cow. I strongly favour the milking strain of Shorthorn. What we want is a general utility beast. A Jersey steer is a very small thing and is difficult to get rid of. If people went in for general utility cows, they would have progeny that would within a reasonable time fetch a decent price in the market for beef. I am not in favour of killing off young cattle if they can be fattened up and marketed when they weigh 500 or 600 lbs. When a dairyman gets together 50 or 100 cows he soon finds that some of them are not profitable. He then wants means with which to fatten them and sell them as beef. If he pays £18 or £20 for a Jersey, and it turns out a duffer it will fetch very little when sold for beef, and most of his money is gone. The progeny of a good all-round beast will soon grow into money and fetch a reasonable price in the market. If I were dairying I would get together a general utility herd that would give good milking results and produce marketable progeny. The pig is an animal that depends very largely on the way it is fed. In my belief it is possible to make any pig, no matter what its breed is, grow into a reasonable weight. When I was a boy I caught a wild pig. By feeding the animal it was possible to bring him up to 200 lbs. I was surprised to see so many splendid pigs

of so many varieties at the last Royal Show. The Berkshire is apt to get too fat. The Berkshire porker will grow as quickly as any pig I know of and will fetch a good price. Then we have the large white pig, the Yorkshire, and the Tamworth. We have to find out from experience which is the best pig for bacon. That can be ascertained from those who make a study of the pig-raising industry. No doubt many of the pigs that have been imported from the Eastern States will prove an asset to us. I remember when Mr. J. Morrison of "Water Hall" introduced Berkshires from England 30 years ago. We still have that strain here. It is a good strain, and the progeny is as good as anything in the Eastern States.

Mr. J. I. Mann: We need fresh blood.

Mr. BROWN: Nothing degenerates so quickly as a pig when it comes to inbreeding. Properly handled the industry should go ahead. I was speaking to a man from Foggitt Jones recently. He said one consignment of 1,000 carcasses had been sent to the Old Country, and sold very well. There had been a repeat order. If that is the case, there should be a big future for the pig-raising industry here. Pigs and dairying go together. A dairyman does not sell his milk, but he separates the cream and disposes of that. He then has his skim milk for his pigs. That feed, in conjunction with what he may grow by intense culture, gives him an opportunity to turn over a large number of pigs in the course of a year. I listened attentively to the remarks of the member for Mt. Magnet concerning the Veterinary Department. I do not know what he meant, whether he thought it should be made a separate department, or whether he thought it should be retained under the control of the director. I do not know whether he was hitting at the director. Owing to the financial depression it would not be advisable to have different heads. We cannot expect the director to have an intimate knowledge of all these things. He has administrative ability. If he possesses good departmental officers, he can see that they are working to the best advantage and carrying on their branches as economically as possible. I take it that is all the director is doing now. It appeared to me from the remarks of the hon. member that many of the departmental officers have been doing the work, and the kudos has been going to the director. I do not think that is so. The hon.

member did not explain himself clearly. In the present circumstances the system inaugurated in the department is in the best interests of the State. I hope the Veterinary Department will be preserved. We do need the best veterinary knowledge we can get. We have diseases to cope with both in the North-West and the South-West.

Mr. Coverley: We have none in the North-West.

Mr. BROWN: I understand there are pleuro, red water and other diseases up there. Some disease may break out in horses, although we do not get many from the North-West. The Rinderpest was a terrible disease for our stock in the South-West, and we can never tell when some such thing may be introduced into this State. The Veterinary Department must be kept up to date in case of emergency, and the officers must have the knowledge requisite for dealing with cases that may arise. Our wool expert, Mr. McCallum, is doing splendid work. Many farmers are now considering the advisability of breeding lambs for export. We shall have to keep British-bred sheep for that purpose. Some favour the Southdown, others the Shropshire, and others the Border Leicester, and so on. I firmly believe in maintaining the flock in all its purity, and that there will always be a demand for merino wool. We have now a surplus of sheep. Off shears there will be thousands of sheep available for the thousands of farmers who have none at all. If all the farms were fenced in, now would be the time for stocking them up with sheep, thus providing the settlers with another line upon which to fall back. I remember that a few years ago the question of growing cotton was discussed. I understood an expert was brought from Queensland and that he reported favourably upon the project. What became of the report I do not know, neither do I know whether the expert thought that the labour would be too dear or what troubles would arise. I do know, however, that cotton is growing in Queensland and that the crops are made to pay. I listened attentively to the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) on the subject of tropical fruits which can be grown in Western Australia. At present the only bananas to be bought here cost 1s. per dozen and are small miserable things. If bananas can be produced here, every encouragement should be given to that end.

Members: They are grown here.

Mr. BROWN: I did not know they were. We should be able to supply our own wants in that respect, and similarly with regard to other tropical fruits. Can Western Australia grow sugar beet and thus produce its own sugar? Expert opinion should be obtained, and experimental plots should be established. I do not know whether the growing of sugar beet has already been tried here. If it can be grown successfully in Western Australia, we shall be independent of Queensland and escape the burden of the sugar bonus. Tobacco, I understand, grows well in Western Australia, especially in the South-West. The quantity may not be there, but the flavour, I understand, is equal to that of any tobacco in the world.

The Minister for Agriculture: There are 3,000 acres under tobacco.

Mr. BROWN: I am extremely glad to hear it, and hope the tobacco industry will go ahead. The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) said that but for the Country Party a compulsory egg pool would have been established. I do not know whether the hon. member believes in monopoly. I think he does. Does he believe in competition? What is to prevent the establishment of a voluntary pool?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are supposed to represent the producers, not the agents.

Mr. BROWN: The hon. member evidently believes in monopoly. I hold that competition is the life of trade. No doubt the voluntary wheat pool is doing a great deal of good, but hundreds of farmers declare that those who sold straight out to the wheat buyers did best. In fact, such cases have come to my personal knowledge. If there were a world pool of wheat, the market could be controlled; but at present we cannot control the market. Let us glance at the egg pool. No doubt the farmer's wife brings in the eggs produced on the farm, sells them to the local storekeeper, and comes home with the cash. There is nothing to stop her from sending the eggs to the market in Perth, and having them sold at the ruling price.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do you think she gets the value of the product?

Mr. BROWN: At certain periods of the year good prices are not obtainable for eggs. At any rate, there can be no control

over the hens. At certain periods of the year eggs are plentiful.

Mr. Panton: What is the cause of that?

Mr. BROWN: Poultry breeders can regulate their chickens. Since the member for Guildford-Midland introduced his Egg Marketing Bill, what has been the price of eggs in Perth? It has been up to about 3s. per dozen, owing to scarcity. The farmers nearly all keep fowls and produce some eggs for sale.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do you think the farmers get a fair price for their eggs?

Mr. BROWN: It is a matter of supply and demand.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Are you, as a producers' representative, satisfied with the prices obtained?

Mr. BROWN: The member for Guildford-Midland is supposed to represent the workers: yet he wants an unfortunate man on 7s. a week to pay 3s. per dozen for eggs. Where does the consistency come in as regards reducing the cost of living? Country Party members had good reason to oppose the hon. member's Bill.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I can see that you had.

Mr. BROWN: The hon. member's object was merely to save the poultry farmers in the metropolitan area, especially those around Guildford. There is nothing to stop the poultry farmers from forming a voluntary pool for the export of eggs. The trouble is, however, that small producers would come on the market and bring down the price of eggs. Moreover, the hon. member's Bill contained such anomalies that we could not support it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You were afraid of the principle of the Bill. You are a commercial representative, not a producers' representative.

Mr. BROWN: Now I wish to say a few words about Forrestania. There was a fair amount of settlement in the district, but the present opinion is that the ground is too salt to produce wheat. In view of the good work already accomplished at the experimental farms, it would be advisable, prior to extending settlement, to establish an experimental farm in the Forrestania district. That district represents the only good land with an assured rainfall remaining unsettled in Western Australia.

Members: Oh no!

Mr. BROWN: A great amount of money is available for the settlement of British migrants. As regards Dr. Teakle's report, I will not say whether it is right or wrong, but I do not think he examined the whole area. At least a foot of the soil on top is free from salt, and in rainy seasons produces splendid crops. Some of those crops have gone eight bags to the acre. I am glad that the Government have agreed to allow any settler desirous of remaining in the district to stay there. Moreover, I understand that they have not the means to shift many of those settlers to other farms. We are told that the Lake Brown area is much worse than Forrestania.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is wrong.

Mr. BROWN: I have been told it is a highly developed area. Suppose an experimental farm were established at Forrestania for a number of years, then it would get experience of rainy seasons and dry seasons. I do deplore the fact that a large amount of English money which could be put into the development of these districts is held in abeyance because of reports that the soil is not good for cereal growing. Next as to rabbits, which are becoming a serious menace, not between the rabbit-proof fences, but between the second fence and the coast. No matter where one goes, one finds rabbits between the second fence and the coast. They are breeding so rapidly in the sand and among the rocks there, that they can hardly be eradicated. Why should this State go to the expense of keeping up the No. 1 fence? I will not say anything about the No. 2 fence at present. How many hundreds of miles the No. 1 fence extends over I am not in a position to state. However, men are employed to travel up and down the fence and see that gates are not left open and that there are no breakages. Nevertheless, between the two fences there are now millions of rabbits.

Mr. Sleeman: Have you read that letter in this morning's paper?

Mr. BROWN: No. The Agricultural Department now have hundreds of applications for rabbit netting, and the Government are not in a position to purchase it. But there is a huge quantity of netting in the No. 1 fence, available to be pulled up.

The Minister for Agriculture: It would not be worth anything.

Mr. BROWN: I do not agree with that. At any rate, the posts are good.

Mr. Corboy: They are good as long as they are left there, but that is all.

Mr. BROWN: I do not think the netting generally is rotted, though certain parts underground may be. If the netting is not in good order, what is the use of keeping it there?

The Minister for Agriculture: It would not stand removing.

Mr. BROWN: Probably the Minister has never seen the rabbit-proof fence. I pass along it frequently, and I examine it carefully. The fencing system will not keep the rabbits out, will not save Western Australia from the rabbits. The only effective system is that which obtains in New South Wales. In that State there are no netting fences along the main roads. One can take up a block of 5,000 acres, and the wire-netting is put across that, and there are properly constructed gates. Moreover, heavy penalties are imposed on people who leave the gates open. There the boundary between holdings is not wire-netting at all. Twice a year an inspector comes along, and if he finds rabbits on a holding he gives notice to the holder, and if the holder fails to eradicate the vermin he has to appear before the court. The individual farmer must solve the rabbit problem for himself. If the rabbit-proof netting in the No. 1 fence is in good order, it can be sold to farmers more cheaply than wire can be obtained at present.

Mr. Doney: But do you know that it would stand removal?

Mr. BROWN: Above the ground it is still good enough to keep rabbits out. If it is not in good order, the whole fence is no good. To my mind there is no doubt that the No. 1 fence should be pulled up and the posts and the wire sold to settlers. The Minister for Agriculture may not agree with me, but I assure him the rabbits are becoming a very big menace to the farmers, and chiefly in the areas nearer to the coast. Rabbits are to be found almost in Perth, and around Albany and all along the rivers the country is full of them.

Mr. Coverley: They have been there for years.

Mr. BROWN: Yes, they are no longer coming over in waves, but they are breeding in their own localities.

The Minister for Agriculture: But mostly east of the fences.

Mr. BROWN: There are fewer rabbits east of the No. 1 fence than are to be found between the two fences. The Lake Carmody country and the Lake Biddy country are all west of the No. 2 fence, but still there are not so many rabbits around Carmody as there are around Narrogin. I wish to commend the Agricultural Department on the good work it is doing. Every officer in the department is an expert in his own line, and is giving a fair deal to the State. The Government, too, are doing good work, as also did the previous Government, imbued as they were with the idea that we must foster the agriculturist. I am sure all members realise that. Our agricultural colleges and schools are turning out practical farmers who, when they leave those institutions will, I am sure, make good on the land. Owing to the excellent work of the agricultural colleges and experimental farms, our hopes for the future are well founded.

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narrogin) [5.33]: I suppose no Government department is perfect, not even the Department of Agriculture. I was not here last night, but judging from what I have read there was a fair amount of criticism levelled at the department now under review. Of course sound, healthy, well-meant criticism is always helpful, and I have no doubt the very practical Minister now in charge of the department will turn that criticism to good account. In any case it is altogether too much to expect that a department whose activities are so diverse as are those of the Department of Agriculture can move very far without having to run the gauntlet of the criticism of its friends. I regard the Department of Agriculture as being very efficiently controlled and very ably officered. I look upon it as one of our most worthwhile departments. I am always glad to see money flowing through this department, and also through the Agricultural Bank and the Mines Department; for money going through those departments is essentially of a reproductive kind. For those reasons I regret the reduction in the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture from £98,000 to £71,000 or 27.6 per cent. I hold that this is one of the departments where there should be no reduction at all. The fact that we are passing through a depression is no excuse, for the greater the depression, the greater the amount of work devolving

on this department. No doubt the Treasurer could easily make out a case showing that the reduction was inevitable, but nevertheless I regret it, and contend that it should not have been made. I suppose the Agricultural Department is busier this year than ever before, a condition mainly due to the depression. It might be mentioned to the credit of the department that its officers are always very ready and willing to do whatever is demanded of them. There is, I suppose, more important work devolving on this department in Western Australia than on any similar department in the Eastern States, the major reason being that in the Eastern States land settlement is generally the result of the sons of established farmers going on the land, young fellows who take with them the experience and advice of their fathers and, generally, a fair share of machinery and stock as well; whereas in this State any lack of knowledge on the part of those who go on the land—and such settlers, of course, are drawn from all considerable phases of activity—is supplied in the main by the officers of the Agricultural Department. Let me refer briefly to the Government subsidy on stud stock. I desire to compliment the department on the action it has taken in this regard. I know from personal observation that the purchase of stud bulls has had a splendid effect upon the type, quality and productivity of cows throughout the dairying districts. The subsidising of entire horses will, I feel sure, result in similar benefits. It is obvious that the horse is coming into its own once more, and I hope therefore that this subsidy will be retained, and that the reduction in the departmental estimates will not in any way endanger the continuity of the system. I have seen a large number of entire horses in the district I represent, and in each case the type, the breeding and the condition of the animal have all been excellent. It reflects the greatest credit upon the officer, whoever he was, who went East to choose those animals. I notice that the member for Beverley (Mr. J. I. Mann) seems to be of opinion that the department is making a mistake in bringing in so many entire horses; he would prefer to see mares imported. I do not pretend to be able to give my friend advice on any stock question, but he must surely be overlooking the fact that the productivity of the sire over the year is 50 or 60 times as great as that of the

dam. Of course the same argument will apply in the case of stud bulls purchased by this department and distributed through the dairying districts. The only other matter to which I would refer is the establishment of experimental wheat and oat crops. I heartily agree with the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) that invariably experiments should precede settlement. About three weeks ago I went with the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) and the Minister for Lands into the Northampton district and over that stretch of country 50 or 60 miles to the north-east of Yuna. It was the most inspiring trip I have made for many years; certainly not during the past 10 years have I gone over so large an area of country so uniformly good. I was delighted to have the experience of visiting that district with officers of the department and with the men in control of the experimental plot. That plot has an area of 50 acres. All the work was done with, I think, very little governmental expense. The owners of the Wandelong Estate were responsible for the work, and the only maintenance costs are represented by the wages of one sustenance man. The experiment is wholly successful and amply justifies this new phase of Government enterprise. I hope that whenever in the future it is intended to open up new wheat-growing land this practice of experimenting before settling will be rigidly adhered to.

**MR. WANSBROUGH** (Albany) [5.43]: Like other members, I wish to express my appreciation of the officers of the Department of Agriculture. I want to draw attention to the disease ravaging the stock in the Denmark district. We have in that district some 2½ or three millions of public money at stake. Not only are the young stock dying off, but this mysterious disease is taking daily toll of the matured animals as well. Only this week seven cows have been stricken by this disease. It requires the ablest care and consideration that can be given to it. I have said there is from 2½ to three millions of public money at stake in the district; I am afraid that if this disease cannot be arrested that money will have gone west. In my opinion the position demands the whole attention of one officer of special qualifications, whose duty it should be to watch the progress of the disease stage by stage. It is nonsen-



sical for an officer to go there to-day, inspect the stock, and not return for a month. The settlers of the district have clubbed together and are doing fairly good work, but their finance is limited. A man in the district is attempting to do something for them but he is only an amateur, though I hope he is on the right track. The Minister should station an officer there to investigate the disease thoroughly. I do not like the methods being adopted. Evidently the investigations made are treated as a secret because the settlers have not been able to obtain information of what has been done on the block taken over by the department. The disease is so serious that whatever information has been gained should be made available to the settlers. I emphasise that no piecemeal dealing with the disease will provide a remedy. It is a serious matter and I press the Minister to give it his earnest consideration. I regret that the vote for the purpose has been reduced to £560. If it cost £10,000 or £100,000 to find a remedy for the disease, it would be money well spent. Another matter to which I wish to refer is the removal of the stallion from the Denmark State farm. In the interests of the group settlers and of the settlers generally, I press the Minister to provide a stallion in the district. There are 550 settlers and there is not a stallion in the district. I again urge the Government to arrange for a prompt investigation of the wasting disease. It is a matter to which I did not like to refer in this Chamber, but it had to be done.

**MR. COVERLEY** (Kimberley) [5.47]: I appreciate the eulogistic remarks made by the Minister and by the member for Gascoyne regarding the Tropical Adviser, Mr. Wise. He is doing exceptionally good work and we are very fortunate in having an officer of his ability. His appointment represents practically the only consideration that the people of the North have received from Governments, present or past. There was a suggestion that, owing to the depression, Mr. Wise would be retired, but we are glad that the Government have retained his services. Vast strides have been made in agricultural production, particularly in the Gascoyne district, as a result of Mr. Wise's labours. As was mentioned by the member for Gascoyne last night, quite a lot of

money had been wasted by inexperienced people trying to grow tropical fruits, and no headway was made until that officer was appointed by the Collier Government. I agree with the member for Gascoyne that there is a big opportunity for growing tropical fruits in the Gascoyne district for the metropolitan market. Gascoyne has the advantage of being fairly close to the market and, with a couple of fast boats such as the State boats "Koolinda" and "Kybra," it should not be many years before the Gascoyne district supplies all our requirements of tropical fruits and thus creates interest in the development of that portion of the North. Recently residents of the North have felt concerned because the services of Mr. Wise were not available to the extent they might have been. Owing to the depression, he has been restricted in his travelling allowances. I want the Minister for Agriculture to realise that it is a long, dry stage from one end of the North to the other. The distance is some 2,000 miles and there is only one officer to attend to the whole of that territory. Again, during four months of the year, it is practically impossible to travel in the North by motor car. Consequently Mr. Wise has a big job to cope with the work during the eight months when it is possible to motor. He has done wonderfully good work from Wyndham to Carnarvon. I hope the Minister will remember that we have only one officer, and that no matter how heavy his travelling expenses may appear to be, when compared with the expenses incurred for all the other industries, such as dairying, wheat growing, etc., the outlay is relatively light. Big items appear on the Estimates for the Agricultural College, for experimental farms and for veterinary officers, etc. I realise that such officers are doing good work, but there is only one officer to do all the work for the North, and I hope the Minister will not be too hard in the matter of travelling expenses. Last evening several speakers referred, some critically, to tropical agriculture. I do not say that I believe the whole of the North-West will be brought under tropical agriculture. I do not consider that at all likely, but there are patches that could be profitably cultivated. The Gascoyne district is proof of that. One other part that could be profitably utilised is the portion of Kimberley

known as Elephant Hill district. It was surveyed and cut into blocks some years ago, but nothing further was done. It was never thrown open for selection and no effort was made, so far as I know, to get people to take it up. Elephant Hill is a fairly large area consisting of nice pandanus swamps suitable for pig raising. The Minister for Agriculture has referred to the opportunities offered by the pig industry and has gone to the expense of importing well-bred pigs. Here is a golden opportunity for him to make a name for himself and open up a big industry in the Kimberley district. Elephant Hill is only about 20 miles by the nearest route from the Wyndham Meat Works and is ideal country for pigs. Any member with a knowledge of farming knows that pigs do well in swampy country.

Mr. Angelo: Will it grow maize?

Mr. COVERLEY: It is pandanus country, which is wet country, the pandanus being an indication of water at shallow depths. Being fairly close to the coast, it has a good rainfall, much heavier than the average for Kimberley. Quite a number of residents in and around Wyndham would be only too glad to take up blocks. As the land is fairly close to the Wyndham Meat Works, an overseas trade could be built up. Further, with the assistance of Mr. Wise, many tropical products could be tried out at little expense to the department. Only a little assistance would be required, not nearly so much as is asked by settlers in the southern parts of the State. I am pleased that the Government have appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the much-discussed question of abolishing the pleuro line. I have no desire to discuss the merits of the question or to argue for or against the necessity for the pleuro line, but I am glad that an independent commissioner in the person of Mr. Max Henry has been appointed to inquire into what many people have long regarded as an injustice. Whatever the outcome may be, I am satisfied it will be in the best interests of the industries likely to be affected, namely, the dairying industry of the south and the cattle industry of the north. Hunting for dingo scalps was an industry in my district during the season when many men were hobbled out owing to the wet. Stockmen are employed only during the mustering, drov-

ing and branding season, and in the other part of the year they are, what is termed, hobbled-out. In the East Kimberley district particularly the stockmen went out during the wet months dog scalping, and they used to receive £2 for each scalp. That bonus was some inducement for them to go out dog scalping. I believe that 75 per cent. of the dingoes infesting the country were thus exterminated. Through the influence of the Minister the board appointed to control this business reduced the scalp money from £2 to £1.

The Minister for Agriculture: Are the pastoralists prepared to pay a higher rate in order that a higher bonus might be given?

Mr. COVERLEY: I can trace the actions of the Minister from the time when he was a private member, and when he spoke on the Bill that was introduced at that time. All his actions were in the direction of protecting the agriculturist. His main grievance was that the agriculturist would pay too much for the extermination of vermin. Those who have been paying for the extermination of vermin have been paying for a very good purpose, and are not complaining in the way the Minister would have us believe. While dog scalping was made worth while, 75 per cent. of the vermin was exterminated. The dogs became scarce, and it is very hard for people to make wages out of the business. The Minister has now reduced the amount, and people will not bother to go after the dogs. Of course the dogs might be poisoned, but in the Kimberleys it is hard to trap a dingo once it has taken poison. When the animal is found the carcass is usually so putrid that the scalp is not acceptable to the local authorities. It has always been the Minister's desire to bring down the tax upon the agriculturist, and that is the reason why the bonus has been reduced to £1.

The Minister for Agriculture: It has not been reduced in the case of the agriculturist more than in the case of the pastoralist.

Mr. COVERLEY: There are not as many vermin in the agricultural areas as there are further out.

The Minister for Agriculture: The ex-Minister reduced the tax before I did.

Mr. COVERLEY: Dingo trappers who are exterminating vermin in the outer areas are also minimising the trouble in the more settled areas. The bonus for

pup scalps has been reduced to 5s., but I venture to say that very few men would dream of selling them at that price. I do not know who would discriminate between the scalp of an adult dog and that of a young dog, especially when the young scalps have been stretched. I hope when the amendment to the Vermin Act comes down, the Minister will see that the bonus is not reduced any more, otherwise the vermin will most certainly increase.

**MR. PIESSE** (Katanning) [6.3]: I congratulate the Minister upon the excellent results that have been achieved by this important department. I appreciate the splendid efforts and activities which have always been so freely demonstrated by this department in the interests of agriculture and its profitable development. I appreciate particularly the efforts of the experts who have for many years given us the best of their knowledge and experience, and have to a large extent been the guardians of primary production. The object of the successful development of agriculture is to make it profitable for those engaged in it, not only profitable to the individual, but of greater importance to the wealth production of the State. It is to be regretted that our wheat and wool industries have suffered so much by the collapse in prices. Many of us have had occasion to doubt whether these industries can profitably be continued on the basis of the present low prices. We repeatedly hear from Premiers and Ministers of our State Parliaments, as well as from the Federal Prime Minister, references to the outstanding value from the point of view of the nation that comes as a result of primary production. Unfortunately there has been a very serious fall in prices, and a crisis has been precipitated during the past year through the disruption of the world's markets. All these factors render it the more necessary for both State and Federal Parliaments to realise their responsibilities to the industry. We might rightly level a complaint at the Federal Parliament on the score that its members have not realised the difficulties confronting the industry to-day. We have been disappointed on more than one occasion with the small amount of assistance that has been rendered to it through these times of depression. There has been a lack of practical sympathy on the part of our Federal Legislature. Notwithstanding the material

fall in prices, which have made the industry unprofitable, we have been expected to carry on other industries which have become a burden upon the primary producers. I wish to refer to an article that appeared in the "West Australian" recently dealing with the remarkable disparity in prices of primary and secondary products. The article is as follows:—

The official record of the Stock Exchange of Melbourne draws attention to the disparity of the movements of the prices of farm and industrial products in Australia. It is well known that our primary industries have suffered a remarkable and critical fall in price. It is not so well known that our secondary industries are managing to increase their prices, yet it might be expected that with the reduction of costs of raw materials, prices of secondary products would be brought into closer conformity with the decreased spending power of the farming community. The figures given by the official record are quoted below:—

		Farm products.	Industrial products.
1927	.. ..	161.6	157.5
1928	.. ..	161.2	161.7
1929	.. ..	159.2	162.0
1930	.. ..	129.9	166.4
1931—			
January	.. ..	109.1	175.2
February	.. ..	113.2	180.6
March	.. ..	115.7	179.8
April	.. ..	113.6	179.1
May	.. ..	112.9	180.6
June	.. ..	109.5	180.4
July	.. ..	107.5	183.2
August	.. ..	102.6	181.8

These figures suggest that our protected industries are taking full advantage of the tariff and the various embargoes and impediments to importation, in spite of various assurances that nothing of the sort would be allowed to happen.

There is no doubt that a great handicap is placed upon the agricultural industry by reason of the high cost of production. This Chamber, irrespective of party, should pay close attention to the matter at the earliest possible moment. If the industry is going to prosper, the cost of production must come down. It is, of course, ridiculous to make comparisons, but I would point to the fact that a few days ago the price of an ordinary axe handle was equivalent to the value of two bushels of wheat. Things are out of all proportion in relation to one another, especially the relationship between the cost of production and the value represented by the realisable price of our products. The Agricultural Department can very well be proud of their achievements. These were well exemplified at the

Royal Show both in the matter of live stock and products generally. There should be no prouder men in the State than the experts and officers of the Agricultural Department by reason of the assembly of those magnificent exhibits at Claremont.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. PIESSE: Before tea I was recalling to hon. members the wonderful exhibition of agricultural products at the recent Royal Show, an exhibition sufficient to prove that the agriculturists of this country, who give the best of their years and all they have to the development of the industry, have every faith in its future. Although last year there was a record production in both wheat and wool, yet as a result of the collapse in prices our agriculturists now find themselves in severe difficulties. However, it is gratifying to know that in some directions there has been more profitable production—in butter, for instance, and other side lines. It is disappointing to find that the largest part of our primary products have been sold at a heavy loss. One must realise that this cannot continue. It is pleasing to know that the Federal Government, although late in the day, are coming to the aid of our agricultural industry by supplementing the present unpayable price of wheat with a bounty.

Mr. Sleeman: They offered to come to your aid before.

Mr. PIESSE: There was some grave doubt about their sincerity.

Mr. Sleeman: No doubt whatever.

Mr. PIESSE: The promise has taken a long time to materialise.

Mr. Marshall: The Senate turned down the proposal.

Mr. PIESSE: I do not wish to enter into a discussion with hon. members opposite on that point. Facts speak for themselves. While agriculture is the staple industry to which we all look to help Australia out of the mire, it is notable that this is the first practical help it has received from the Federal Government for years past. Unfortunately the industry is struggling under high production costs, and nobody is more responsible for that than the Federal Parliament. Until those high costs are reduced, and until prices improve considerably, the fate of the industry must continue to hang in the balance. Therefore

it behoves this Parliament to ensure that every possible influence and endeavour are used to bring about an early lowering of costs of production. I have already given hon. members evidence of unfair relative costs.

Mr. Kenneally: More reduction in wages!

Mr. PIESSE: Until primary production can be restored to a payable condition, wages unfortunately cannot improve and we must continue to have thousands of men out of employment. Though the low prices are discouraging, it is gratifying to know that our agriculturists are determined, as far as lies in their power, to stick to their holdings and further develop the industry. If only they are given reasonable encouragement and support, the industry will prove of the greatest value to the State. We must not overlook the fact that in the past many of our primary producers have depended too much on growing only wheat in some instances, and only wool in others. During the past year it has been brought home to them that to make a success of the industry they must embark on other lines as well. Western Australia has a wonderful range of climate, rainfall and land suitable for producing many commodities besides wheat and wool, and many of these other commodities can be combined with wheat or wool. It behoves the Agricultural Department to encourage our producers by every possible means to undertake side lines such as dairying, lamb-raising, egg production, fruit production and pig-raising. However, there are farmers growing practically the whole of these products, and thus are not dependent on one line for their livelihood. Our local market offers a good demand for many of the products mentioned. We cannot overlook the fact that as the result of last year's operations many of our farmers are in grave financial difficulties. That brings me back to the anxiety with which the future is viewed by many of our farmers, although they obtained a record crop last year and have every prospect of a good crop this year. Although in many cases assistance and sympathy have been extended to distressed farmers by the Government and by Parliament, I fear that we have not done all we should to assist them out of their difficulties. During the year the position of many primary producers has caused anxiety to every

member of Parliament and particularly to Ministers. Legislation has been passed to protect farmers who are in difficulties—I refer to the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act. That measure at the time it was enacted was regarded as experimental, as merely a temporary expedient, the hope being that some more definite and tangible scheme would be devised by the Government to render further relief to distressed farmers. A Royal Commission inquired into the disabilities affecting the agricultural industry of Western Australia, and no doubt hon. members have read the report carefully. I think they will agree that it is a businesslike report, and that the suggestions made therein are practical and will to some extent meet the situation if they are adopted. I do not see why part of the plan should not be put into operation almost at once. The first part of the plan does not need legislation, but only requires to be carefully administered by the Government in order to bring about a satisfactory scheme of arrangement between the farmers and their creditors, thereby in many cases avoiding recourse to the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act. I shall not take up the time of the Committee by going through the whole report, but I wish to quote one or two extracts to show that the Royal Commissioners realised the special difficulties that confront the industry to-day. In one part of the report, the Commission stated—

The whole industry was pyramided on good prices and lavish credit, without due inquiry being made into production costs, world production of wheat, and the value of the assets on which such credit was being extended. The Government through the Lands Department and the Agricultural Bank, together with all classes of the trading community, including associated banks, are responsible for the accelerated and uneconomical development of the farming industry of Western Australia.

The farmers cannot be altogether blamed for that position because, although good prices were received in the past, we were not so much concerned about the cost of production so long as the farmer was able to pay his way. When he was not able to pay his way, he became worried and wondered whether he could continue his operations as a farmer, and make a success of his undertaking. Owing to the sudden fall in the prices of wool and wheat, the position of the farmer became most difficult. Not only was there a sudden drop in the price of wool, but there was the loss of between 300 and 400

per cent. in the value of sheep. In addition to that, there was no market for the farmer's store stock. In these circumstances, the sheep farmer's position has become almost identical with that of the wheat farmer. The Royal Commission in their report also stated—

If the present high level costs of production and the existing low level prices of wool and wheat continue, it is immaterial what amounts are written off the liabilities, or to what low rate interest is reduced, as in such circumstances nothing can save the industries of wool and wheat, and a very decreased production must be looked for. It is well for the people of this State to realise this fact and to realise it at once.

I take it that the anxiety indicated by the Royal Commission is shared by every member of this Chamber. We are all anxious to afford the greatest possible assistance to the farmers to carry them over their period of financial distress. I am afraid there is a tendency on the part of some wheat growers, largely owing, I am convinced, to misunderstanding as to the true intentions of the Government, to take decided steps in connection with the threatened hold-up of wheat and wool during the present season.

Mr. Kenneally: Direct action.

Mr. PIESSE: I hope the Government will do whatever is possible to end the present situation. I believe that if a better understanding could be arrived at, something would be achieved. At the earliest possible moment the Government might give effect to at least some recommendations of the Royal Commission. We have reason to believe that some of the wheat-growers think the Government are not sincere in their plan for the rehabilitation of the agricultural industry. I am sure that the attitude of a section of the farmers is due to misunderstanding and want of knowledge of the true position. I can assure the Premier that the delay in giving effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission, has served to accentuate the misunderstanding.

The Premier: To which recommendations do you refer?

Mr. PIESSE: The recommendations under Part I of the report could be carried out easily, without the necessity for additional legislation. The recommendations under Part II. aim at the appointment of a board of trustees, and surely the Gov-

enment could give some consideration to that suggestion. If that were done, there would be a board of experts, with experienced business men and farmers as well, who would be appointed to act as a go-between the banks and business houses generally and the farmers who are in difficulties. From past experience we know that the business people of the State have been very forbearing in their treatment of farmers, and have shown great patience in arranging their affairs to the satisfaction of all concerned. Of course, there have been exceptions and individual farmers have grievances, but on the whole the work of the business people has been wonderful. It speaks well for the commercial houses of Western Australia and for the banks, who came to the rescue nobly and made funds available in order to assist in putting in last year's crops. We know that the area under crop this year is much reduced. Notwithstanding the fact that prices of wheat and wool have improved recently and that there is a better spirit and a more encouraging atmosphere generally in the farming area, if the price of wheat rose to 5s. a bushel to-morrow, it would not extricate the farmers from the difficulties arising out of last year's price failure. I hope the Government will not lose any further time in dealing with the situation, but, at the earliest possible moment, will intimate to the agricultural community what they intend to do. I believe the explanation of the action of the farmers in some parts in threatening to hold up their wheat on the farms is due to the fact that they cannot see how they will be able to meet even a fair proportion of their liabilities to the satisfaction of those concerned. I am convinced that in many instances the business could be fixed up by way of private arrangement. I do not think it will be necessary to ask many of them to seek the protection of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act. That procedure involves some expense, and apparently many of the farmers would prefer to do anything rather than be forced to secure relief under the Act passed by this Parliament. A report appeared in the "West Australian" this morning indicating the possible action that might be taken by the Government. I hope the report will prove accurate. It is encouraging to know that something is to be done, but even so,

the published statement deals only with the Agricultural Bank clients. There are clients of the Associated Banks and those farmers are in difficulties as well. I hope the Government will indicate as early as possible what they are prepared to do to render assistance to those I refer to. The trouble is that some of the farmers do not think that the Government are really sympathetically inclined towards them. Personally, I have no doubt in my mind as to the sympathetic attitude of the Government, because I have had a number of interviews with Ministers and I know that every member of the Government is anxious to do everything possible to make the path of the farmer easier than it is at present. I trust that the farmers will deliver their wheat and wool as usual and that they will be in a much better financial position as the result of the coming harvest. Then again, considerable doubt has existed in the minds of the clients of the Agricultural Bank on account of the bank exercising its statutory preferential lien over this year's crop. From information I have received from the Agricultural Bank, I have reason to believe that although the statutory right will be exercised under the lien, the bank will not deal with the clients in any arbitrary manner. Some misapprehension exists in the minds of the farmers in this respect, and they fear that the bank trustees, in exercising their right under the lien, will leave the other creditors high and dry and the farmers themselves without any means to carry on. As soon as the policy of the Government in that direction is made clear, I am sure that the position of the farmers will be more satisfactory. I believe that if the Government allowed an officer of the Agricultural Bank to visit the districts where disaffection is most apparent, he could assure the farmers who are feeling restless at the moment that the Government would deal liberally with them and render every possible assistance so long as the farmers themselves played the game and did their part. I am sure that the Government will not permit the Agricultural Bank to take an undue proportion of the crop returns, but will see to it that there is a reasonable apportionment as between all the creditors. Another cause of dissatisfaction has been the action of the machinery firms during the last few weeks. Those firms have been insisting upon preferential payments from this year's crop on account of

their machinery, and are requiring a guarantee before the crop is taken off. I have looked into this matter and, to a great extent, the machinery firms are quite right in looking for some return this year on account of their machinery. At the same time, all the machinery firms may not act in the same liberal manner. That is a phase that should be investigated, and I believe some definite scheme could be arrived at so that there might be a proper understanding between the merchants and the farmers.

Mr. Sleeman: If they had retained the State Implement Works they would have got a better deal.

Mr. PIESSE: It is unfortunate that the Implement Works could not be carried on with greater success. As it is now, implements have to be imported from the Eastern States, whereas they should have been made locally. Had that been the position it would have been much better for the State. However, I hope that the suggested hold-up of wheat by a number of farmers, particularly those who are members of the Wheatgrowers' Union in certain districts, will not be insisted upon. The farmers are anxious to have some assurance regarding security of tenure. There is a good deal of misunderstanding regarding that question. The Government, with the approval of Parliament, have granted protection amounting to a moratorium that will last to the end of the year. I think the fact should be made clear to the wheatgrowers that Parliament is prepared to extend that protection for a further period if necessary. In stressing the five years security of tenure, I think there is a good deal of misunderstanding on the part of the wheatgrowers. It is far from the desire of the Government that any man should be forced off his holding, and so long as the wheatgrower is doing his part I feel sure he will be given reasonable protection so that he shall not be harassed by importunate creditors. The Government should make an early announcement; I ask the Premier not to let any further time go by before giving us an indication of what is to be done in this matter. I believe the Government have given close attention to this for some time past, but it certainly is unfortunate that so long a period should have been allowed to elapse since the Royal Commission reported. What we require to do is to relieve the minds of the men and

women—for I know the wife on the farm is just as much worried as is the farmer himself. During the past year some of our farmers have found themselves in a hopeless position. The result of last year's crop was very small financially. In January of 1930 wheat was 4s. 10d. per bushel at the sidings, but in January of 1931 the price was down to 1s. 10d. So one can understand what a small result there was in value from last year's crop. Of course, Parliament has no control over prices, but it is Parliament's duty to relieve the farmer who year after year has toiled on his farm, working hard and putting everything earned into the land. It is in the best interests of the State that those men should have the sympathy of Parliament and be relieved of every removable disability.

Mr. Kenneally: And put it on the worker.

Mr. PIESSE: The farmer has been carrying the whole of the burden of high production costs.

Mr. Raphael: And of the high cost of motor cars.

Mr. PIESSE: Netting for which he has had to pay £10 per mile in the past, he has now to pay £21 per mile, and in addition has to pay sales tax.

Mr. Raphael: Has not the worker been taxed as high as the cocky?

Mr. PIESSE: No doubt the low prices of wheat and wool have been in the interests of other sections of the community by reducing the cost of living. The farmer has made heavy losses, and in many instances has little or nothing left.

Mr. Kenneally: The same may be said of thousands of other people in the Commonwealth.

Mr. PIESSE: So we can understand the farmer's anxiety as to the future.

Mr. Raphael: Are not the working classes just as anxious as to the future?

Mr. PIESSE: The farmer has to remain on his holding to protect what assets he has left and look after his livestock.

Mr. Raphael: What about the worker?

Mr. PIESSE: He is at least just as well off as is the farmer. I hope that by sympathetic administration, by every assistance that Parliament can render in the way of cheaper transport for the farmer's products, by improved marketing facilities and with the continued assistance of the Agricultural Bank and the expert officers of the

department, the agricultural industry will soon be restored to prosperity. Until that is done we as a community are going to suffer; because after all we are dependent almost solely upon the success of that industry. We know what the goldmining industry has meant to us in the past, and we hope it will mean a lot to us in the future; but we must protect those on the land and remove all doubt about their security of tenure. We can only hope that every facility will be given by both the Federal and State Parliaments to keep our people on the land.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [8.7]: May I express the sympathy I feel in regard to the passing of the late Mr. W. T. Richardson, who was the departmental expert in the care of poultry and eggs. Mr. Richardson did a tremendous amount of good work and the Amalgamated Poultry Farmers very much appreciated him, and are deeply grieved at his death. It is gratifying to know that whereas until a little while ago there were two bodies in the poultry industry, they are now amalgamated into a very vigorous association doing a great deal of work. Prices have improved recently, but there is no real marketing organisation, and I regret it. I know what is being done in New South Wales and Queensland, and I am firmly convinced that something on the same lines must ultimately be done here. The egg industry offers almost unlimited opportunities; indeed, our farmers are beginning to recognise its importance, and so more and more the production is increasing. Apart from that, a large number of persons previously unemployed have taken up egg production. That is a good thing. In the whole of this work, in the matter of organisation great assistance was given by the late Mr. Richardson. His heart was in the improving of the marketing organisation, but as a Government officer he could not take part in that. I realise some of the many difficulties the department have to face. The greatest difficulty in the fruitgrowing industry is the incidence of fruit fly. I am sorry that up to date full success in the control of the pest has not been reached. Greater care should be taken in respect of week-end and home orchards, particularly in the metropolitan area. Not long ago a statement appeared in the Press concerning the number of fruit flies caught

in a small home orchard in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Agriculture: Those orchards are the greatest menace of the lot.

**MR. SAMPSON**: I am glad the Minister realises that, and I hope it will be possible to take effective steps to carry out the provisions of the Plant Diseases Act. No other menace is so difficult to handle as that of the fruit fly. In different districts as, for instance, Spearwood and Gosnells, community efforts have been made and have been fairly successful. Unfortunately those efforts are voluntary, and consequently those who enter into the spirit of the effort do not represent the whole of the growers, with the result that the community effort has not been as effective as it would be if it were made compulsory. I am not going to labour that, for I am convinced the Minister appreciates the position, and I hope that greater control will be exercised in the metropolitan area as well as in the outside areas. It is futile for those who depend on fruitgrowing for a living to carry out what is necessary if those in the metropolitan area fail to do their share. I myself have caught hundreds of flies in a little garden I had near Perth. But it is not possible for any individual to handle this difficulty; the provisions of the Plant Diseases Act should be enforced, which would mean a very big step towards improving the conditions. We have heard a great deal about the development of plots in the schools. I hope the Minister when replying will inform the Committee what the Department of Agriculture is doing in this respect to assist the Department of Education. I realise that all the tuition that can be given to children at school will have a very great effect later in life. This applies not only to the fruit-growing districts, but to the wheat districts, and to those districts where primary production is the essential industry. I am delighted to note the efforts put forward by the Primary Producers' Association and by other bodies to stabilise the price of whole milk. This is a work that is long overdue. The way in which many of our dairymen have been exploited in the matter of prices has been disgraceful. Milk has been brought into Perth ostensibly for whole milk purposes, and it has been said on many occasions that the milk has been in excess of requirements and



has been used for butter making. During the last few months the Growers' Marketing Association has been formed.

Mr. Hegney: Who is chairman of it?

Mr. SAMPSON: As the hon. member represents a fruit-growing district, I hope we shall have his assistance.

Mr. Hegney: We grow very little fruit, mostly pigs.

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member can probably appropriately represent those growers, and there is no reason why the association should not give consideration to that phase of primary production. I am pleased it has been found possible for the association to become affiliated or amalgamated with the Primary Producers' Association. To express it more correctly, it is a section of that body, and we are hopeful that the organisation will be effective in improving the status of those who depend upon small farm products for a living.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The association is a political body, is it not?

Mr. SAMPSON: That is not so.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What is the Primary Producers' Association?

Mr. SAMPSON: It has more than one object in view.

Mr. Raphael: Cutting down the workers' wages and annihilation of the Labour Party.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am prepared to support the annihilation of the Labour Party so far as it is represented by the hon. member. I am not here to advocate the claims of the Primary Producers' Association, but it is possible to belong to that organisation and not be influenced by its brand of politics. I regret that we did not have the assistance of the association when the Bill to provide for the marketing of eggs was before Parliament. The time will come, however, when support will be given to such a measure. It is only a matter of members getting a fuller realisation of the importance of the industry and the absolute need that exists for organisation. It is a sad commentary on the consistency of certain members when they approve of compulsion in one direction and deny it in another. The sandalwood legislation is a measure of compulsion. The Egg Marketing Bill was a measure of compulsion but there was strenuous opposition to it. During last season Western Australian apple growers

have come into the limelight. In England in June last an Imperial apple exhibition was held.

Mr. Panton: You told us that the other night on the Lands Estimates.

Mr. SAMPSON: Then there is no doubt as to its truth.

Mr. Raphael: That would not naturally follow.

Mr. SAMPSON: Not only the first prize, but several other prizes, were won by Western Australian apple growers. A greater area of land should be released by the Forests Department and made available for fruit production.

Mr. Raphael: To send the good ones to England and sell the scrubs to us.

Mr. Panton: Is not one scrub enough?

Mr. SAMPSON: I heard of a man who complained that there were several bad apples in a case, but he said, "I will take your word regarding the rotten apples." I am prepared to take the hon. member's word.

Mr. Raphael: That is more than I am prepared to do with you.

Mr. SAMPSON: The winning of those prizes had a far greater significance than the mere value of the prizes. It showed how suitable was our land for the production of apples, and I hope that greater areas will be made available for apple production. Mr. Carne, of the Department of Agriculture, recently returned from the Old Country, and brought with him some excellent information on the subject of marketing. We have also had advice from Mr. Manger, of the Federal Co-operative Co., operating in London. Both those gentlemen are well qualified to advise as to marketing commodities in the Old Country. When I was in London I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Manger and hearing from him a good deal about the dangers to be avoided by exporters of fruit to the Old Country. I feel convinced the Minister will give all possible consideration to the remarks of those experienced and qualified gentlemen.

Mr. Raphael: What did you learn in Malta?

Mr. SAMPSON: In Malta, as here, birth control is not practised as rigorously as it might be. Western Australian fruit products have successfully competed with those from California, and when one says that, one has said everything. Western Australia and California enjoy similar climatic conditions, and when we can hold our own against

California, we can hold our own against the best producers of fruit in the world. I hope the greatest possible consideration will be extended to the producers who are trying to drag a living out of the land by means of fruit growing. When the Water Supply Estimates come before the Committee, I shall have something to say on that point.

The Minister for Works: I hope that is not a threat.

Mr. SAMPSON: No, it is an indication of appreciation on my part of the fact that the Water Supply Department authorities are persisting in a fallacious policy. Let me refer briefly to tobacco growing. There are great opportunities in Western Australia for this industry, but I hope that those who engage in its production will not regard it as a get-rich-quick proposition. It is a form of production that requires considerable care. Insect pests attack the tobacco plant just as they attack other plants. I am sure every member will agree that the imposition by the Federal Government of sales tax on spraying materials is in the highest degree unfair. It is regrettable that whenever a body of men set out to accomplish something in the way of production, our Federal masters try to stop them. Spraying materials used to combat orchard pests should be exempt from sales tax. It is a short-sighted policy that insists on imposing the tax, thus depriving the country of new wealth. The pests that attack fruit are so numerous and deadly that there is nothing to be compared with them. There are the San Jose scale, fungus diseases of different kinds, thrip, caterpillar, and, worst of all, the fruit fly. To treat all those pests, spraying materials are needed.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough) [8.27]: The Department of Agriculture is chiefly concerned with agricultural instruction and research. I intend to confine my remarks within those limits. There can be no doubt of the importance of agriculture. Directly, this department is a spending department, but indirectly it exercises an immense influence on the revenue of departments, particularly the Railway Department. Over 300 years ago an English writer, Cowley, then chiefly renowned as a poet, but now better known for some of his essays, wrote a fine essay on agriculture, in which he stated—

As for the necessity of this art, it is evident enough, since this can live without all others, and no other without this. This is like speech,

without which the society of man cannot be preserved; the others like figures and strophes of speech, which serve only to adorn it.

In the course of his essay he proceeded to point out that schools had been established for teaching dancing and things of no material benefit, but that there was no school to teach agriculture. Nowadays we have altered that, and we are giving instruction in agriculture in schools, colleges and universities. In the principles of agriculture there is nothing new to learn since Virgil, the Latin poet, wrote his pastoral poems over 2,000 years ago. He there dealt with systems such as fallowing, rotation of crops, value of legumes and so forth. In fact, he wrote so well that agriculture became a fad, and was largely taken up by the populace. In our day the Premier waxed so eloquent about the virtues of agriculture that we had business men and even politicians going on the land, but no doubt they found that something more than merely taking up land was necessary to make a success of it. There is such a thing as experience, and although I was brought up on the land and was educated in the theory of agriculture, I have still many things to learn. If I had known 15 years ago what I know now, I should have been a great deal better off. When I first went up to inspect land, the Government land guide showed me some rather beautiful country. He said, "You do not want to take this land because there is a noxious weed growing upon it." This weed was 2 or 3 feet high and looked very green. I would have nothing to do with that land. It turned out, however, that the noxious weed referred to was the blue lupin. Two thousand years ago Virgil extolled the virtues of lupin in his pastoral poems, and 2,000 years afterwards we find people calling it a noxious weed. Some few years later, when I was planting lupins, there were other people roundabout engaged in pulling them up. I congratulate the proprietors of the "West Australian" on the interest they have taken in the lupin-growing competition. They have given a great fillip to the growing of lupins wherever this fodder has been tried. Nevertheless, I think it would be very difficult to grow lupins as they grow in the coastal areas, and in the neighbourhood of Geraldton and to the north of that town, because in those districts the lupin is not cultivated; once it is established it becomes permanent and cannot be wiped out. The stock will always tread in sufficient to re-

seed the plant, and it can then hold its own with any weed or plant life that comes along. I was referring to the value of experience. One man took up a block in my neighbourhood. There had been no stock upon it for 12 months. He asked me how much stock the land would carry, and I told him what I thought. There was a good deal of grass upon it. He went away, and put on double the number of stock. He wanted advice, but thought he knew better than I did. At the end of the summer most of his stock were dying. Rumour has it that the Upper Chapman State Farm may be closed. I do not know whether that is so or not. The department are working it now on entirely wrong lines. That is not wheat country. It is really suited for dairying and the raising of fat lambs. In my opinion the Government should have specialised there in fat lambs, to show people in the district what could be done in that industry. Experiments in dairying should also have been conducted.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you think the farm should be closed?

Mr. PATRICK: It would be foolish to close it. Even as a wheat-breeding farm it has proved its value, but the Government should conduct experiments along the lines I have indicated. The Minister for Lands referred to the future that lay before Geraldton as a port for the export of fat lambs. He is quite right in his judgment. From the dairying and fat-lamb point of view, that country is far superior to the South-West in its commercial and economic value.

Mr. J. I. Mann: The Minister is not a prophet.

Mr. PATRICK: He was not prophesying, but merely stating a fact. The possibility is there and proof of it has already been afforded. With top-dressing this country can be enormously improved, and can be turned into dairying and fat-lamb country at a fraction of the cost that has to be incurred in the South-West. Further out from the Upper Chapman is the Dartmoor area. Before the Labour Government went in for the 3,500 farms scheme, it is a pity they did not exploit this part of the State from the point of view of dairying and wheat growing. The blocks furthest away are within 100 miles of the port. Over 200,000 acres of land have already been surveyed for selection. The Government

have an experimental plot out there, but I do not know that one is necessary. The land has been proved for 30 miles out from Dartmoor over a series of years as good wheat-growing country with a comparatively low rainfall. The Director of Agriculture slipped rather badly when he condemned it a few years ago as a wheat-growing proposition, on the ground that the rainfall was insufficient. Rainfall is not the only factor in wheat growing. This is land of a light texture, although it carries heavy timber. It will probably grow wheat better on a 10-inch rainfall than other country will do with a 16-inch rainfall. This has already been proved. Experience counts for a good deal in estimating the value of light land in the northern districts. This used to be referred to as sand-plain, but now it is more politely termed light land. Last year I ploughed 300 acres of this class of country with a disc plough and sowed it with oats and lupins, and this year it is carrying a magnificent crop. A few years ago I might have looked upon it as valueless land. One can see immense possibilities for this type of country. A considerable amount of criticism has been levelled at Dr. Teakle because of his report upon the salinity of certain lands. He is probably quite correct in his findings. He has merely examined the land from the scientific point of view, and found a certain quantity of salt in it. That is all he had to show. The Lands Department must now take the responsibility of saying whether the land will grow wheat. Dr. Teakle has had considerable experience in America of land of a similar type. I do not understand the reference of the Minister for Lands to sulphate of manganese. The chief thing used in the United States in salty country is sulphate of lime or gypsum. There is any amount of gypsum in Western Australia and that is far more efficient for the purpose than sulphate of manganese. Dr. Teakle found a lot of salt in the land, and the problem facing the department is to combat it. As a rule scientists do not exaggerate. I once attended a meeting of farmers. Amongst those present was a highly qualified scientist, and the other was a well-known agricultural expert. There was a certain problem confronting the farmers, and one of them put certain questions to those two

gentlemen. The agricultural expert got up, and after going round, under and over the subject for a quarter of an hour, he left no one any the wiser. The scientist, on the other hand, said, "I might give you a hundred and one reasons why this occurred, and probably would be wrong in each case. The best thing I can tell you is that I know nothing about it." We do get the truth from scientists, and that is probably what we have got from Dr. Teakle. The relative value of horses and tractors has been referred to. That is a matter of economics. The increase in the production of wheat in the world is largely due to the number of tractors employed in the United States. The machines are purchased so cheaply there and the fuel is so cheap that millions of horses were scrapped and an immense quantity of wheat was produced. Hundreds of thousands of men were put off farms because tractors were found to be more economical than horses. If we could discover fuel, such as has been discovered in the United States, there would be no question about the value of tractors here. In South Australia tractors are being worked with charcoal and wood, and if the same principle could be applied here, there would probably be an additional call for those implements. The Government of South Australia have experimented for some time with a tractor that has been run on wood and charcoal. The department here could conduct similar experiments with considerable benefit to the State.

Mr. Raphael: That would mean taking more men away from the industry.

Mr. PATRICK: Had it not been for the tractors then in use, the 50,000,000-bushel yield last year would not have been harvested. There are not enough horses in the whole Commonwealth to take the place of the tractors if they were all scrapped tomorrow. I wish to pay a tribute to the work that is being done by Mr. Newman of the Agricultural Department. His work is not spectacular, but it is of immense benefit to the State. I hope he will be able to find means to overcome the blowfly trouble and also the red mite. Already we learn that the red mite has been found north of Northampton, so that it is spreading rapidly. The member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) referred to the Director of Agriculture, and said he thought the department should be run by an Under Secretary. I do not agree

with that view. He said the Director was not suitable as head of the department because he did not possess the necessary all-round knowledge of agriculture.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Not exactly that. He said he would do better if he were doing the work of administration.

Mr. PATRICK: The principal business of the Director is administrative. He has to see that the men in control of the branches do their work properly. He should also work in with them. The Director of Agriculture in South Australia, Professor Perkins, is one of the most efficient directors in Australia. He was in my time Government Viticulturist and Government Horticulturist. He knew nothing about agriculture, but he has been a great success as a director.

Hon. P. Collier: Does the hon. member suggest that any highly qualified specialist should spend his time in administration?

Mr. PATRICK: No, but that is no bar to a man being a successful director. I am not criticising our director. In Professor Lowrie we had probably the most efficient Director of Agriculture in our time.

Hon. P. Collier: If we have a man who is an expert in wheat growing, why should we take up his time dealing with fruit?

Mr. PATRICK: Probably it would be wrong to give him the job. It might be better to keep him in his own department. In his time Professor Lowrie was a judge of all classes of stock, sheep, cattle and horses, at the Adelaide Royal Show. Not only was he one of the best judges in Australia, but he possessed an unrivalled knowledge of agriculture. He was such a strong-minded man that no Minister could get on with him.

Hon. P. Collier: He is the sort of man we want.

Mr. PATRICK: And he had to get out.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Perhaps he could not get on with his Ministers.

Mr. PATRICK: He had different ideas.

Hon. P. Collier: In other words, the efficient experts will not allow themselves to be overruled by a Minister who does not know anything about the matter.

Mr. PATRICK: That is exactly the point.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a fact.

Mr. PATRICK: We now have a Minister who possesses a knowledge of agriculture.

Hon. P. Collier: But there may be another Minister later on without any knowledge of agriculture.

The Minister for Agriculture: I am going to stick to the job.

Mr. PATRICK: Various problems will have to be faced in the future. We have been dealing largely with new land, and there is the question of the maintenance of fertility. That can be achieved only by adopting a far better system of farming than that adopted hitherto. To that end the experts of the department can largely assist. If there is one department which rather than others should not be allowed to suffer from false economy, it is the Agricultural Department.

MR. BARNARD (Sussex) [8.47]: I cannot let the opportunity pass without congratulating the Government on the establishment of a stud farm in the South-West. Such an establishment is essential; and I regret it was not set up a few years ago, as it would have saved the country a good deal of money in the purchase of high-class stock. In a dairying centre it is absolutely essential that the best of stock should be procured, because it is just as cheap to keep a good animal as to keep a bad one. The cattle recently imported are of excellent class, and I am sure they will prove of great benefit to the district. The cows are of good quality, though the prices paid for some of them are rather high. The Government have introduced into the district some fine pigs, and in the near future the class of pigs produced there should be excellent. The Government have also started an experimental grass plot, including grasses from all parts of the world. In a dairying district a number of grasses is essential. At present Western Australia has only a few grasses, whereas many fine grasses natural to other parts of the world would probably do well here. At the moment, in fact, some imported grasses are doing very well indeed; and we are watching closely to see how they will carry on through the summer. If we can introduce grasses which will stand the summer season, it will be an excellent thing for the South-West. I am convinced that in the balancing of fodders additional grasses will prove beneficial to the stock. The member for Albany (Mr. Wansbrough) has drawn attention to small epidemics amongst stock at Denmark. The same thing applies in the South-West, and we look to the Agricultural Department to have an eye kept on

this matter by officers who understand stock. In a new district such as the South-West, where the struggling settler has only a small number of cows, the loss of even one or two represents a great misfortune to him. A reduction of two brings his number of cows down from ten to eight, though he is still called a ten-cow man. It is highly important that the Agricultural Department keep a strict watch on the diseases of cattle. Like other members who have spoken, I do not greatly favour the zone system. The whole of my electorate, which covers a large area, is practically a Jersey zone, except as regards the cows kept by a few of the older settlers. Every Agricultural Bank client has to stock Jerseys. Although these are fine cattle, I believe that the utility cow is required in the district. The milking short-horn should be encouraged there as well as the Jersey. The area is too large to be restricted to one type of cattle. It should be divided into several zones so as to allow settlers to take on the cattle which they prefer.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**  
(Hon. P. D. Ferguson—Irwin Moore) [8.51]: I appreciate highly the spirit in which hon. members have criticised the Estimates of my department. I realise that their criticisms have been made with the idea of helping, and some of them will be of great assistance to me. I have been surprised at the diversity of subjects discussed in connection with these Estimates, subjects ranging from the Estimates themselves to marketing methods, proposed legislation, farmers' debts, egg control, birth control, and a score of other items—all interesting, but not all of them relevant to the Estimates of the Agricultural Department. I shall now endeavour to satisfy members as to some of the questions they have raised, and try to set at rest doubts existing in their minds in connection with various matters which they have discussed. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty) was desirous of ascertaining the position as to the testing of cream at the various butter factories. For his information, and for that of hon. members generally, I wish to explain that the responsibility is upon the butter factories themselves to test the cream which

comes to them from their suppliers. Each factory has its own tester, who is approved of by the Agricultural Department as being a man capable of doing the work. Moreover, the expert advisers attached to the dairying branch of the department, periodically visit the factories and keep a check on the work of the testers. Therefore I do not think there is much reason for suppliers of butter fats to the factories to believe that their interests are neglected.

Mr. McLarty: Does that apply to milk factories also?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No; only to butter factories. The hon. member also raised the question of herd testing. I know it was a matter of great regret to him, as it was to me, that owing to the difficult financial position with which the Government were faced they found it necessary to curtail the herd testing operations of the Agricultural Department. Stud herd testing has been carried on for a long time, and is still being carried on; but owing to the Commonwealth Government having discontinued their assistance in the direction of grade herd testing, we have been forced to abandon that work, which is not being done anywhere in the State to-day. Representations have been made to the Commonwealth Bank to induce them to assist us in this direction. When in Melbourne last week, I saw the Chairman of the Commonwealth Bank Board, and I think it extremely likely that the bank will come to our assistance with a grant, so that with the help of the owners of herds I hope the Government will be able to reinstate grade herd testing. I feel sure it is in the best interests of the dairy-men of this State that it should be carried on. Reference was also made by the hon. member to the advisableness of legislation dealing with the whole-milk industry. The matter is one that comes within the purview of the Minister for Health, and I cannot deal with it as Minister for Agriculture. The hon. member also raised the question of noxious weeds. Some criticism was levelled at the department in connection therewith. The hon. member himself as a member of a local governing body must realise fully that it is the province of road boards to deal with noxious weeds. All that the department have to do in connection with noxious weeds is to see that the local governing bodies stand up to their obligations. It is a sorry state of affairs

when a Government department has to compel a body of elected representatives of the ratepayers of any district to do their obvious duty. Surely it is the duty of local governing bodies to try to keep their particular districts free of noxious weeds, which constitute a menace to every ratepayer and to the State as a whole. I wish to impress upon all local governing bodies in Western Australia that they should stand up to their obligations in this regard and do their utmost to rid their districts of noxious weeds which, if allowed to grow for a few years, seed profusely in nearly every instance, and thereupon cause a great deal more trouble in eradication than would be the case if they had not been allowed to go to seed for a few years. If there is any particular weed which a local governing body regards as likely to constitute a menace and therefore desires to have placed on the list of noxious weeds, that can be done by application to the department. The member for Murray-Wellington also referred to the red mite and lucerne flea. The department have been actively engaged in an endeavour to discover some method by which these pests can be controlled. Mr. Womersley, of the C.S.I.R., and Mr. Newman, the Entomologist of the Agricultural Department, have been working in conjunction towards this end. Quite recently what is thought likely to be a useful parasite has been discovered in the South-West.

Mr. Marshall: Why do you refer to it as a parasite if it is useful? Can parasites be useful?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course they can. A parasite which would rid us of the lucerne flea or the red mite would be very useful indeed.

Mr. Marshall: Then it would not be a parasite.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Whilst I am not prepared to say at this stage that the parasite which has been discovered will eradicate the lucerne flea, nevertheless great hopes of this result are entertained. However, until we are definitely assured of success, no definite pronouncement can be made. Every effort will be used to follow the matter up, so as to utilise the parasite to the fullest possible degree if we find that it will do the job which we think it is capable of doing. When I first came to the Agricultural De-

partment, I had, like many other farmers, numerous notions that I hoped to put into operation for the benefit of the agriculturists of Western Australia. But, unfortunately, Ministers propose and Treasurers dispose. Because I have been unable to secure the amount of finance that I needed to carry out my ideas, many of them have had to be scrapped. One thing that I had hoped to see was the appointment of a pig adviser in connection with the work of the department. The member for Beverley (Mr. J. I. Mann) raised this question, and I wish to assure him that the matter is not being lost sight of, and that at the very earliest moment, as soon as the Treasurer can make the money available, an officer will be appointed for this purpose.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do you hope to get a decent price for pigs or shall we have to sacrifice them as we are doing to-day?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) is keen on the question of marketing.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is all-important.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The department I control deals with agriculture and we are not concerned with marketing. I look forward to the time when the department will be known as the Department of Agriculture and Marketing because I believe the functions could be easily combined seeing that they go together.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is useless producing more pigs at a loss.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Pigs are not produced to-day at a loss. The loss the farmers are making is in connection with wheatgrowing, and the development of pig raising will assist the wheatgrowers to make a profit out of their surplus grain. The member for Beverley (Mr. J. I. Mann) referred to the purchase of stallions. The policy of the department is to encourage the purchase of stallions outside the State to the fullest possible extent. In these days when the tractor is going out of favour and the horse is coming back to favour, there is a big future for horsebreeding in this State.

Mr. Patrick: The march of science will not stand still.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The best way we can encourage the horse-

breeding industry is to import the best type of stallion to improve the stock. I agree with the hon. member when he says we should import mares as well. If I could have secured the necessary funds from the Treasurer, I would have purchased mares for one or two of the State institutions in an endeavour to breed high-class stock. At the same time I do not think it is a function of the department to breed stock to dispose of the animals at a profit but rather to assist private individuals by subsidising the purchase of stud stallions.

Mr. J. I. Mann: And brood mares, too.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** There is this to be said about the purchase of mares that the mare proves profitable to the owner, whereas by purchasing stallions we can give practical assistance to 30 or 40 different breeders. One of the conditions under which we purchase stallions is that the animal must travel in the districts where he is located so that his services shall be available to any farmer desiring them. That would be absolutely impossible if we assisted anyone to purchase a mare. Any advantage accruing would be to the purchaser himself; the other settlers in the district would not profit by that course. The member for Beverley is a keen stockman and he raised the question of the renovations required at the saleyards at Midland Junction. That is one of the works I have endeavoured to accomplish from the inception of my regime as Minister in charge of the department. I realised the absolute necessity of bringing the yards up to date. The Labour Government had been good enough to provide sufficient money to put about 50 per cent. of the yards in order. That was done by putting down concrete floors. The beneficial result to the stockowners has been most marked. The remaining 50 per cent. of the floor space has been allowed to get into a shocking condition. Maintenance costs have represented a heavy drain on the resources of the department, and continually recommendations have been made urging that the balance of the floor space should be put in order. At long last I am glad to be able to inform the Committee that the Treasurer has agreed to find the necessary money, and the work will be proceeded with almost immediately. That information will appeal to stockowners generally. I regret it is not possible to find sufficient money to concrete the balance of the floor space and make it uniform with the portion already attended

to. It would require several thousands of pounds' worth of cement to carry out that work and, owing to the small amount of money that can be made available at the present time, it has been decided to cover the floor space with white gum sleepers. While the timber will not prove as permanent as concrete, white gum is one of the best woods known in the world for standing in the ground. I believe the sleepers will last for many years to come. They will be cut by men on sustenance, and some have been cut already. I believe the work will prove entirely satisfactory to the stockowners and they can rest assured that the abominable floor that exists to-day will soon be done away with.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Would not a bitumen surface have been cheaper?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, white gum sleepers will be cheaper and I doubt if bitumen would prove satisfactory. The member for Beverley referred to stock licks. There are many proprietary stock licks on the market and many farmers buy them. It has been reported to the department that the stock have benefited considerably from those licks. While I agree that that is so, I would point out to the stockmen of this State that the Agricultural Department has placed a formula on the market, which has proved very satisfactory as a stock lick. It can be prepared for an expenditure of about one-half the price charged by the owners of proprietary licks. We believe the lick the department has suggested is as good as any of the proprietary lines, and I want the farmers of the State to know that in purchasing the departmental preparation, they will have one that will meet all their requirements. I wish to reply to some of the remarks made by the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) last night. I was pleased to note the moderate tone adopted by that hon. member. Owing to a small difference of opinion that took place between the hon. member and myself in my office some time ago, I was led to believe that he would rake me fore and aft in Parliament. I was a little apprehensive as to what would take place.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: He is all right.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member is always fair.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I want to explain that the member for Mt. Magnet was in my office with a deputation

to make representations on behalf of his friends or constituents of his, and I told him I considered he was distinctly unfair in asking me, as a new Minister—it was shortly after I had been appointed to my present position—to do something that he would not have asked my predecessor, his own Ministerial colleague, to do. He asked me to break a regulation that had been promulgated by his own colleague, and I refused to take that action. I am sorry the hon. member is not in his seat this evening because I would have liked him to hear what I intend to say. He got very excited when I refused to do as he suggested, and he assured me he would raise the matter in Parliament and would show me up. As it was, he was very moderate last night and I am glad he did not say more than he did. For my part, I shall not take the matter any further.

Mr. Kenneally: You have gone so far by way of innuendo—

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There was no innuendo at all.

Mr. Kenneally: You might as well go the full distance and not leave the innuendo.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: What innuendo have I left? The member for Mt. Magnet is not like the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally). The member for Mt. Magnet would not indulge in innuendoes and I made no innuendo, nor did I leave any inference to be drawn. I am glad the matter has ended in this way, and I want to assure the member for Mt. Magnet that there is no animosity on my part, nor do I believe there is any on his part either. I am glad that the incident between us is closed; it is finished so far as I am concerned.

Mr. Kenneally: Then why ventilate it now?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Because the hon. member referred to it last night.

Mr. Patrick: I think he referred to an officer of the department; he said he was satisfied with the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is another matter altogether. The member for Mt. Magnet commented upon the importation of cattle from Victoria. In fairness to myself and the officers of the department, it should be explained that the cattle imported from Victoria were taken from districts where no cases of pleuro-pneumonia had occurred during the previous two years. From the time when he himself previously



purchased cattle from New South Wales, the Victorian Government made strenuous efforts to rid their State of pleuro-pneumonia, and have practically succeeded in doing so. They spent a lot of money in exterminating all the cattle on farms where the disease had appeared. The result is that to-day Victoria is practically free of pleuro-pneumonia. That is the difference between the position in Victoria and in our own State, and explains why we are prepared to purchase cattle in Victoria in districts that we know to be clean, whereas we will not permit cattle from the northern parts of the State to be brought down to the southern parts, seeing that we do not know that the northern areas are free from pleuro. I shall say no more regarding that phase of the question, because a Royal Commissioner will shortly commence an inquiry regarding the stock regulations and the pleuro line in the Kimberleys. The member for Mt. Magnet also referred to the zone system in connection with the dairying industry in the South-West, and other members, too, raised the same question. That policy was introduced after mature consideration by the Superintendent of Dairying, the Director of Agriculture, and other officers associated with them. After they had discussed the question amongst themselves, they conferred with the representatives of the Royal Agricultural Society, and with prominent cattle breeders and dairymen. As a result of the discussions with the several interests, the zone system became an accomplished fact. It was established in an endeavour to assist the dairying industry. It was considered it would be better to have one type of cow in each district rather than a mixture of different breeds of cattle distributed throughout the one area. While I realise it has not been possible to carry out the scheme in its entirety, because there are so many dairymen in each district who have not received assistance from the Government and can therefore purchase the particular breed of cattle they fancy, on the other hand, those farmers who have received Government assistance are asked to purchase only the type of cattle chosen for their particular zone.

Mr. McLarty: They cannot go in for other breeds.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, not with Government money. It will be remembered that the zone system was introduced mainly in the interests of the group

settlers. There is a vast difference between settlers of that type and the older farmers of that area, who had their own herds and knew so much more about cattle and the dairying industry generally. It was necessary to give definite and emphatic advice to group settlers, so that they would embark on the right type of cattle. Wherever we go in the South-West we see a very marked improvement in the type of cow as the result of this zone system.

Mr. Patrick: No, no.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is a positive fact. Here is an instance of the wisdom of a dairyman getting hold of one particular type of cattle and concentrating on it: There are two well-known dairymen side by side in the South-West, both of them good, practical men. Each is milking 74 cows. One of them does not believe in the zone system, but buys a different breed of bull every year. For a recent month that dairyman's factory cheque was £98. Side by side with him is another dairyman on a slightly poorer farm. He also is milking 74 cows. When he started several years ago he decided to concentrate on one breed, and has not changed from that breed.

Mr. Patrick: What breed is it?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Never mind. From his 74 cows, his factory cheque for the same month was £211.

Mr. McLarty: That is exceptional.

Hon. P. Collier: For how long has that test been going on?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I can only say that both men have been in the industry for a long time. Those cream cheques were for the month before I was down there. When those two men started they had cows of somewhat equal productivity. I could not see any difference in their cows. But one man has been mixing his bulls, getting one of a different breed every time. To-day he has a mongrel herd, whereas the other man has been buying bulls of one breed, with the result that his cream cheque is very considerably higher than his neighbour's.

Mr. Patrick: He is not a practical dairyman.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They are both practical dairymen. Regarding this zone system, I have here a communication I received a little time ago.

It should be of interest to members. It reads as follows:—

It is fatal for a man to start off, say with a Jersey bull; when that animal's heifers are old enough for breeding he looks around for another bull, and is not particular about its breeding. But because he has heard someone say that Ayrshires are hardier, he buys an Ayrshire bull to mate with the Jersey heifer, and when the resultant progeny of this cross are ready for milking, a milking Shorthorn bull is procured with the idea of giving more size or more saleable steers. And again with the next generation he uses a Friesian bull, with the thought of increased milk flows. And after all these years of breeding he now expects an animal which has a combination of the advantages of all the breeds enumerated, namely, rich high-testing milk, hardy large frames, and heavy milkers. But what the farmer really has after his 12 or 15 years of breeding is a mixed nondescript mongrel; hard, all sizes, colours, types and worst of all, no improvement in production, but really a more definite mongrel than when he started, due to the conflict of type of each breed with each mating. On the other hand, with a defined system of breeding and the selection of a breed of sire to suit the climate, pasturage, and marketing conditions for the produce, and a staunchness in keeping to that breed, with each generation a definite improvement is shown.

Mr. Patrick: We all agree with that.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is a grossly exaggerated case.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) referred to our surplus sheep problem. This is one of the very great difficulties in our pastoral areas.

Hon. P. Collier: The member for Gascoyne does not know very much about that subject.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** He is a practical man where sheep are concerned.

Hon. P. Collier: No, he is not a sheep man. What he knows about is banana growing.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Order, order!

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The member for Gascoyne is an experienced banker, an experienced sheep man, and is experienced in station management. I agree with him that one of the very great problems we have to face is the disposal of our surplus sheep. Due, of course, to many years' development in the southern portion of the State, as well as in the pastoral areas, the established pastoralists of the North in the past were able to get rid of

their surplus stock. But to-day, unfortunately, they cannot do so. Nor is there any demand in the markets of the world for canned mutton. At one time we thought to get rid of our surplus stock by canning it. I do not know what is going to be done with that surplus. I heard of a pastoralist in the North who sold several thousands of sheep at 1s. per head.

Mr. Coverley: What class of sheep?

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** A very decent class.

Mr. Coverley: I bet they had ticks as long as their tails.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** They were of a very decent class, and they came from a station whose wool has always fetched top price. I think something might be done in the extension of the trade with Java and the Dutch East Indies with some of these sheep, and I have been making inquiries to see if that market can be exploited, for I can discern no other avenue for getting rid of those surplus sheep. As the Leader of the Opposition said last night, the difficulty lies in the lack of transport. If we could have a regular fortnightly service of boats with the Dutch East Indies, I think we could get rid of many of our surplus sheep. But there is no trade to warrant the frequent running of the boats. From the other side of the world our competitors have a regular service of boats to Singapore, and so they are in a position to supply that market with the meat which we should be supplying, in view of our superior geographical position. But they have the trade established, whereas we have not. It is difficult to displace their trade, and until we can build up ours on a sufficiently large scale to warrant the frequent running of boats, we shall be up against a very great difficulty in this regard.

Hon. P. Collier: That is quite true.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) in discussing these Estimates at some length did not once refer to them, but discussed marketing, which he said was a vital question to the primary producers of Western Australia. I agree with him. It is more or less an obsession with the hon. member, and a lot of us do not accept his viewpoint.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Unfortunately for you the farmers do.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** To most of us any interference with what has been regarded as the ordinary channels of trade and commerce is more or less anathema. But I am having it borne in on me that owing to combinations of other sections of the community, which react to the prejudice of the producer, the time is coming when the producer will have to do something in the direction which is always being advocated by the member for Guildford-Midland. As to whether it is wise to insist upon control in all our marketing I am not prepared to say, but I think that unless the commercial community of Australia, which has the big end of the stick in connection with this business, is prepared to give the producer a more satisfactory deal in future than he has had in the past, the producer will have to turn his attention to controlling his own marketing operations and be independent of those who are making more out of it than he is at present. However, the department I control is an advisory department, and has nothing to do with marketing, and until the time comes when it may be altered, not very much can be done by us. The member for Albany referred to the investigations being made into the wasting disease in cattle in the Denmark area. He misrepresented the matter slightly, for he criticised the Government for spending so small an amount on those investigations. He quoted £500, but if he refers to the Estimates he will see that the proposed expenditure this year is £735. Everything is being done that can be done with the limited amount available for this purpose on the farm we have taken over from a group settler in the Denmark area. It has been definitely established that sheep contract this wasting disease just as well as do cows and calves.

Mr. Wansbrough: Pigs also.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** We have definitely decided to conduct our investigations with sheep. To that end we have purchased some sheep and sent them down to that farm, where investigations are being carried out by Mr. Pilmer, the departmental expert. We have there also an agricultural adviser, with a group settler to assist him. The whole of the operations are being supervised by Dr. Gilruth of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. Dr. Gilruth was in Western Australia recently, and visited the farm, and I

am able to say that the investigations being made met with his approval. The hon. member said the department should not hide its light under a bushel, but should report the result of its investigations up to date. Unfortunately the results so far obtained are not sufficiently definite to warrant announcement, and until we can get positive results it would be improper to make any statement which might not be confirmed by later results, and so might mislead the Denmark farmers. The member for Kimberley referred to projected land settlement in his district. This is not a matter for my department. He should take it up with the Lands Department in an endeavour to get that area which he says is suitable for settlement, settled. When it is settled my department will do its utmost to assist the settlers to make good. The hon. members referred also to the fact that we had reduced the vermin rate, and that in consequence stockmen in his electorate who busied themselves trapping dingoes were unable to make a living in the off season. I have only followed in the footsteps of my predecessor, who reduced the rate. I did not reduce it any further than he did, and I applaud him for having made the reduction.

Mr. Coverley: Are you sure?

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I am not in the habit of making statements of which I am not sure.

Mr. Coverley: I think he reduced the rate, not the bonus.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I am referring to the rate, not the bonus. The rate is the same to-day as when it was fixed by the ex-Minister for Agriculture. It has been necessary to reduce the bonus, because there was not sufficient money in the fund to continue payments at the old rate.

Mr. Coverley: Owing to your reducing the tax a second time.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I am able to pay out in bonuses only what is collected by the Commissioner of Taxation by way of tax and handed to me, and unless pastoralists and farmers are prepared to pay a higher rate, it is impossible for me to pay a higher bonus. Much as I regretted having to reduce the bonus, I was compelled to do so owing to the amount to the credit of the fund becoming rapidly

depleted. It is unfortunate that that has been necessary, because I am convinced that, had we been able to continue to pay the higher bonus on dingoes, in the course of a few years we would have nearly exterminated them from the State. Foxes, of course, have largely increased and the bonus has been cut down to a very small sum. If it is reduced any further, it might as well be wiped out altogether. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) asked what was being done regarding school plots. That is the province of the Education Department, who have their own Superintendent of Rural Schools. That officer avails himself of the services of the experts attached to the Department of Agriculture, and they assist him in every way possible. They assist also by the provision of seed in certain instances, and I am glad to say that the result has been very beneficial in those rural schools where the teachers and the scholars have been sufficiently interested to take up this work. I should like to see the work extended. I believe it is a very useful work. We want to educate the rising generation in an agricultural way. In fact I consider that too much money has been spent in this State on educating counter-jumpers, lawyers, doctors and teachers, and not enough on agricultural education. I should like to see a lot more spent in that direction. The Collier Government did something of this kind by establishing the Muresk Agricultural College. That will stand to the credit of the ex-Premier for all time.

Hon. P. Collier: One of the few things I feel proud of.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is one of the things that make me proud of the hon. member.

Hon. P. Collier: Will you erect a tablet there when I die?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope it will be a long time before that is necessary. The work at Muresk is being continued. The first batch of two-year students have been turned out, and they are now scattered throughout the length and breadth of the State. I believe they will make their mark amongst the agricultural community. Western Australia will always be an agricultural country. I believe that the leaders of Western Australia ought to be agriculturists, and I believe that the ex-

students of Muresk will be amongst the leaders of the public life of the State after they have made good on their farms.

Hon. P. Collier: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: During Show week I had an opportunity of attending a dinner arranged by ex-students of Muresk College. They have an association of students which they intend to keep going, and as the college grows older, the association will increase in numbers. The member for Swan asked what was being done regarding the cultivation of tobacco. Tobacco is one of those tricky plants that is likely to give a lot of trouble to the people who engage in its cultivation. It is not a crop that can be grown by an inexperienced man. Everyone who embarks on tobacco cultivation has quite a lot to learn, but I am glad to say that its cultivation is extending in this State, and that this year sufficient seed has been sent to the country districts to sow 3,000 acres of tobacco. I do not think that 3,000 acres will be sown, because farmers waste a large portion of their seed in experimental work. I do not think that the whole of it will be planted to advantage, but I am hopeful that the crop to be harvested as a result of this year's sowing will show a considerable increase. There is little doubt that the quality of tobacco grown in certain soils in certain districts in this State is as good as anything that can be produced in Australia. Surely we in this State should be able to produce sufficient tobacco to meet our own requirements! I should like to refer to the fat-lamb industry, because I believe it is going to be one of the biggest industries of the State. Some years ago, in an endeavour to foster the export trade in lambs, quite a lot of money, private and governmental, was spent on the establishment of the Western Australian Meat Works at Fremantle. While those works have been more or less a white elephant to those who invested money in them, as well as to the Government, nevertheless they have acted as a safety valve and as an insurance against the time when Western Australia would have a surplus of lambs for export. That time has arrived, and I believe that in the near future the works will be utilised to their fullest capacity. Last year we exported 23,000 lambs treated at the works, and this year we have already treated 44,000, of which 35,000 have been shipped and the balance are in store. Members will have noticed a

paragraph in the "West Australian" dealing with the shipment of lambs sent away early this year. It says—

Western Australian lambs were exhibited at Smithfield to-day for the first time and made a favourable impression, Southdown being outstanding. Exporters gave the opinion that they equalled the best, with the additional advantage of proximity to market compared with the Eastern States of Australia.

The Department of Agriculture have been conducting a campaign of encouraging fat-lamb breeding, and we have felt it incumbent on us to inculcate into the minds of farmers proposing to embark on this industry that they should breed the right type of lamb. If we are going to achieve success, it is essential to place on the overseas market the type of lamb that our customers there want to buy. It is of no use our saying that we are going to breed a type that we believe does well in this State if no one wants to buy it. We want to breed the best we can of the type our customers require. After the appointment of a committee consisting of experienced lambraisers, in conjunction with experts of the department, we have suggested that the best type of lamb that can be raised for the overseas market is a lamb by a Southdown ram from a crossbred ewe. The committee and department do not say that that is the only suitable type of lamb. What we do say is that as a result of our experiments and of the experience in the Eastern States as well the progeny of the Southdown ram and crossbred ewe is the best lamb for the overseas market. We want to encourage the people who are engaging in this industry to produce that type of lamb. If growers consider that some other type is a little better, or suits their particular conditions, there is no reason why they should not grow that type, but the result of our experience teaches that the lamb I have described is very suitable for most of the districts of Western Australia and that it is the type the English buyer wants for his table.

Hon. P. Collier: We ought to have a really expert man to advise on that point.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: To appoint such a man would entail unnecessary expense, because we can get that advice from those who control the market in London, and we can easily see from day to day the type of lamb that is bringing the highest price per pound. That is what

we want. We want quality in our lambs because the English buyer will pay for quality every time.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the whole point. I went through the Smithfield markets and it was easy to pick out the New Zealand lambs.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I believe that the fat-lamb industry will make great strides in this State. I believe that the inner wheat belt, the South-West and adjacent areas are eminently suitable for the production of high-class lambs. I believe that the outer pastoral areas should concentrate on the production of merinoes, and the outer agricultural areas might easily embark on the production of a crossbred ewe that could be sold in the inner agricultural areas, the South-West and the Great Southern districts to become the mothers of the export lambs after being mated with Southdown rams. If we do that, we shall be proceeding on sound and safe lines, and the efforts of our producers will be crowned with success. For some time Ministers in charge of the Department of Agriculture have been endeavouring to induce the South Australian Government to allow our tomatoes to go through South Australia to Melbourne. There is a big market in Victoria for early tomatoes. Western Australia is particularly adapted for the production of early tomatoes, especially in districts like Carnarvon and Geraldton, which are free from frosts and where the soil and climatic conditions are suitable. I am glad to inform members that at last the South Australian Government have agreed to our repeated requests and that our tomatoes are now allowed to pass through South Australia to Victoria under certain conditions. I believe that Western Australian tomato growers will reap considerable benefit therefrom. As an indication of the growth of our tomato trade, I should like to quote the number of cases of tomatoes imported into Victoria last month. The figures were—From Queensland, 21 cases: from New South Wales, nil; from South Australia, 2,705; and from Western Australia, 12,136 cases. That gives an indication of the growth of the tomato trade with Victoria. It is not likely that that quantity will continue because Victoria will be able to produce her own supplies later on. Last year I discovered

with regret that the wheatgrowers of Western Australia had not utilised to the fullest extent the pedigreed seed wheat grown at the various State farms. At the close of the season a portion of the crop had to be sold as f.a.q. wheat. This was very painful to me after we had gone to such expense and trouble to produce seed wheat on the farms, but the growers were unable, owing to their financial position, to pay cash for the wheat and use it as seed. Some of it had to be sold in the vicinity of 2s. a bushel. This year I have evolved a scheme whereby the growers can get seed wheat without paying cash. To those who were prepared to give me a bushel and a half of f.a.q. wheat, I said I would supply with one bushel of pedigreed graded seed. A fortnight ago I announced in the Press that I was ready to receive applications for this seed wheat. There would probably be about 8,000 bags of seed available. Within 10 days of the notice appearing we received applications for no less than 25,000 bags of seed. That will show what the farmers think of it, and will indicate their regret that they were unable to use the seed last year. This year's seed will all be utilised, and none of it will be wasted. The member for Beverley referred to the purchase of pigs and cows by the Government in the Eastern States. These purchases were effected out of a fund that was made available by the Rural Credit Branch of the Commonwealth Bank. The stipulation was that the money should be spent in improving our stock. The Superintendent of Dairying was sent to the Eastern States to effect the purchases. Yesterday I gave members particulars of this stock. Those who have seen the animals say they are of a very high class. They represent the best cattle we have been able to get from the Eastern States. It follows that the growers there are not going to sell their best stuff, but the beasts that Mr. Baron Hay has purchased are the best available. As an indication of the sound judgment he displayed I would mention that just before the Melbourne Royal Show he purchased some pigs, and these were exhibited at the show. Amongst the 12 sows and two boars that he purchased the pigs gained at the show the following prizes:—Champion boar, reserve champion sow, two first prizes, three second prizes and one third. This is an indication that Mr. Baron Hay's judgment coincided with that of the judge at

the show. Our agriculturists have been experiencing a difficult time in the last year or two. I believe that the silver lining is now beginning to appear. There is a better outlook than there was 12 months ago. I believe the result of the elections in Great Britain will have a marked effect upon the position.

Hon. P. Collier: Now, now!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think the result will be felt in the price of the commodities that we have to sell in the markets of the old world. During the last few days there has been considerable improvement in the price of wool. In to-night's paper there is a statement to the effect that at the Geelong sales wool fetched 21½d. a lb.

Hon. P. Collier: Was that following upon the elections in Great Britain?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not say so. It is the best price that has been realised for wool in Australia for a long time. I hope it will be the forerunner of a steady improvement. I am informed that wheat to-day is being sold by the pool to millers at 3s. 6½d. a bushel. That is the best price that has obtained for a long time.

Hon. P. Collier: For the last two years.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is an indication that things are improving.

Mr. Wansbrough: Does that include the bonus?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We do not know anything about that. I believe our farmers generally would get on better if they devoted more time to mixed farming operations instead of concentrating largely upon one line. That does not refer so much to farmers in the South-West. Farmers in the wheat belt have unfortunately concentrated too much on wheat growing, and have neglected side lines. Too many of them have bought their milk in tins, have not made their own jam, and have not kept pigs. I have always embarked upon every side line I could lay my hands on, and I think our farmers would have been much better off to-day and would not have felt the depression so much if they had tried their hands at side lines instead of concentrating on one or two things only. If we can induce them to broaden their sphere of activities, and the financial depression is a means of making them do this, although the dose

is difficult to take, much benefit will accrue to them in the long run. The officers of the department are working whole-heartedly in this direction. They are out to assist the farmers and give them the best advice at their disposal. That is what the department exists for. If it does not do this, it will have failed in the purpose for which it was created. Every officer is anxious to do this to the best of his ability.

Hon. P. Collier: They are a good lot of officers.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I was pleased to hear the references to the honour conferred upon Dr. Bennett, who has devoted himself so unselfishly to the investigations into the dread Braxy-like disease. It looks as if his efforts will be crowned with success. I sincerely regret the untimely death of our poultry adviser. The late Mr. Richardson was an officer to be proud of. He was wrapped up in his work, and did much for those engaged in the industry. People may have disagreed with him, but they acknowledge that he was highly respected and an upright and honourable man who lived for his job. He did his work in the job and he took his pleasure and recreation in it. His job was his whole interest in life. I deeply regret that at a comparatively early age he has passed away and that the department has been rendered the poorer by his death.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—College of Agriculture, £7,830—agreed to.

Vote—Public Utilities—Aborigines Native Stations, £4,576:

Mr. COVERLEY: The Estimates in this case have been decreased by £826.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can ask questions but cannot engage in a general debate.

Mr. COVERLEY: I should like to know why the tannery department has been closed down. This was attached to the Moola Bulla station, and cost many thousands of pounds.

The Minister for Works: As the Minister for Lands is not present, this vote might be postponed.

Vote postponed.

[19]

Vote—Goldfields Water Supply Undertaking, £118,192:

Mr. MARSHALL: Has any provision been made for a reticulation system at Wiluna, and is any money provided on the Estimates for it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These Estimates cover only the operating expenses, salaries, etc. I have looked up the file dealing with the matter. The Wiluna water scheme is controlled by a board. The members of it have asked the department to find money to instal pumps at certain wells. The Water Board is constituted under the Act with power to borrow money, and they have been advised to that effect. No money has been provided on any of the Estimates for this work.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Kalgoorlie Abattoirs, £21,120; Metropolitan Abattoirs and Saleyards, £26,349—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.2 p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 3rd November, 1931.

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

### QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT, BLACKBOY AND HOVEA CAMPS.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many men are at present on sustenance (a) at Blackboy, (b) at