

the condition of affairs in Western Australia was most satisfactory, but in view of the financial position to-day, these innovations should not have been introduced. This is not the time when we should start putting buffet cars on country lines travelling over long distances, serving comparatively few people merely for the sake of collecting 9s. or so per trip. The old system under which passengers were able to have a cup of tea or other refreshments at stations along the line, served the purposes very well indeed. The Commissioner might very well have refrained from incurring expenditure in providing the facilities I have referred to.

Mr. Munsie: As, for instance, providing a shower bath at a place where the train stops at midnight.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have noticed a number of these things which require attention, although I admit many of them may be small alterations and innovations, which, however, have involved the department in increased expenditure. If the Commissioner of Railways fails in these smaller matters, he is likely to fail in the greater things connected with the railway administration. I can assure the Premier that I will give him every assistance possible, so far as I can honestly and legitimately do so, in his difficult position regarding the finances. He will not find me complaining unduly or supporting those who complain because they have suffered from the exigencies of the financial position of the State. I have not done it yet, and I do not intend to commence now. Our financial position resolves itself into this: that we are in pawn to people outside the State. We are being drawn upon by the Commonwealth authorities unduly and I endorse what the member for Carnarvon has stated. We got no consideration from the Federal Government during the five years I was in office and I do not think, no matter what party may be in power, that we can expect consideration from the Federal authorities. According to the attitude of the Federal Government, Western Australia constitutes something which may be drawn upon whenever they choose to do so. They are levying taxes upon us to-day which, if the money were available to the State Government, would largely relieve us of our financial difficulties. It may be considered somewhat undignified for one politician to criticise other politicians, but I have no hesitation in saying that most wilful extravagance is indulged in throughout the Commonwealth by the present administration. They are quite prepared to levy taxation wherever they can, without regard to the effect it will have upon the development of the State. Moreover, we have to pay tribute every year to money-lenders abroad, we have to find interest and sinking fund on our loans. I believe it was a false policy for the States to embark upon so extensive a borrowing policy as they have done in past years. Because of the recklessness of that policy we are pledged right up to the hilt to money-lenders

in other parts of the world. That is one reason why we are unable to sell the products of our own land at a reasonable price to our own people; we have to extort higher prices in order that we may be in a position to pay tribute to money-lenders in other parts of the world. Except where essential, our borrowing should cease. We have over-pledged ourselves, and we are now pledging the credit of posterity, while by our deficits we are becoming still further indebted to foreign money-lenders. I wish to say in conclusion that I shall be only too pleased to assist the Government wherever I can, with a view to helping the State out of its difficult financial position.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 9th August, 1921.

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

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

Hon. W. J. George (Murray-Wellington) and Mr. E. B. Johnston (Williams-Narrogin) took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

PAPERS—STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [4.36]: I have here the balance-sheets for the year 1919-20 of the following State trading concerns:—State Saw Mills, State Implement Works, State Quarries, and State Brickworks. I would draw the attention of members to the fact that the reports of the Public Works Department laid on the Table of the House last year contained the unaudited balance-sheets of these concerns. I shall be glad if hon. members will put aside the ignorant criticisms which have appeared in the

Press in connection with these trading concerns, and examine these papers for themselves, when they will see that the two sets of papers compare. I move—

That these papers do lie on the Table of the House.

Hon. P. Collier: Are you laying papers on the Table or making a speech?

Question put and passed.

QUESTION — GOLDFIELDS WATER SCHEME AND AGRICULTURAL AREAS.

Mr. McCALLUM asked the Minister for Works: 1, What rate is charged for water supplied in the agricultural areas from the Eastern Goldfields water scheme extensions? 2, What rate is charged for water used for domestic purposes to residents of the Eastern Goldfields? 3, Are any interest or sinking fund charges on the main goldfields scheme charged to consumers in the agricultural areas? 4, What is the total amount, if any, at present owing to the Water Supply Department by consumers in the agricultural districts? 5, What amount, if any, has been written off by the department against consumers in the agricultural area?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Holding fee of £5. Rate, 3d. per acre within $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of main. Up to the amount so levied water is allowed at 2s. 6d. per thousand. For all over that quantity 2s. 6d. per thousand and gallons is charged. 2, Rate 1s. 6d. in the £ on annual value; rebate 7s. 3d. per thousand and gallons. Excess water, if paid for before the 10th March for first 5,000 gallons, 4s. per thousand; further excess, 2s. 6d. per thousand; if not paid before the 1st March, 5s. per thousand. 3, Interest and sinking fund are debited to the whole of the scheme. 4, £14,059. 5, From the year 1912 total amount written off is £9,067. In years 1913-1914, £2,000 as concessions. Returned soldiers' properties not worked during absence, £1,500; where more than one holding, first holding £5, others £1, £2,000; balance includes Crown ratings in error, surrenders to Agricultural Bank and general rebates, £3,567, £9,067.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. A. Thomson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) on the ground of ill-health.

PAPERS—AVON LOCATIONS, FORFEITURE.

On motion by Mr. O'Loughlen, ordered: "That all papers in connection with the recent forfeiture of Avon Locations Nos. 16410, 4712, and 5529 be laid upon the Table of the House."

The Premier laid the papers on the Table.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

Debate resumed from the 4th August.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.45]: Following the example of my friend, the Leader of the Opposition, I must congratulate the new members on their return. Some of them emerged from the fray scarred and worn, and the attendance at the House has been somewhat thin in consequence of sickness among them. I suppose there was never an election which did so much injury to members. I do not know whether this was due to the actual fight or to something which has occurred since. I am sorry that so many of the old members were defeated. Prior to the elections I expressed the hope that the House would again be constituted just as it was before. However, there have been many changes. I regret the defeat of my friend and colleague who was Attorney General in the last Parliament. We miss him, and I am sure this House will miss his advice and help.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We would not object if a few more were defeated.

The PREMIER: I can quite understand that, but I am not going to be ungenerous enough to say that I should be glad to see the front bench of the Opposition wiped out altogether.

Mr. Munsie: You do not mean that.

The PREMIER: Not a word of it. The speech of the Leader of the Opposition was a particularly able one. It was a generous speech, too, considering that it came from the Leader of the Opposition. He made his points very well, and his references, particularly to the finances, should make the speech one which will be felt throughout the country. I shall endeavour to make quite clear the exact position of affairs. I repeat that the speech of the Leader of the Opposition did make quite clear his ideas of the position, and the public have been very considerably impressed with his speech on that account. I want to discuss the State trading concerns, and to say that I shall very gladly accept the offer of help which came from the Leader of the Opposition. In fact, I shall be glad to accept the help of hon. members, no matter where they sit, in this time of stress. During the course of my remarks I propose to discuss the situation fully and to state what I believe to be the remedy. Of course, economy has been talked in this House during the last fortnight. I want members to understand that we are practising economy, and economy, I think, of the right sort. Every member knows that it is possible to practise economy in the wrong direction, such as the so-called economy of closing down necessary activities. Do members think that it would be wise to close down necessary activities? No member would say that the activities of the Lands Department should be curtailed. Every member surely is of

opinion that the activities of that department ought to be increased day by day. In many other directions very useful work is being done. It is true there are not many public works in hand at the moment, but a great deal of useful work is being done by the department, work which will lead to increased production. The activities of the Titles office have been fairly considerable, and throughout many of the other departments there has been an increase of work and an increase of interest shown in the work. To this I shall refer later on. What we ought to aim at is the permanent solution of our financial trouble. It would probably be a simple matter to so arrange things as to get the finances into a more satisfactory position temporarily, but I wish to point out that we have invested a very considerable sum of money in our public utilities—I referred to this the other day—and that these public utilities can only be made to pay by increased production and increased trade activity. The question is: Are we so shaping our policy and work as to achieve increased production? I think we are. I doubt whether any good can come from cutting down; it is very much better to build up. I quite agree that we must cut down any unnecessary expenditure. Even in our most prosperous times, it would be quite wrong to say that we ought not to be careful of our expenditure. Everyone will agree that we ought to be careful of our expenditure, no matter how satisfactory the surplus of revenue over expenditure may be. Coming to the finances, I first wish to make it quite clear to the public that there is a difference between trading concerns and business undertakings. Business undertakings should really be called public utilities, while trading concerns are really competitive concerns. These public utilities are really State monopolies.

Mr. Lambert: You did not call them that prior to the elections.

The PREMIER: I never did other than call them as the hon. member names them, business undertakings. I am not responsible for one set of investments having been called business undertakings and the other set of investments having been called trading concerns. I realise, however, that the public are confused by these two terms.

Mr. Underwood: I never heard of the other term until your Government came into power.

Hon. P. Collier: Neither did I. The distinction was made when the Wilson Government took office in 1916.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: When the Act was passed.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, the Trading Concerns Act.

The PREMIER: Then I withdraw and apologise. That, however, is by the way. The fact remains that confusion has arisen in the public mind. A business man asked of me the other day, "Why don't you sell the trading concerns which are causing you all this

great loss of money year by year?" I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "I am referring to those trading concerns." I replied, "They have not cost the Treasury one penny, because the figures are not included in any of our financial statements, except in so far as these concerns make a profit." If we were to keep in mind the fact that business undertakings are public utilities—and I propose to term them such in future, unless some member can suggest a better name for them—we would be better able to understand the position. These public utilities embrace railways, harbours, and such like undertakings, and have nothing whatever to do with sawmills, meat works, implement works or brick works. Doubtless members do understand the distinction, but the outside public do not.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I wish some members here would endeavour to convince the public.

The PREMIER: There is no reason why the hon. member should not make a start.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have been doing my best, but it is a hard job.

The PREMIER: I have pointed out that the loss on public utilities or business undertakings which are really a convenience to people in trade, last year amounted to £686,000, which was just the amount of our deficit for the year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Can you convince the "Sunday Times" of the difference between an overdraft debit and a loss?

Hon. P. Collier: These financial critics, I am afraid, are hopeless.

The PREMIER: I am afraid they are. These public utilities are essential to the carrying on of our trade, and through them we lost £686,000 last year. This is a point which members would do well to keep before them. They should satisfy themselves as to what is being done by the services which involved this loss of £686,000. It is there that we must look for the remedy. Later on I shall show that the revenue of the State is sufficient to meet our ordinary legitimate requirements, that is, our requirements apart altogether from the invested money. I have pointed out that the trading concerns are those which compete in ordinary trade. From them we had a credit balance last year.

Mr. Lambert: Well, point them out clearly to us.

The PREMIER: I have already mentioned a few of them. I might instance the Wyndham Meat Works. The hon. member will probably ask me to say what the Wyndham Meat Works are in competition with. Well, Queensland. The State Sawmills, State Implement Works, State Brick Works, State Quarries, and State Steamships are instances of other trading concerns which compete in ordinary trade, but last year we credited revenue with £7,784 from these trading concerns.

Hon. P. Collier: After paying all charges.

Mr. Lambert: Interest and sinking fund on the "invested money".

Hon. P. Collier: And depreciation.

The PREMIER: After crediting interest and sinking fund.

Hon. P. Collier: And depreciation.

The PREMIER: Not in every case.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: In most cases.

The PREMIER: In some cases. It should be clearly understood that the trading concerns accounts are not in any way mixed up with the ordinary financial statement which is issued month by month. They are kept quite separate.

Mr. Lambert: You have to keep them separate.

Hon. P. Collier: The monthly statements of trading concerns are very unreliable.

The PREMIER: That is so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then why do you publish them?

The PREMIER: I do not know, but I agree that they are useless. However, the trading concerns are in no way connected with the deficit or with the financial statement month by month. That ought to be fairly well understood. I have not the exact position before me, but I think I can say that so far there has been no loss in the aggregate. As a result of the profits made by the State Steamships a considerable sum of money was transferred to revenue in 1917-18 and 1918-19, and it will be remembered that I came into office in May, 1919. The State Steamships have done very well in the past, but I do not know that they will do well in future. I doubt whether we can look for a profit in future, but when it comes to serving our people who live in the North, we must remember that we have a duty to perform. If that duty be necessary, we must perform it well, and obtain satisfactory ships for the service. Then we hope to be able to develop trade with the East. There, again, the State Steamship Service may be necessary for that trade, which must prove of considerable value to Western Australia. The control of the State trading concerns, spread about through the various departments as it is now, must be considered entirely unsatisfactory. All those concerns should be under one control. Really, it is no part of a Minister's duty to manage a business. A Minister's department is not equipped for such an undertaking. The officers of the Agricultural Department, for instance, are not trained to business. It is no use saying that the Minister ought to know the business of State trading concerns. I suppose there is no one in this Chamber who has had anything to do with, for example, large freezing works.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But we appointed as manager a man who had had such experience. He could not rest satisfied with that, but dabbled in building, of which he knows nothing.

The PREMIER: The hon. member interjecting may be right or may be wrong, but I want him to listen to me. I say it cannot be expected that any Minister will know how to manage large meat works. It would not

be a good thing if he did know, because a specific business must be managed well and continuously. Ministers come and Ministers go; a Minister's life is a temporary appointment.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the Minister appoints a manager.

The PREMIER: Yes; but when we deal with a business, we must so arrange as to provide for good management not merely to-day, but also to-morrow and the day after, and for the rest of time. As a matter of fact, no Minister could manage these trading concerns.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is a matter of opinion.

The PREMIER: I do not expect my friend opposite to agree with me in all respects.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I hope you are not going to appoint a Commissioner for State trading concerns, that is all. You only want a commercial committee.

The PREMIER: If Parliament decides on that course, I will ask my friend to be one of that committee. However, I want the House to understand that if the State trading concerns are to continue, they must be well managed; and to that end some other arrangement is necessary. Six Ministers can carry on the ordinary business of this country, and manage that business properly by doing a reasonable amount of work. But, as things are, with the State trading concerns in existence, Ministers have a great deal more to do than previous Ministers in this country ever had. That would not matter so much if by that system the trading concerns could be well managed. In that connection I may record my belief that on the whole these concerns have been well managed and have performed the functions for which they were established. On the other hand, for my part I do not think the State trading concerns are of real good to anybody. I doubt if there has been or if there is in this State one ounce more of employment because of the two millions Western Australia has invested in the State trading concerns, than there would have been without that investment. We should have had just the same amount of employment through private enterprise engaging in these very businesses.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No.

Mr. Lutey: What about the State saw-mills?

The PREMIER: The State pays no more in wages to any worker than the private employer pays.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The only difference is that those wages are paid to men in this State, instead of to men in Victoria.

The PREMIER: I repeat that these concerns are not of any advantage to a single person in this State, so far as I know.

Mr. Lambert: Do you intend to dispose of any of them?

The PREMIER: I am prepared to sell them to the hon. member.

Mr. Clydesdale: I will take the ferries off your hands.

The PREMIER: I do not believe that commodities are one penny cheaper because of this State competition. However, hon. members can express their opinions on this matter presently; just now I am merely telling them what is the case. If as the result of these State enterprises the employees were paid higher wages and commodities were rendered cheaper—a rather difficult thing to achieve, by the way—then the position would be quite different. As the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) rightly indicated, by the State trading concerns we may do something here that otherwise would be done in Victoria, or in some other State. If he means that private enterprise would not have established implement works here, then to that extent he is right. But the problem is to manufacture here implements of the same quality as the imported implements, and to do it at a cheaper price. No doubt the State Implement Works may act as a sort of policeman to watch prices, and in doing so achieve some good; but unfortunately the State Implement Works follow the upward prices all the time. When we were making losses in the State Implement Works, we had to put up prices. With the ever increasing tariff it might have been expected that the State would be able to beat the private manufacturer to the extent of not having to take advantage of the full protection of the tariff. However, the prices charged by our State Implement Works are not very much lower than anybody else's prices.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Would you be satisfied if I brought you sworn evidence from representatives of private enterprise, evidence given before a select committee of this House, that they could not start implement works in this State on account of dumping?

The PREMIER: I am quite satisfied with the hon. member's statement; I do not want sworn evidence.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Those statements were made in evidence before a select committee of the House.

The PREMIER: I take the hon. member's word for it; but the statements were probably wrong.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They were made by importers.

The PREMIER: We have an enormous sum of money locked up in these State trading concerns. One point which must not be forgotten is that apart from the capital invested in the concerns, there is the working capital that is needed. The invested capital and the working capital total a very considerable sum indeed. This amount might be used, and could be used to-day, if we had it, for developmental work, which would mean more employment, more production, and larger opportunities to a great many people. Such would be the position if we

had now the two millions which the State trading concerns have cost to establish, and the hundreds of thousands of pounds of working capital they use in addition. If we had that money, we could use some of it for the railway in the Esperance district about which an hon. member on the front Opposition bench is so concerned, and some of it for clearing a few hundred thousand acres of land in that district, with the result that a great deal more employment would be found and a great deal more good would be done.

Hon. T. Walker: I say you can do both, if you make an effort.

The PREMIER: One is done, and I am trying to do the other. We are now surveying the land and settling the land.

Hon. T. Walker: Both are good, necessarily.

The PREMIER: Yes. One is done, and I am now trying to do the other. But let us get away from the State trading concerns, which annoy hon. members opposite.

Mr. Lambert: Are you going to sell them, or are you going to appoint a Commissioner?

The PREMIER: It will be necessary to consult the House before we sell any of them. Prior to any sale being effected, Parliament will have an opportunity of saying what it thinks about the proposal. Personally I should like to see the trading concerns sold, because I would be glad to have the money they represent to invest in more profitable undertakings.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You could not invest it more profitably.

Mr. Lambert: I think everyone should clearly know the attitude of the Government on this subject.

The PREMIER: I think we should sell the State trading concerns if we could. I do not know that I need say any more on the subject, but I can assure the House that it need have no fear of all these affairs being sold: as regards the majority of them, nobody would buy at all if we tried to sell. No one would be likely to make us an offer for the Wyndham Meat Works, for instance.

Mr. Clydesdale: Will you sell the South Perth ferries?

The PREMIER: If the Colonial Secretary were not in the Chamber, I would tell the member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) what I think about those ferries. I am a bad sailor, for one thing, and was once very ill on board one of those South Perth ferry boats. Now I should like to turn from the ferries, and from the oil engine which drives one of those little boats, and get to the finances generally. Frequently the finances of this State are discussed as if we had £6,789,565 revenue to expend as we pleased. I tell the House that that is not so at all, and I wish to state the facts. Our ordinary revenue for last year was £2,843,534. The profits from State trading concerns for last year amounted to £7,784, making a total revenue of £2,851,318. From this must be de-

ducted recoups of interest, etc., amounting to £448,407. That is to say, we pay our interest month by month on money loaned to the Agricultural Bank, the Workers' Homes Board, and other investments of that kind. We get recoups from these once in six months; they pay us only once in six months. The monthly deficit is, of course, increased by these interest payments charged up month by month, and the total is reinstated in the revenue at the end of six months.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Just when you pay it.

The PREMIER: Yes. This leaves a clear revenue of £2,402,911.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why do you want to make that sort of division now?

The PREMIER: I have not to ask the permission of the member for North-East Fremantle before doing this. I am not going to refer to 1915 or 1914; so the hon. member need not be afraid or concerned. Roughly, £2,400,000 is the amount of revenue that is available to be utilised for various purposes; for the carrying on of the government of this country, for one thing, and for the education of our people, for police protection, for all those things that Governments must do. From that amount of £2,400,000 we have to deduct a loss on business undertakings. We have to give a cheque month by month to make good the wages paid by those concerns. The losses of the business undertakings totalled £686,000 approximately, leaving the Government an amount of approximately £1,716,000 to meet the ordinary expenditure, balance of interest, and so forth.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Those payments are for interest and wages.

The PREMIER: The hon. member can put the matter as he pleases. I say that the Government give those cheques month by month in order to make good the shortages on these business undertakings, and that if the Government did not give those cheques the wages could not be paid. Of course, one cannot escape payment of interest. To meet the ordinary expenditure of the State we have available £1,716,000. Will hon. members please realise in their minds what that means? Occasionally some hon. members speak about the Government having a revenue of £6,700,000 to do with as they please. In actual fact the Government have £1,716,000. The Leader of the Opposition said the other night that I had £1,850,000 more revenue than his Government had. He made a very good point there, and he interested the public, too. I believe it was the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) who suggested that statement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not.

The PREMIER: I think I heard the whistle.

Hon. P. Collier: No; that was entirely my own.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is quite correct, though. That was the worst part of it for the Premier.

The PREMIER: I wanted that interjection from my friend, and now I have it. That was the worst part for me, the hon. member says. I am very much obliged to him. Now I want to tell him that it was not bad for me at all. I do acknowledge having received £1,850,000: from ordinary revenue £990,000, and from business undertakings, £860,000. But in the business undertakings it cost £1,170,000 to earn £860,000. Hon. members will see that there was no advantage to the Treasurer, that as a matter of fact it was £310,000 disadvantage.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is bad management.

The PREMIER: Possibly that may be so; I do not think so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not expect you to.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member had to manage these concerns he would appreciate the fact that they have to pay hundreds of thousands more in wages and in costs generally owing to the increased price of commodities than formerly. In the case of railway wages alone, the increased amount runs to something like £650,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why has that altered? It was £800,000 the other day.

The PREMIER: It is for a different period. The hon. member induced me to compare this year with 1915-16, which I did.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I wish you would.

The PREMIER: I do not want to hurt the hon. member's feelings.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We did not have the deficit.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member desires me to deal with a mass of figures I will do so, but not now. I will deal with them when I deliver the Budget later on. Then we had to pay increased interest and sinking fund which brought the loss for the year including the interest and sinking fund, to £594,964, representing the amount we had to pay in respect of the railways. That represented the loss on the railways for the year, including interest and sinking fund. Increases paid to civil servants and teachers and increases in the wages of the ordinary staff since 1915-16 amounted to £325,000. All these three items were outside my control, but we had to pay £2,090,000 more than was paid in 1915-16 on account of them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You received more money.

The PREMIER: We had £1,850,000 more in revenue but had to pay £2,090,000 more to get it. In this way we really had less revenue than the hon. member received in his time.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How much extra was there for the sinking fund?

The PREMIER: There was £50,000. That was on loans raised during the hon. member's term of office. In addition we have had to pay much higher prices for commodities

throughout the service. Our sovereign is no bigger than the sovereign of the ordinary man and, naturally, wages have had to be increased because of the increased cost of commodities. Where the hon. member had to pay 9s. to his wages men in 1915-16, we have to pay 13s. 4d. now. These increased costs have gone right through the departments and they have had to be borne. That means hundreds of thousands of pounds in increased costs owing to commodities and materials. At the same time the costs incurred have been greater on account of the increased activities all round. I have referred to the increases since 1915-16, and these increases were owing to Arbitration Court awards and reclassifications. I do not question the wisdom of those awards because living costs have become higher on account of the increased cost of commodities. Increases in wages and salaries since 1915-16 have represented £1,033,000. It has to be remembered that the officials of the tramways and railways, the teachers, the police, and so on, in addition to the ordinary wages staff, have received this amount in excess of that paid in 1915-16. To my mind it is wonderful that the deficit is not more than £686,000. I have already indicated that greater activities have been shown in many directions. The results of the working of the railways show that the cost of coal consumed was £71,000 more than in 1915-16. I am not going to worry members with a mass of figures, because we will have them in two or three weeks' time when I am dealing with the Budget. The principal reasons for last year's estimates not being realised are to be found in the loss on the railway revenue due to the unfortunate strike and the heavy falling off of railway traffic during the last four months of the year. The railway results compared with the estimates show that the revenue was £36,389 less than was anticipated and the expenditure was £237,275 more than was estimated. Thus, the loss on the railways for the year, including the interest and sinking fund, amounted to £594,964, giving a total loss on the business undertakings, including interest and sinking fund, of £686,486, which represents the deficit for the year. It was anticipated that the loss of railway revenue amounting to £152,000, which was due to the strike, would be picked up subsequently, but instead of that result being achieved the revenue went to the bad to the extent of a further £130,000 during the last four months. In other words, we received £280,000 less than was anticipated by the Railway Department in February last. These troubles had to be faced, and I suppose no Government has ever been faced with so many difficulties as we have had during the last two years. These troubles, of course, have been due to the war and the aftermath of the war. Probably every country in the world has been faced with troubles during the last few years. As the Minister for Agriculture

rightly says, we have come out of our troubles well.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How can he say that?

The PREMIER: I believe the House will agree with that.

Mr. Teesdale: He can say so because it might be worse.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is the only excuse.

The PREMIER: I offer no apology for the position. I merely state the fact, and it is this: I think we have come out of our troubles well. When every other State of the Commonwealth has been in trouble, we have been able to keep our people employed. There may have been odd people out of work, but there is plenty of work for all. I do not contend I will make the work that a man may want just when he wants it, and where he wants it, but there is work to be done. There will be work no matter what happens. I would like hon. members to realise what has happened. Every hon. member knows how the gold mines have been putting off men; the copper mines have been stopped, and so has lead production; tin mining is proceeding only in a small way; sandalwood cutting has practically been stopped; pearl shell production has been at a standstill as the shell has been unsaleable. In addition to these the Wyndham Meat Works, which employed a great number of men, and are capable of turning out large quantities of goods, have been closed down. Further, employment has been difficult and business men have had to put off hands in all directions. We have had strikes and troubles, and men have been pulled away from work in that way. We have found work, notwithstanding all these difficulties. I doubt if any other State in the Commonwealth can show quite as good a record. I am able to say that there is work for our people. The other day I was asked: "Where is this work?" Since then, between 450 and 500 men have gone to the country and taken clearing jobs that have been waiting for months. Preparation for loans to these men to enable this clearing work to be done has cost a lot of money. I will show how much activity has been displayed by the Lands Department in due course. Before I discuss the Agricultural Bank, may I refer to an article that appeared in the "West Australian" this morning. Mr. G. Taylor, who, I believe, is connected with the University in Melbourne as a lecturer, has offered some criticism in connection with the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board.

Hon. P. Collier: What are his qualifications as a critic?

The PREMIER: He is a young Western Australian.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He said that everything was all right now, you know. It was wrong when the other party was in office.

The PREMIER: I do not agree with his remarks. He is a Western Australian, and a young man at that. I object to such a man publishing inaccurate statements regarding Western Australia.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are you sure that he is a Western Australian?

The PREMIER: Yes, he was educated at the University here and went to Melbourne later on. He has taken his M.A. degree, and this article had something to do with him getting his degree. He is evidently a wise young man who has developed an imagination. He is a lecturer or something there. At any rate, I have never discussed matters in connection with the Agricultural Bank with this young man, nor has Mr. McLarty, the manager of the bank, ever seen him.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And he could not have seen the annual report, because no one has had it.

The PREMIER: I thought I was dealing with a subject concerning which the hon. member knew nothing. However, that is the position. Mr. Taylor has not made inquiries here, because we know everything that has happened at this end. Our University passed him on to the Melbourne University, and he has written a book in which these statements to which I desire to draw attention have been made.

Mr. Teesdale: Are they worth reading?

The PREMIER: Yes, they are worth reading because we are not going to have this sort of thing written about Western Australia. They are published in a book which will be circulated.

Hon. P. Collier: As a man holding a position at a University and having the M.A. degree, his remarks are bound to attract some attention.

The PREMIER: The "West Australian" in publishing the matter this morning, said that this young man's criticism was opportune. I agree that it is opportune, because it gives us an opportunity for explanation. The article quotes Professor Meredith Atkinson's reference to the Bank as follows:—

The idea was excellent in its conception, efficient in its earlier administration, and unfortunate in its ultimate entry upon the slippery slope of political interference.

Hon. P. Collier: That is nice alliteration—"slippery slope." Has he ever been on "Truth"?

Hon. T. Walker: Slippery slopes, indeed!

The PREMIER: There has never been any political interference with the Bank. There is no political interference with it now.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But he says it is all right now. It was only interference when Mr. Scaddan was in power.

The PREMIER: There has never been any political interference, but it seems to be the habit of these Professors, when they foregather, to make such statements.

Hon. P. Collier: Whoever heard of such slushy slops?

The PREMIER: Professors seem to have a habit in these days of discussing politicians and dictating to politicians. Mr. Speaker probably remembers one occasion when politicians were discussed in his presence. At any rate, I think this young man should have made further inquiries before writing such a book.

Hon. P. Collier: His ambition is satisfied; he has written a book.

Hon. T. Walker: Oh, that mine enemy would write a book!

The PREMIER: I do not want to deal very much more with Mr. Taylor beyond advising him to be more careful should he ever write another book.

Hon. P. Collier: You should advise him never to write another book.

The PREMIER: Rather should he write a book on the lines of that followed by the member for Sussex.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What was that?

The PREMIER: I understand the member for Sussex wrote a book of love poems.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We must have a look at that.

The PREMIER: The Agricultural Bank was not established merely for the purpose of earning interest on money invested. It was never established for any such purpose. It was established to assist in the development of this State. The Bank was opened in 1895 and the first advances were to the extent of 50 per cent. against the value of the work done. Later on the amount was increased to 75 per cent. of the value of the work done. That had been going on for 11 years but we still continued to import flour. In 1906 we made careful inquiries to see if we could get experienced farmers from any part of the world. We found that we could not get experienced farmers, for the man who is wanted everywhere is the experienced farmer. There being no surplus of men of that type anywhere we could not get them. We then inquired for men with money, but they were even scarcer. So, as we could not get either men with money or men with experience, we decided to advance 100 per cent., the full cost of the work to be done. It was quite useless to say to our own men, men with neither money nor experience, "There is 75 per cent. of the cost of making a farm." Without the other 25 per cent. the proposition was not sufficiently attractive. So we made it possible for men without money to become farmers. That was why we increased the advance to the full value of the work done. Thousands of men without means were settled in consequence of it. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) claims a partnership in the settlement of 50 men at Yorkrakine. The men there have done remarkably well. Men who went out without a penny 10 years ago are now comfortably well off. About 35 of the original company still remain there, and all have done well. By the aid of the Agricul-

tural Bank we very soon converted a wheat importing State into a State exporting wheat. Within a very few years after the full advance of 100 per cent. was made, the State was exporting wheat.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The State exported wheat as far back as 1904.

The PREMIER: Yes, but only a small sample. We toyed with it. But as a result of the operations of the Agricultural Bank, we have exported 20 million pounds worth of wheat during the last six years—at all events wheat to that value has gone into the pool. It was the 100 per cent. advance which made that possible, yet this young man of the Melbourne University criticises that work. I am anxious that the public should understand that the Agricultural Bank has been very well managed, and has achieved the object it set out to achieve. Through that bank we have bought agricultural development more cheaply than it has been bought in the Eastern States or in any other part of the world. We make the clients of the bank pay interest on the money; in fact they pay the full cost of it. There have been some losses, but very few. I doubt if any other financial institution has lost so little as has the Agricultural Bank. It is remarkable that we should have got through with so little loss. The explanation, of course, is that our land is cheap when first taken up, but improves greatly in value as the farm becomes developed, and so the bank's security is enhanced. I should like to know whether the House would not readily pay as a bonus every penny owing by the farmers to the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board if, by so doing, we could double the production of the State. If we could double the State's production at that price it would be cheaply done. However, we are going to lose but a very small percentage of what is owing. If we turn up the records of advances made and work done in the Eastern States, it will be seen that the advances to farmers were made without any system. The assistance given there was not given in the way we gave it; in fact it was not such assistance as meant opportunity to the man without money. I think we ought to be applauded for our work in that respect. It is no small thing to be able to say to a man, without either capital or experience, but who will work, "In Western Australia you may become possessed of a farm, and have it in full development in the course of a few years." It is something to be proud of. Professor Taylor may know the world's written history, but he has not read much of the world's history as it applies to agriculture. If he read the record of Lord Kitchener in Egypt he would find that the soldier-statesman spent a great deal of time and money in making farms. If he were to read the life of Joseph Chamberlain, he would find that that statesman, on one occasion, assisted Mauritius to such effect as to save the industries there, and did the same thing again some years later. So, too, in Greece they did just the same work. In fact, throughout the

world the agriculturist is protected. In England they are discussing the question to-day; and, by the way, we shall have to do the same, because if they propose to do in respect of our products generally the same as they did with our apples sometime ago, namely, fix the price at which they will purchase, we shall have to wake up to the situation.

Mr. Lambert: You do not blame them for that, do you?

The PREMIER: Britain named the price at which she would take our apples. I do not say it was either a good price or a bad price, but I say that if we intimated to Britain to-morrow that we would take her woollen goods at our own price, she would straightway look around for some other market. We have to protect and provide for those engaged in primary production, whether it be agricultural or mining. The Minister for Mines is fully alive to that. He has battled hard for the miners during the last couple of years, particularly in connection with the baser metals.

Mr. Lambert: Why restrict it to the last couple of years? He has been at it for the last 10 years.

The PREMIER: I want the House to appreciate the fact that all engaged in primary production in this State have been duly encouraged. For a greater number of years than I care to say, I have been connected with banking institutions, either with the Agricultural Bank or with the Western Australian Bank, and so I think I can claim to know a little more about this business, of which I have had some 40 years' experience, than does Mr. Taylor.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is he worth taking so much notice of?

The PREMIER: I do not care a jot for Mr. Taylor, but I do not want the work of this bank to be discredited.

Mr. Lambert: The only thing likely to discredit it is the fact that you will not enlarge its operations.

The PREMIER: We have owing to the Agricultural Bank £2,740,000 made up largely of advances during the past 15 years. This, too, is interesting: we have been paid by the purchasers of conditional purchase land during that time £2,950,000. So the men who are paying six per cent. on their advances have contributed to the revenue of the State to a greater extent than they borrowed. It would be good business if, to-morrow, we could take 100,000 acres of land, sell it to farmers for £100,000, and loan them £100,000 with which to improve it, drawing interest on the investment and at the same time getting all the indirect advantages springing from production. It would indeed be good business. There is owing to the Industries Assistance Board £1,136,000. I do not wish to discuss Mr. Taylor very much more, but I should like to point out that in his next paragraph he stated—

Few measures have been so little discussed at the time of their framing, and so widely criticised afterwards.

He is referring there to the Industries Assistance Board. That Bill was more fully discussed in the House than any other Bill for years before and after. On turning up "Hansard," I find that 30 Statutes were passed in that year, in addition to the Address-in-reply debate, the Budget debate, and the debate on the Loan Estimates; and that of the space occupied in "Hansard" by the 30 Bills, etc., 8 per cent. went to this one measure.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Taylor was cutting his teeth at that time, and so he could not know.

The PREMIER: However, let us drop Mr. Taylor. I wish to discuss land settlement and development, and our duty to the State in this respect. Inseparable from the question of a White Australia is this work which we are doing. I believe in a White Australia. I think we ought all to believe in it. But I do not think it is a bit of use giving it merely lip service. We require to provide for a White Australia. Japanese and Chinese have a perfect right to their own countries, just as we have a right to our country. Both Japanese and Chinese are industrious and hard working, and one can respect and admire them. We have no enmity against them, quite the reverse. We are on friendly terms with them. We can respect them and yet say that they ought to live in their own country. There is no need to be offensive. It would not be right, for they are a very clever people. We all admit that. I have met Japanese and Chinese, very nice people indeed. I have not a word to say against them. All I say is that I want this country white, and that I intend to do the best I can to people it with the white race. We must work for Australia, and I want to know what is the best way. I know that to-day we are having industrial troubles. If we expect to achieve much merely by reducing wages, I am afraid we shall be mistaken. I know that the workers cannot be asked to cheerfully accept reductions. Neither does the employer calmly contemplate a reduction in profits. What we require to do is to set out for better results. The best thing that could happen us all is for employers and employees to come nearer to each other. It is really a partnership from which each draws his share of the profits. Of course, the worker says that the employer gets too much, and the employer says that too much has to be paid to the employee.

Mr. Lambert: I suppose you have noticed which of the two lives the better?

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Coolgardie must keep order!

Mr. Lambert: Why pick me out?

The PREMIER: In order that the worker shall have good wages and so that the employer may derive profits, the maximum results must be obtained. We have come to the parting of the ways; we cannot go on as we are doing now, and I am attempting to make

it clear that all should work together in order to achieve the best results.

Mr. McCallum: Then why do you want to shoot them down?

The PREMIER: We do not shoot anybody down.

Mr. McCallum: You were preparing to do it.

The PREMIER: We were preparing to keep law and order, and we shall always be prepared to do that. But let me finish what I was saying. If we are to obtain maximum results, we must do as I have just stated, and keep law and order as well. Are we doing our best now? I say unhesitatingly we are not. If both sides, employer and employee will work together, if they will help each other, then we shall have that maximum result which is so essential. We know that employment means the investment of a large amount of capital. It means also management by the most experienced and the best brains we can get. The worker has to accept that. What we want is ample capital, and skilled men in control of affairs, and having those two things, there should be no doubt about getting good results. It is of no use seizing every little opportunity to fight; we should get on better than we have been doing. I admit that differences must arise, but, after all, I have never known of an industrial disturbance which was not settled sooner or later. I know the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) will agree with me, because he and I have often discussed this matter in connection with troubles that have been in progress. He will agree with me that no good can ever come of a strike. What we want is peace, and a decent understanding. I say unhesitatingly that men can only be paid for what they earn, and unless we can by some means improve the present situation, the workers will not continue to receive the wages they are now getting. Both sides pay when there is any trouble, but the worker pays the most. He pays by reason of his unemployment, by dearer house rent and in every way. We should remember, too, that 80 per cent. of the spending power of the community is in the hands of the men who have comparatively small incomes. It will be seen therefore how necessary it is to them that there should be industrial peace. I do not wish hon. members to believe that industries can pay more in wages than they are doing. The cost of living was made the excuse for increased wages.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some industries are merely a gamble and you cannot expect them to pay.

The PREMIER: If wages are to be maintained, it must be by strenuous effort. If we can have industrial peace and good understanding, wages may remain as they are, otherwise there will be unemployment. I have had something to do with house building in Perth during the past two years by reason of my association with the Workers' Homes Board, and I believe that owing to high costs in connection with building, the worker has

to pay £15 more per annum for each room in his house. I ask whether a man who is earning a limited income can accord to pay that. Of course he cannot, but he will have to do so unless we can in some way cheapen the cost. The only way in which that can be done is by greater output and cheaper commodities.

The Minister for Mines: Greater output will mean cheaper commodities.

The PREMIER: I should think it ought to be possible to put this position squarely before all sections of the people, and particularly before those who have to pay. Every industry should realise this. It is not good either that a man should set up a disadvantage against his employer. Say that a handy man was working ordinarily at Wyndham, and a plumber was required; is it right that we should be compelled to send to Fremantle for one if the man on the spot was able to do the work although he did not happen to be a plumber. No industry can be carried on when that kind of thing takes place. I do not say that it has happened, but it is the kind of thing that is likely to happen. I wish to appeal to those people who employ labour to recognise their responsibilities, and to the employees as well to recognise theirs also.

Mr. Lambert: They do.

The PREMIER: If they did, there would not be continuous fighting.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are there any instances where they have not recognised their responsibilities?

The PREMIER: Both the employer and the worker have responsibilities. Does the hon. member think that the worker recognises his when he knocks off work for the afternoon as he did at Carnarvon the other day in order to attend a meeting? If he thought seriously for a moment I am sure he would not do such a thing.

Mr. Lambert: Why do you not cite the master bakers?

The PREMIER: I am talking about the responsibilities of the one and of the other, and I say emphatically that those responsibilities must be recognised if we are to maintain wages at their present level. I would be delighted, and the people of the State would be delighted, to continue to pay existing wages. But how can that be done unless we get results? I want to see whether we can bring these people together and achieve that result which it is so important we should have. Take the shearing position to-day. It is an almost impossible position to exist. I do not want to discuss the merits of the case because we have nothing to do with the dispute, but the fact remains that it is unfortunate that it should exist. There are sheep to be shorn and wool to be sold. An agreement existed last year and there was no award this year, but the men made a demand and because it was not acceded to, we have all this trouble. We cannot blame the pastoralists who are getting a great deal less for their wool this year. How, therefore, are they to pay what is

asked? If matters such as this could be handled at the right moment, we could save a lot of trouble.

Mr. Lambert: If they were all like you it would be all right.

The PREMIER: Our desire is to keep Australia white, and we can only do that by working. The Federal Government can talk as much as they please about a White Australia, but it can only be kept white by State activities.

Mr. Lambert: Billy Hughes and his push are inviting the Japanese here.

The PREMIER: Let us get down to work. There are 330,000 people in this State. God knows that is all too few. Of that number there are 160,000 within a few miles of this building.

Mr. Davies: Too many.

The PREMIER: Our people in the country keep not only this number going, but also 60,000 in the Eastern States, men, women and children, for that is the number who are working over there to supply the requirements of the people in this State. Let us not forget that there are 50,000 men engaged in our primary industries in the country and that it is upon them that we depend to a very great extent for everything. Under our system we provide bonuses for the city worker and tax the country worker. That is an extraordinary thing. We also bonus the industries of Melbourne; we protect them. That should not be.

Mr. A. Thomson: Unfortunately, we cannot protect our own industries.

The PREMIER: This country has suffered in the past, and it is suffering to-day from the twin devils, high and direct taxation and high and indirect taxation. I do not think any country can stand both; they are a heavy handicap to production.

Mr. Pickering: Quite right, and the sooner we realise it the better.

The PREMIER: Indirect taxation is very high, and so also is direct taxation. If one owns a block of land in Perth or Fremantle, he has to pay I do not know how much in the pound.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And you are letting him go free altogether so far as State land tax is concerned.

The PREMIER: I do not suppose he would pay less than 5s. in the pound.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: At East Fremantle he would pay 3s. 2d.

The PREMIER: It would not be worth it. That would be what he would have to pay to begin with, and on top of that there would be other taxes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Water rates and sewerage charges.

The PREMIER: I am very glad I do not live in East Fremantle. We start off with Federal taxation, and then we have State taxation, and on top of these we have the local authorities taxing us in each centre. We are trying to develop this country under a high tariff and high taxation. These things constitute a very heavy handicap. It is

queer, but true, that a man cannot spend his first five hours in this country without contributing something to the Federal revenue. We land him on the wharf from the Old Country, and with his first cup of tea or his first glass of beer he pays something to the taxation of the Commonwealth. We are charged with all the responsibilities of developing this State. Everything that requires to be done to make Australia must be done by the States. And yet the Federal Government take twice as much in taxation, including customs and excise, from us as we get from them. It ought to be generally understood what is being paid for the service rendered by the Commonwealth, and for the service rendered by the State Government. I admit that the war has made it necessary for the Commonwealth to raise large sums of money, and that we have a great deal to pay out as the result of the war. There is of course a great deal of expenditure which will not be productive of very much good, and this expenditure has to be met out of Federal taxation.

Mr. Lambert: Do you not think you have paid rather too dearly for the war?

The PREMIER: I do think we have paid rather dearly for federation. If we were not federated our position would be different from what it is to-day. We are faced with a deficit which will have to be met. The full cost of development falls upon the State. The only way of developing Australia is to do it through the State. It is more than Australian development; it is Empire development.

Mr. Lambert: You ought to buy us 50 revolvers, and we ought all to go to the Federal Government armed with them.

The PREMIER: This State should be assisted in its work of development, since that development is not only Australian, but Empire development. That assistance should take the form of a Federal and Imperial Government vote. It is universally agreed that we must people Australia. With the object of preparing for immigration, we are doing a good deal of work in the South-West. There is as much clearing going on there as ever before. I have looked into the question of the settlement of the land between here and Albany, and we are draining and clearing the land and settling people down there. The cost of settling this part of the State will be considerable. Between here and Bunbury, and perhaps further afield, resumptions should be made with a view to increased settlement. In this part of Western Australia we have drainage and irrigation works to perform. Roads and railways must also be constructed. I have worked out the cost of settling 20,000 persons between here and Albany over a period of eight years. It would take quite that length of time to settle so many men in an orderly fashion. As a preliminary to doing this work, it would be necessary to spend on land resumptions, drainage, roads, buildings, clear-

ing and fencing, the sum of about £700 for each settler. The whole of this money would be paid back by the settler. The settler would also pay interest on his farm, that is to say, on the £700 worth of land that he would take up. The railways connecting up that land would either earn sufficient revenue to make them pay, or the State would have to make good the interest on about one and a half millions of money, or two millions at the most. The sum of £100 in the case of each farm might be allowed for railways and sundries. The total cost of settling this number of men, spread over a term of eight years, would be in the region of 16 million pounds. I do not say that the State would have to face that cost, but that is what it would amount to. The development of the wheat belt cost 20 million pounds.

Mr. Pickering: Are you basing that estimate on current prices?

The PREMIER: The cost is based on the estimated value of the work. Many of the men who come here possess a certain amount of money, and many others have made money which they have put back into their farms. Further, many of the settlers have done work at a cost less than the average rate. I do not advocate the expenditure of this large sum of money by the State, but just wish members to know what must happen if the country is to be developed. The work is worth doing, at all events so far as the land between here and Bunbury is concerned. Indeed, it would be worth while developing the land between here and Bridgetown, and between Bridgetown and Albany, but it will take many years to do.

Hon. T. Walker: And from Albany to Esperance. It is all good land.

The PREMIER: Yes, wherever the land is good it is worth while. We are looking 300 miles south to Albany, and then we go east towards Esperance, but it all comes under the heading of the development of the South-West.

Mr. C. C. Maley: Is there no good land along the Midland line?

Hon. P. Collier: Not very much.

The PREMIER: I think the State has done its work in connection with the wheat lands. Money which is being brought in is being used to still further develop our wheat lands. If we had 70,000 wheat farms we should have no difficulty in disposing of them. In fact, we have very little wheat land on our hands. That work has been done.

Mr. Clydesdale: You have a lot of wheat land that is being dummed.

The PREMIER: We may have, but the hon. member cannot name one block.

Mr. Clydesdale: Can I not?

The PREMIER: No. We are having a very close inspection made of blocks that are held, but are not being used. Before long there will be many forfeitures. Two years ago I told the people concerned that they must get on with their improvements. If they fail to do this the land

will be forfeited. We have developed our wheat belt; it will go now. We must also develop the south; that will go, too.

Mr. Latham: You will have to extend your wheat belt.

The PREMIER: I was told that I was an infernal idiot to go so far east as I did.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Who told you that?

The PREMIER: That does not matter. I was told so at any rate. Of course any man who attempts to develop the country, east or south, will suffer for so doing. One or two hon. members will be pleased to know that I gave instructions to-day for the subdivision of land even further east than we have hitherto gone, that is between Burracoppin and Westonia. People may take it up if they please; I do not intend to advance any money against it. It is wanted by certain people who have money, and they may have it. I believe they will be able to farm it. They will require some money out there because they may strike a bad season or two. The area in question is about 25 miles square. When we take all the facts into consideration we must admit that we have not still available a very large area of wheat land, except perhaps in the Esperance district.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You will admit that you are selling the land too cheaply.

Mr. C. C. Maley: There is land available adjacent to the Wiekepin railway.

Hon. P. Collier: Wait until we have fixed up the South-West.

The PREMIER: I know it will be said that the land adjacent to our railways ought to be used. We have a perfect right to insist upon improvements being made on the 14 million acres of conditional purchase land which is subject to improvement conditions. That is being done. There are also eight million acres of land in the South-West that has been selected for some time, and which we require to be improved. If we had taxed the Peel estate 5s. an acre, it could not have been developed by private effort.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You might have got it for nothing, then.

Mr. Lambert: You recognise the virtue of collective ownership?

The PREMIER: I recognise the principle when I see it.

The Minister for Mines: I warrant you do not.

The PREMIER: The question is, are we going to drain these lands in the South-West for the settlers? If we decide to do so we should first become possessed of the land. If we construct drains in advance of settlement the land must carry the cost of the scheme, and if we become possessed of the land first we can charge that cost against the land according to the value of the work done. This has been done in the case of the Peel estate. We may be able to put a price of £10 on some of the land, to pay the cost of drainage, in the case of swamp lands, and a price of 10d. on the high land. I do not know that we shall get very much land between

here and Bunbury, but we shall at all events get some. In addition, there is Crown land available, which can be more easily handled.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The PREMIER: Before tea I had dealt with the land down as far as Bridgetown, but I had not mentioned the land north of Perth. There, I think, there is opportunity for development if some scheme of drainage can be devised. In this locality we have land very close to the market, and a much smaller area is sufficient on which to make a living. We ought to develop first of all the land which is nearer to our markets. I repeat that I am merely indicating what the cost of this development will be. I have made it clear that I do not consider that £16,000,000 will need to be found by the Government, but the total expenditure will equal that amount. If we take the undeveloped land in the South-West, from Margaret River to Augusta, a little over 30 miles—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How much Crown land is there?

The PREMIER: Practically all of it is Crown land. The land we are dealing with is all Crown land, but there are some original grants, and fairly big grants, too, in that district. We have recently sent 40 men to Augusta and another 30 or 40 will be sent to join that group. It is here that I hope to settle the 50 men whom I promised the goldfields people, when I visited Kalgoorlie with the Leader of the Opposition, would be provided for, the men suffering from a touch of miners' pthisis. There we have some opportunity of putting our men on the land. If we are able to settle 200 men there, it will be a considerable advantage to the district. Everyone knows the value of 200 farmers in a small locality. From Pemberton south to Denmark, we have a very much bigger area. The distance from Pemberton to Bridgetown is about 114 miles and practically every acre of that is Crown land. Here we have timber which will largely provide for the railways for some time, valuable timber which can be sold and which will be the means of bringing revenue to the State, apart from the royalty on the timber. I suppose we can claim to have in this part of the State, from Bunbury south, some of the best land in the world. We have also some very beautiful country which will be valuable not only to the agriculturist but to the tourist. We want to open up our beauty spots. It would be much better to provide for the people beauty spots within our own State than having them go to the Eastern States, to Tasmania, and New Zealand. I believe that Nornalup, of which this House has heard occasionally, is one of the finest beauty spots in the world, so we are told by Prof. Wilson of the American University who was here some time ago. I can answer for it being a very beautiful place with a good climate, and one which will provide an

excellent resort for our people who require a holiday to recuperate.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: What about means for getting there?

The PREMIER: They will have to be provided. Some of us will be unable to go there because, unlike the member for North Perth, we do not possess motor cars. I hope the hon. member will take the opportunity of visiting this part of the State. People only need to see it to realise how valuable it is. After leaving Pemberton one is in the karri country more or less until reaching Denmark. It is not pure karri, but the karri will provide traffic for the railways and bring in a considerable amount of royalty. There are many magnificent stretches of water in the South-West; the rivers are good, and there are big inlets. When I visited Nornalup some little time ago we were very well looked after. There I tasted the best oysters I have had in Western Australia, and we lived in the lap of luxury at very small cost, and came into contact with a band of very good-natured settlers.

Mr. Underwood: Did you get any oysters at Point Sampson?

The PREMIER: Yes, but the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) did not get them for us; we got them for him. He kept his feet dry. However, I am dealing with the South-West. This part of the State is well worth opening up, and when it is remembered that a man can make a comfortable living off a hundred acres of good land, members will realise the opportunity that exists. I do not say that the necessary railway should be built to-morrow, but I do say that we cannot escape the obligation of building it. I want to see the land from Margaret River to Augusta opened up, even though it will be a big task. I hope that members will go down and see this country in a few weeks' time. The member for East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has asked that a trip be arranged, and I desire that members should go and see what can be done. I hope that members will also have an opportunity of seeing the South-West during this Parliament. They ought to see it in order to learn for themselves exactly what is being done. It is quite useless to keep unoccupied this vast territory, which is capable of producing millions of wealth. If our people are going in for manufactures, there must be not only good food but comparatively cheap food available for them. We cannot expect to have cheap food if it has to be brought from overseas; it must be produced within the State. When we have finished with that stretch of country we will still have the land right through from Bridgetown to Mount Barker, a different proposition, but one which it will be well worth while to face. When I talk of railways, I know that some members will ask what the present railways are doing, and will tell me that the land adjacent to the existing lines should first be developed. That is what I propose to do. There is not nearly so much unoccupied land that can be controlled along our existing railway system as some

members seem to think. In our newer districts the settlers are living up to an agreement to improve their holdings, and this refers to 14,000,000 acres of our alienated land. I mention this work to-night, because it is right that we should know the opportunity which is ahead of us. I think I ought to say something about the North-West.

Mr. Angelo: It is about time you did; we have heard a lot about the South-West.

The PREMIER: The hon. member cannot hear too much of a good thing. In connection with the North-West, it should be noted that the Federal Government have recently imposed a very high duty on tropical fruits, on bananas particularly, which means that we shall have to produce our own requirements. It is possible to produce sufficient for our requirements. If I have not said much about the North-West, it is not because we have not been doing something. Until one has visited the North he cannot realise the opportunities that exist there. I do not claim to know very much because, owing to the very heavy rains and the impossibility of getting through the country, I did not see as much of it as I had hoped to do, but I believe that I now understand a little more about it than I did before my trip.

Mr. Underwood: The Minister for the North-West knows all about it.

The PREMIER: In the last two years we have classified 150 million acres of that country. We are now exploring a vast territory, 40 miles in extent, abutting the coast line between Derby and Wyndham. There, I think, we shall be able to start our tropical agriculture, and in saying this, I am not overlooking the opportunities presented by Carnarvon which is favorably situated and comparatively handy to Perth. I saw cotton growing very well indeed, though I cannot speak as to its value. Fruits which were flourishing included pine apples, bananas, mangosteen, coconuts, dates, etc. Tropical agriculture ought to be developed and we ought to be able to meet all our own requirements. This we intend to put in hand as early as possible. Of course squatting is well established; the pastoral areas are magnificent and the cattle country of the Kimberleys is probably equal to anything that the world knows. The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) will be able to tell the House about the gold, silver, tin, asbestos and diamonds to be obtained in the Nullagine district. The gold mines are being worked only in a small way. If it were possible to open up the bigger things which are there, the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway would be a paying proposition. We intend to send a geologist to this district to see what can be done. The water there, too, is teeming with fish. Whaling should prove a very valuable thing there. Again, we have the pearl shell. And there are the fish in the sea. If any other country had waters containing such wealth, those waters would be worked; and we should work them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We want the population first and the money.

The PREMIER: Yes; we must get the people in order to be able to do these things, but we must make a start and pave the way, and then capital will come in. We may, too, find oil there; but, whether we do or not, the north affords ample opportunity for a great many people, and the preparatory work is being done now towards the development of that country. I hope we shall get the men with money to make that country progress. Just at present Wyndham is under a cloud, because meat cannot be shipped and sold; but as matters become normal in that respect, we shall send away a great deal of meat and create a great deal of wealth. From this country we must export all we possibly can, and lay ourselves out to sell all we passibly can oversea, to people outside. When we remember that our interest bill is something over two millions per annum, we must realise that it is necessary for us to export something, if only to meet that interest bill. Then, when we think of the purchases we bring into the country, we realise, once more, how much we must produce to cover the cost. We ought to be actively developing wealth here, there, and everywhere, north, south, east and west. In this country, with its small population and unlimited resources, there must be considerable push: every man in the country must put his shoulder to the wheel and keep it there in order that the wheel may go round. If we do not do that, then very soon other people in other countries will develop and prosper. All the work I have suggested will well repay its cost. Now, the Leader of the Opposition said something about public works to help tide over the unemployed difficulty. I have mentioned a few little railways that we have to build. The Nyabing line is authorised, and the Esperance railway is under construction, and there are one or two other small lines to be put in hand. The railway construction authorised and being done is a comparatively small thing, very small indeed as compared with the large undertakings of the past. Within the next few years we shall have supplied with railways all the agricultural land that is now available for settlement. In the South-West a line is needed between Pemberton and Denmark. The line will probably take years to build, but the expenditure each year will not be very much. As regards the reference of the Leader of the Opposition to public works, I am prepared to put authorised works in hand so soon as material becomes a little cheaper. Money, as we know, is getting cheaper; and railway material is getting much cheaper. We shall, I hope, start some of the authorised railway lines before very long. There is the line to Bencubbin and to Westonia that is authorised and ought to be built. We cannot afford work that will not be productive, and we must select for earlier construction those works that will produce the greatest amount of settlement and development and opportunity. I repeat,

the scheme of works now ahead of us is not a big scheme compared with the vast undertakings of the past. Now I suggest that I inform hon. members of what has been done in the matter of land settlement. In that respect I find that in the year 1918-19 there were 2,444 applications for 39,684,365 acres of pastoral land, and in 1919-20 3,220 applications for 20,431,528 acres, and in 1920-21 4,365 applications for 22,083,235 acres.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do those figures include applications by returned soldiers?

The PREMIER: No; they refer to Crown lands, pastoral lands, town blocks, and so on. As regards rural lands, there were in 1918-19 1,136 applications for 610,249 acres, in 1919-20 2,620 applications for 1,468,046 acres, and 1920-21 2,870 applications for 1,726,496 acres. So that in 1919-20 we more than doubled the settlement for the preceding year; and this year we have done still better. The figures represent a fairly considerable number of new selectors. We are, of course, settling our own people on the land. I have told hon. members that we propose to settle some miners on the land. To-day the Government threw open 50 blocks in the Esperance district especially for gold-fields people, and when those 50 blocks have been taken up we shall throw open more. We are, of course, bringing out immigrants, and some of them are being settled on the land. We have discussed soldier settlement in this House so frequently that I do not know I need say much more about it to-night. I have told hon. members that we are committed to the settlement of our returned soldiers on the land. We committed ourselves to that as far as we could. Every acre of wheat land in the hands of the Crown inside the settled belt has gone to soldiers—every acre that we had. It may be that east of the present wheat belt there will be found other land suitable for settlement; but that land is unsurveyed at present, and therefore not immediately available for soldier settlement. I have told the House that the soldiers would be settled in their own districts if we could settle them there.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Who made that promise? We did not guarantee a district.

The PREMIER: I think we promised that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you had no land in a district, how could you settle the soldiers there?

The PREMIER: I think we promised also that the returned soldiers should not go on absolutely unimproved properties.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is something different.

The PREMIER: The promise was made, at any rate, that the soldiers should be settled in their own districts. Now, in 1915, my friend opposite went East and said that we could take 14,000 soldiers. He was perfectly right. I have been saying to-night that there is still opportunity here for 20,000 soldiers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But your friend on this side did not say that he would buy the farms of other men, put those other men off, and put the soldiers on.

The PREMIER: Of course he did not; but he did not survey land, and improve it and prepare it for the soldiers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He never had the opportunity.

The PREMIER: Yes; he did have the opportunity. However, not a tap of work was done until a very few years ago. The hon. member interjecting knows full well that I moved in this House on that very question.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Of course you did.

Mr. Angelo: And the member for North-East Fremantle supported the present Premier.

The PREMIER: Nothing had been done, and the soldiers were here. The soldiers were here, and the best steps possible had to be taken. In any case, the soldiers could not have been settled on virgin land as cheaply as they have been settled.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The final arrangement was not completed until after you took office.

The PREMIER: No; but land should have been surveyed and got ready in advance. However, it is no use crying over spilt milk.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do not forget that we went out of office in July of 1916.

The PREMIER: But the hon. member's party were in office for two years during the war. The Labour Party had some opportunity, and the party now on this side of the Chamber had some opportunity, and until May of 1919 nothing was done in the way of improving land; and by that time nothing could be done, because there was no labour available. If we had got ready from 1914 onwards, we could have had Crown lands prepared for the soldiers. But that was not done. Still the soldiers are well settled, and cheaply settled, and every acre of land we have got will be taken up by other people; so where is the loss?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But we carry the increased indebtedness.

The PREMIER: I do not think we are carrying an increased indebtedness.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Well, let us say that the soldier is.

The PREMIER: No, the soldier is not, because he has got his farm more cheaply. In South Australia the capital cost for each soldier settled is £2,300; in Victoria it is £1,900; in Western Australia it is £1,100. We have settled 3,954 returned soldiers on a commitment of £4,383,000. We have made no mistake in the matter. We have done the best that it was possible for us to do, and I think the soldiers are pretty well satisfied. The soldiers have got their holdings, and are fixed up, and hon. members opposite can talk until they are black in the face without altering the position. Up to the 30th June last we had settled 3,954 soldiers on the land, and by now over 4,000 have been so settled.

It is true that 1,100 more soldiers have been qualified, but I do not think we shall hear very much more from some of them; they will have got positions or taken up some other avocation.

Mr. Latham: There are a number of soldiers waiting.

The PREMIER: That is so; and if they will go where we can offer them land, they can be settled on the land straight away.

Mr. Latham: In the South-West?

The PREMIER: There is no Crown land surveyed ready in the known area. As regards numbers of soldiers settled on the land we have settled more than South Australia has settled. We have settled 1,600 more than Queensland and 1,800 more than Tasmania, and 1,700 fewer than New South Wales. I think we have done fairly well, and I think the soldiers are doing good work on the land, producing well and doing well. They will pay the instalments of the purchase price, and pay them far more easily than would have been the case if the soldiers had taken up virgin land. It has to be remembered that the land on which the soldiers are settled will be paid for by them; and if I were permitted—which I am not—I would like to bet my friend opposite that the value of the areas on which the soldiers have been settled will be doubled within a very few years.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some of them will.

The PREMIER: That is so. I do not intend to dwell further upon the question of land settlement but will refer to the Civil Service. Members will remember that I pointed out in the "West Australian" recently that the numbers have been greatly reduced while the salaries have been increased. I think the civil servants were entitled to the increases they received, in common with the other people who have received increases. I consider we are getting better results from the service as it is to-day and we are getting more work with fewer numbers. I know that in some departments, at any rate, more work is being done. We must not confuse expenditure in connection with the Civil Service with the expenditure in the Medical or Health Departments, the Charities Department or upon education. The Civil Service, as such, is, of course, the service that we come in contact with as a rule. The education system in Western Australia is costing a great deal of money, but the expenditure in connection with the Medical and Health Departments, as well as the Charities Department is enormous. It has grown to tremendous dimensions of recent years.

Member: Can you tell us what it is?

The PREMIER: I have not the exact figures, but the reports will show how that expenditure has grown. Although the Education vote has grown, there is very little being done at the present time. We have established one or two high schools in the country, but beyond that the expenditure represents increases in salaries and the

cost of a few schools in the country. I hope that the House realises that the Civil Service has been reduced in numbers, and although they are receiving more in the way of salary, better work is being done. Some people consider that we should wipe out the Civil Service altogether, but if we did that, we would only save about £450,000 a year.

Mr. Teesdale: We should wipe out a few of the heads.

The PREMIER: If we took some of these people away from their work, they would not be able to carry on in other avenues of employment, because no other department in business is carried on in the way business of Government departments is transacted. Files have to be built up because members demand information. If information is required, minutes have to be written to show the reason for action and so on. I think the cost in regard to the compilation of these files should be cut down very considerably and the work of departments should be carried on more on the lines of outside business concerns. Should such a course be adopted, although we may not have absolutely perfect records, the results would be there. Why cannot matters of conversation be carried to results and the results recorded on the files?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You must have perfect records in connection with departmental matters.

The PREMIER: We could have a sufficient record. Is it not utterly absurd for a man in one room to write a minute to a man in another room?

Mr. A. Thomson: You want to sack some of them.

The PREMIER: It is more a matter of the system. The House demands the file and desires to find out what instructions have been given in connection with a certain matter. In order to keep a record of these instructions and the action taken, these files have to be built up.

Mr. A. Thomson: Why not alter the system?

The PREMIER: That is a different matter. We do not mind paying men well to do necessary work, but I object to high salaries being paid to men who do absolutely unnecessary work. We are endeavouring to deal with the position to a certain extent, but on account of the demands for information, we cannot altogether get away from the system as it is at present. I agree with the member for Roebourne that reform in the Civil Service can only come from the heads of departments. If the permanent heads manage their departments firmly and well, the position would be righted.

Mrs. Cowan: Cannot effect be given to some of the suggestions right away?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is impossible. Get rid of a few Acts of Parliament and something might be done.

The PREMIER: Yes, it is true that Acts of Parliament necessitate a certain amount of this work being carried out. At the same

time, permanent heads are taking a greater control of their departments at the present time. I think they should do so because if a man is offered a senior position and accepts it, he should accept the responsibility of carrying out his work well. If he cannot do so, he should say so, and if he cannot prove his ability to carry out the work he has undertaken, his services should be dispensed with.

Mr. Mann: Would you promote by merit, instead of seniority?

The PREMIER: Yes, certainly.

Mr. Latham: That is something we do not get to-day.

The PREMIER: I would like to deal briefly with matters connected with the Forests Act. It will be remembered that the Forests Act was passed about two years ago. In passing that measure Parliament took far too much control away from the responsible Minister. The financial aspect of the forestry legislation should be looked into, for I do not think we can afford to spend the amount of money set aside year by year upon the forests.

Mr. A. Thomson: Has not that money to be authorised by the House before it is spent?

The PREMIER: Not in the ordinary way. The working plans come before the House and, once passed, this Chamber has no more concern with them. Once the money is approved for use upon the scheme of work endorsed by the House, the money so authorised is used until the scheme is carried through. A great deal of money is collected, and I think we have spent about £50,000 in the forests within two years.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Do not you get that amount back ten-fold?

The PREMIER: The Bible says something about bread cast upon the waters coming back after many days. In this case, I am afraid it will take too many days for us.

Mr. Teesdale: And it will be pretty mouldy by then.

The PREMIER: I want to see permanent forests in this State as well as anybody else, but I think this House should control the expenditure on forestry and know where the money is going. I do not say we should not spend this money, but we should know how it is being spent. We should get timber for our local requirements at a much more moderate price than we can obtain it to-day.

Mr. A. Thomson: Unfortunately, our State Forestry Department is in the combine.

The PREMIER: We want timber for our railways, and it is important to us that the timber should be acquired at as low a cost as possible. Regarding the relations between land settlement and forest requirements, the position now is that every application for land in the South-West is submitted to the Conservator, Mr. Lane-Poole. Eighteen months or so ago I agreed that every acre of purely jarrah land should remain there for the purposes of a jarrah reserve. I did not approve of the plans, and have not done so yet. Those plans will convert these areas into State

forests, but as soon as they are in order, I suppose we shall approve of them. Similarly, land which is purely karri country can also be reserved. At the same time, agricultural land must not be held up for forestry purposes, and Mr. Lane-Poole has said so, too. This must be so, because such a policy would not pay. While we must conserve our timber areas for all time, if it comes to a question of exporting timber and we have to wait for, say, 100 years before the timber can reach an exportable stage, it would be better to export agricultural produce. Fruit trees with crops every year would be better than a karri tree coming into use in 150 years' time or so. Then there is the question of regulations which are regarded as all important under the Act. Without the regulations the Act would not pay, and there would not be any control over the forests. This is how they are made to-day: the Minister approves of the regulations and they go through Executive Council, after which they are put into operation. These regulations may or may not be good ones. For instance, there was a regulation which said that trees must not be cut below a certain size. The regulation proved to be impossible, but under the Act neither the Minister nor the Government can alter it without the recommendation of the permanent head. The control over this aspect is vested in the Conservator by the Act, and I am not, of course, blaming the Conservator for it. I think it would be right for Parliament to inquire into the working of this Act, and into the wisdom of allowing it to remain on the Statute-book in its present form. I can assure the House that any Minister of the Crown administering the Forestry Department under this Act is in a most unfortunate position indeed. If it comes to a question of selecting land, the application would be referred to Mr. Lane-Poole. The Conservator may say "Yes" or he may say "No." He may be right, or he may be wrong in my opinion. If I think the Conservator is wrong, I can do nothing in the matter, for he may say that as there is one karri tree growing on the area, it should be reserved. The Minister in charge of the department may determine that where 20 red gum trees and one karri tree are growing, the land shall be set aside for agriculture, but if the Conservator disagrees with the decision, then it is particularly unfortunate for the Minister.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This Parliament has been altered. Why not introduce a Bill to alter the Act?

The PREMIER: Parliament passed the Act and it would certainly be a good thing to inquire into the working of that Act. It is almost impossible at the present time for the Minister to control the department.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Does the Conservator hold up matters in this way?

The PREMIER: Yes, he is doing so every day.

Mr. A. Thomson: Why not appoint a select committee to inquire into the whole matter?

The PREMIER: I think the House should inquire into the matter. We must have timber and we must have agriculture, and there is plenty of room for both. Personally, I hope there will be an inquiry because the Government are responsible for the control of the affairs of the State, and forestry is included under that heading. We want to make it possible for a Minister of the Crown to control his department. When it comes to a question of spending money on the karri or jarrah forests, members must consider how much it costs to get a crop in 10 or 40 years.

Mr. Lambert: We must consider whether Millars' will carry on the affairs of this country.

The PREMIER: Millars are not carrying on the affairs of this country by any means.

Mr. Lambert: They did a lot of lobbying when this Bill was going through. It was most disgraceful at the time. I heard it said that one clause of the Bill cost the company £50,000.

The PREMIER: Well you are a very fortunate man. However, it is ridiculous to say that Millars are running the country.

Mr. Lambert: They were seeking to run it before the Bill passed.

The PREMIER: The Bill was passed by the House, not by Millars. I do not know what the hon. member means. I expect a lot of timber men came up here and discussed the Bill with hon. members at the time, but I do not know that they influenced the House very much. I think the amendment that gives Millars the right to a renewal was proposed, not by a private member, but by the Minister.

Mr. Lambert: They were pretty successful in their lobbying.

Mr. A. Thomson: If the Government's interpretation of that clause is right, it means that the late Attorney General misled the House.

The PREMIER: No, I do not think so. It is a perfectly simple clause and it was discussed here at considerable length.

Hon. P. Collier: There is nothing in the "Hansard" report of the then Attorney General's remarks which can be said to be misleading.

The PREMIER: No, it is perfectly clear.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, both the clause and the statement by the then Attorney General.

Mr. A. Thomson: The Solicitor General does not agree.

The PREMIER: Yet I expect the Solicitor General drafted the clause. I have discussed it with him time and again. The other night some hon. member said that we would lose a million pounds by renewing the leases. We might make that amount if the company were to surrender their leases. But they have a perfect right to cut all but the immature timber on their leases, and take it away. Is it to be thought that they would give up something said to be worth a million pounds, give up $4\frac{1}{2}$ years of lease which they possess in order that we might make a million pounds? I do not say that it is worth a million pounds.

Whatever it may be worth, I ask any hon. member would any man give up for nothing the right to cut timber over those leases for the balance of the current term? Of course not. It is to be remembered that after the present leases expire Millars will have to pay such royalty as is prescribed by the Conservator.

Mr. Lambert: They are taking good care to get rid of the timber.

The PREMIER: Under their existing leases they have a perfect right to cut the matured timber. They have paid for the right. They are paying to-day. Those rights were granted to them years ago.

Hon. P. Collier: They have what rights the last Parliament conferred upon them, and it is of no use complaining now.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is a matter of opinion.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no room for opinion about it.

The PREMIER: I wish the House to realise that after the present lease expires, Millars and others who get renewals will pay just as much as any other permit holder would pay. The State will not lose a penny of revenue. If there be any timber left to cut after their present leases expire, and if they had no rights whatever, would any member say to a company having their mills already erected, "Take your mills away. Someone else will pay just as much royalty as you will pay, and so they can erect their mills and cut out the timber"? Of course, the House would not permit it.

Mr. Lambert: We should not allow their commercial interests to interfere with the policy of the country.

The PREMIER: Millars do not interfere with the policy of the country at all. If Millars or any other people invest money in this State and obey the laws of the State, they ought to be protected so long as they behave themselves and do what is right by the State. It is all nonsense to suppose that we should get one penny more from anybody else than we will get from Millars, unless indeed they are foolish enough to surrender their leases. We shall have an opportunity later for discussing the wheat pool. I intend to introduce a Bill which will make it possible to carry on the pool. The Grain Elevators Bill also will be introduced. In respect of immigration, I hope we shall get a number of people from overseas. I want it to be clearly understood that instructions will be given that men coming into this country will have to get a year's experience on a farm before they become eligible for land settlement. It will be made clear to them also that if they come out from the Old Country to the city, they cannot expect to get land. I would not waste a twopenny postage stamp on a man who intends to settle in the city. We want immigrants for the country, and we intend to put them into the country. Our own people also want to select land, and they will be considered first. As hon. members know, Mr. Gullett, the Commonwealth Immigration

Officer, was over here the other day. We shall be appointing a second officer for London in the course of a few weeks.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What is the salary to be?

The PREMIER: Do you want the position? It will probably be £500 per annum. Will you go? I have said that the permanent solution of our financial troubles must come from increased production and increased trade. We expect increased production from our mines, from our pastoral areas, and from our industries generally but, in the main, increased production must come from agriculture. The House and the country know that that has been my policy in the past, just as it is now. To-day our own people are willing to go on the land. They have not been so willing to go on the land during the last seven or eight years but, owing to the industrial slackness in many directions, and the fact that some of the mines have closed down, or at all events shortened hands, our people are now prepared to go, and I am prepared to take them. We can get immigrants, and we must have them. Our duty seems to me to be quite clear. We are charged with the responsibility of advancing this great and valuable portion of the British Empire. We are doing all that can be done. We are a busy people and, in the aggregate, we produce a wonderful result. I claim that, in the circumstances, we are doing everything that can be done. The Government are being supported by members of the House and by the general public. I hope that during this debate members will discuss the possibilities of development; each man dealing with that part of the State which he knows best. Mining men, I hope, will tell us what can be done for mining, while agricultural men will explain to us what is needed to promote the agricultural industry. If we all join in shaping the course we must follow to this end, I think that in a very short time our troubles will disappear and this country will once more sail on an even keel, and come to the prosperity which she so richly deserves.

Mr. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.25]: At the outset I wish to outline my position in this Parliament.

The Premier: Come over here!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I entered Parliament with the idea of endeavouring to do my best for the country in which I was born. The time has arrived when men should step forward and advocate their country first. We should do away with all this party strife that exists, not only in Western Australia, but throughout the Commonwealth. I believe that the great deficit we are building up, and which must cease, is largely caused by the representatives of the people neglecting to work in accord and do the best they can for the country. I believe that the party system is a curse and a yoke around our necks. I was told that when I entered Parliament my ideals would be shattered. If,

at the conclusion of my term, my ideals are shattered, and I find that I cannot do any good in Parliament, I shall not seek re-election. I am pledged to my electors to do the best I can for Western Australia and for the South-West, irrespective of any section of the community. I won my seat against an accredited Labour candidate, and also against a member of the Ministry. It proved to me that I had to sit on the Opposition cross-benches, because people in my part of the electorate were not quite satisfied with the administration of the present Government.

The Premier: They never are. They will not be satisfied with you after a week.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I want to pay a tribute to the Premier for the way in which he has handled the land settlement scheme for returned soldiers. In my opinion he is the one man in Western Australia who has made a legitimate attempt to settle the soldiers on the land. If it had not been for that unholy combination of so-called Nationalists which conspired together to put the late Mr. Frank Wilson and the present Premier, then Minister for Lands, out of office, our soldiers, when they returned from the Front, would have found their land settlement scheme going on swimmingly, instead of finding that it had been grossly mismanaged and neglected until the present Premier again got back into office and took charge of it.

Mr. Hickmott: The late Mr. Frank Wilson was a member of the Nationalist Party.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There was a little bit of underground engineering in that matter.

Mr. A. Thomson: You are a little bit ignorant of the subject.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I will speak concerning the hon. member's judgment when I have had an opportunity of listening to his able utterances.

Hon. P. Collier: It will be a long time before you will learn anything from the hon. member.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: As stated by the Leader of the Opposition, the position in regard to unemployment is a grave one. There is one man in Western Australia who stands against the employment of a vast section of the community, and that is Mr. Lane-Poole. I am pleased to know that the Government have taken up a firm attitude in regard to this gentleman. I speak from bitter experience of him. During the war period, on account of the attitude Mr. Lane-Poole adopted, economic conscription was forced upon scores of married men, which ended in their being separated from their families. It also turned a prosperous town in the South-West into stagnation. Mr. Lane-Poole is cursed in the great South-West. There would be no unemployment there if the Government would adopt the system of throwing open Crown lands in cases where the timber has been cut over, and of giving the men an opportunity to work those lands. The price of timber

to-day at the siding is greater than it was before the war, delivered at Port Adelaide. If the Government would get rid of this incubus there would be an opportunity to settle thousands of people in the South-West on the unalienated Crown lands. The timber there is old and has been cut through scores of times. If it is not utilised in a few years it will be worthless. At Mundaring, I understand, thousands of pounds are being squandered in a great reforestation scheme. Most of our forest lands are adjacent to railways and are being depleted of their best timber. That is why the price of timber stands so high to-day. There exists a great demand for Western Australian hardwoods. Let us make use of the opportunity afforded to-day, and provide employment for the thousands of people who want it. After we have cut out the forest lands let us close them up under strict forest inspection, and they will then reforest themselves. The member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen), and other members who have had experience of the forests of Western Australia, will support me in the statement that jarrah grows on the worst land, and that such land is not of much use for any other purpose but for the growing of jarrah. On the question of making ready the land in advance of settlement, I am an extremist. I believe that the people should be given their land in an improved state. At present, no sooner are men placed upon the land than they are forced off it because of the great charges imposed upon them. The cultivation of the land is one of our stable industries, and the land should be given to the people in the form in which they can best make use of it. I want to see people settled on the land under improved conditions. If the improved conditions which have subsequently to be fulfilled are not complied with let those who have taken the land get off it, and be replaced by other more desirable settlers. I challenge the Premier or any member of the Government to say that in the past people have not been settled on the land 40, 50, and even 60 miles from a railway. That is the case, and most of these people have been unable to make good. There is only one way of settling the South-West. Thousands of pounds have been squandered in the construction of roads, as, for instance, the building of roads to Nornalup Inlet. The only way to develop that portion of the State is by railway communication. We require a net-work of railways to open up the South-West, such as we see in the agricultural areas. Members cannot conceive of the great possibilities of the South-West unless they visit the locality themselves. People who have settled between Bridgetown and Mount Barker were promised a railway a long time ago, and they have become almost disheartened by the delay. Many of them have planted orchards of 30 or 40 acres in extent, and to-day have tons of fruit rotting on the ground. The Government sent an advisory board through to Mt. Barker, and this board reported that the construction of

a railway was warranted. Despite this fact, nothing has yet been done. The railway would pay from the start. The Government might begin by constructing the first 30 miles of it, and it would be found that the proceeds from the timber lying along the route would pay for the construction of the line. There are 30 or 40 returned soldiers along this route, who also have to be taken into consideration. Another railway is required from Manjimup to the Warren River. Settlers were sent down there by the Government some ten years ago, and on the lithos produced to them were guaranteed that a railway would be built within three years. I travel over this country on my holidays every year, and can assure hon. members that of the 30 or 40 settlers who originally went there not half a dozen are left. Thousands of pounds have been advanced to the settlers at different times and the money has gone in ringbarking and ring fencing. Because the farms have had to be abandoned this money has been wasted. In many instances the land has, I understand, reverted to the Crown. When legislation was first introduced in connection with the State Sawmills the Government promised that a railway would be built from Pemberton to Flinders Bay. That apparently has been lost sight of. Some of the finest land in the South-West lies between these two places. One of the engineers told me that there are no engineering difficulties in the way of constructing the line. He said that if he had Mr. Hugh Brockman as a guide he would be able, in ten days, to survey a route that he did not think would be departed from by more than 100 yards. I should like to make a few remarks concerning the Country Party and the wheat pool. Although there is a wheat pool I cannot find that there is any pool for our apples and the other products of the South-West. Although there is an Industries Assistance Board for the wheat farmers I cannot find that there is any such board for those people in the South-West who live 30 and 40 miles from a railway. Whereas it costs from 30s. to £2 an acre to clear wheat-growing land it costs the settlers in the South-West up to £20 an acre to clear their land. The men in our part of the State are having heart-breaking struggles to make a living. The primary producers apparently think they are the only pebbles on the beach.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They are not.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They say they are the only creators of wealth in the State. That is not so. I claim that the men engaged in the timber mills and in the mining industry are creating wealth just as much as are the members of the Primary Producers' Party.

Mr. Iatham: That is our platform.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Hon. members opposite have left it rather late. I am afraid the Country Party exists from selfish motives. It consists of a party of wheat farmers who are out for themselves, and who, to a great extent, do not care whether we

starve or live in the South-West. It is, of course, impossible that we should starve, and that is why we have existed so long whilst the wheat farmers have been spoon-fed. I claim that if the Country Party were genuine they should be solidly opposed to centralisation. Centralisation is the curse of the country. Now, it appears that people are asking for tramway extensions. There would be no need for tramways and there would not be the scores of motor cars and trains running in the metropolitan area were it not for the people who live in the bush, the tillers of the soil, the timber hewers and the miners. They are the men who are keeping Perth going. Before any tramway extensions are made I ask hon. members to support me, especially those belonging to the Country Party, in insisting that railways are built in the fertile portions of the South-West. That will be one of the solutions of the problems facing us to-day, and a means of reducing our deficit. It is a criminal shame and a disgrace to the community, as well as to Parliament, that so much money should be sent out of the State to-day. In the past Governments have not assisted people who live in the country to the extent that they should have done. I am not referring to the Premier. I know what he did in the way of settling the Eastern areas. He now says that he will develop the South-West. As long as he maintains that attitude I will be with him. While we are extending consideration to new settlers let us not forget the claims of the old settlers, those who have been battling along for 30 or 40 years, and whose sons are now continuing the battle, because of the lack of railway facilities afforded to them. I know of men who have taken up land on the far side of rivers, and who cannot get their bridges built, and so for five months in the year are unable to get their produce to market. All this is going on whilst countless sovereigns are being sent out of the State to build up industries in the Eastern States. Another important industry which needs attention is the tin-mining industry at Greenbushes. During the last 20 years Greenbushes has sent away an average of about 400 tons of tin per annum. And yet the Government have done little or nothing to assist the industry. Ministers for Mines will say that the Government have done something, but they have never done anything of a genuine nature in that direction. Certainly they have built a few batteries, and battery managers' houses, which are not required. I ask the Government to advance to the industry the sum of £5,000. There is no doubt that good lodes exist at Greenbushes. That must be the case, for such a large output of tin to have been going on for so long a time. I ask the Government to grant this sum free of Government control, to place it in the hands of a local committee of men who have a long experience of the district, men of practical knowledge and who will best know how to lay out the money. Let the Government send

down an engineer to work the machinery, and let him consult with these local men as to where these lodes exist, and as to where the boring operations should be conducted.

The Minister for Mines: Why not use the divining rod?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have not much faith in that.

The Minister for Mines: Most of the tin mines in Cornwall were discovered by means of the divining rod.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I know of a man who is supposed to be an expert with the divining rod and who claims that he has located a lode at Greenbushes. People have sunk down to 90ft., the water level, and though there are good indications at that depth they are unable to go any further. I should like to deal with the question of road boards and their difficulties, more especially those situated in the wet areas, and over whose roads there is a great deal of heavy traffic due to the carting of sleepers. I am absolutely opposed to the nationalisation of roads. We have no desire to see another department created. At the last road board conference one of the Ministers said he would bring down a Bill for the nationalisation of roads, and that the Government would take control. This would mean that we should have taxation without representation. I do not think that our railways have proved a success under departmental control. I believe we should revert to the old pound for pound system in respect to the construction of our roads. The local authorities, although perhaps very small fry in comparison with Parliament, are really the ratepayers who pioneer the districts. They collect a certain amount of rates and revenue, but we often hear the objection that the local authorities are constantly crying about the condition of the roads and yet are not prepared to tax themselves, but that if they did so, they would have better roads. If the roads are nationalised, as has been indicated by the Minister, I consider that a great amount of public money will be squandered. It would be far better to leave the roads under the control of the local authorities, and for the Government to provide an engineer to supervise the work of constructing and grading the roads. Unless some good argument is adduced in favour of the proposal, I shall oppose any system of nationalisation under Government or Ministerial control. As regards soldier settlement, I paid a tribute to the Premier when he was Minister for Lands for his honest attempt to settle the soldiers on the land. In the South-West, however, holdings have been purchased at highly inflated prices. The soldiers are paying tax on about £1 per acre, although the land was sold to the Government for £3, £4, £5, £6 and, I believe, even £7 per acre. These men have no possible chance of making good. I claim that the soldiers have been given nothing. When they left these shores, they were promised, not only by the Government but by every chap who stayed behind

and let the other man go to do the fighting for him, the sun, the moon, the stars, and everything that shone. When the soldiers returned and wanted to go on the land and make an honest endeavour to assist the State, they were set a task which was worse than impossible. It is impossible for them to make good, more especially on the repurchased estates. It is of no use the Government departments endeavouring to hush up this matter; interest bills are falling due and the soldiers cannot meet them. The Government may gloss it over for the first six months, 12 months, or two years, but then they must come down with a huge thud.

Hon. P. Collier: And in about three years' time the interest bill will be double what it is to-day.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Quite so. Then the repurchased estates will revert to the Government and we shall be burdened with a further incubus. The soldiers are getting nothing; they are paying 7 per cent. interest on their money, and are not even receiving the treatment which is meted out to those settlers who got advances from the Agricultural Bank 10, 15, or 20 years ago. Yet we say we are doing something for our returned soldiers. I would like the Government to cut their assessments down by one-half. If this were done, we could claim that we were doing something for our soldiers. We have been told that 1,900 soldiers have taken the places of other men on the land. Where have those other men gone? Inexperienced men have replaced experienced men on the land. Is there any possible chance of their making good? I was chairman of the local repatriation committee. I was spending three and four days a week burning petrol, in order to do inspection work for the Government. We made recommendations and, against our advice in instances, the land was purchased for £300, £400, or £500 more than we recommended. I can prove this statement; there is no denying it.

Mr. A. Thomson: It did not happen in my district.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The South-West is a great place, but it has been badly managed. Now, however, the people have sent up a decent representative to watch over its interests. I believe that drastic taxation is necessary to bring into use the land adjacent to existing railways, an unimproved land tax, or a tax on unimproved land.

Mr. Latham: We have it now.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No, we have not.

Hon. W. G. Angwin: Of course we have not.

Mr. Latham: Well, I pay a land tax.

Mr. Lambert: But not a tax on unimproved land.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The pioneers are the men who have given enhanced value to the land abutting the railway, and the enhanced value should belong to the State. The railway south runs through a considerable stretch of country on which a drastic tax should be imposed, so that if the present holders do not make use of it, they will be compelled to

give it up to people who will utilise it. Our present system of taxation is by no means fair. A farmer possibly makes a profit of £1,000 this year and pays taxation on it accordingly. Next year he suffers from a drought, or there is no boat by which to ship his fruit, or a hail storm ruins the crop and he loses £500, £600, or £700. This loss is not taken into consideration and the farmer is soon hard up against things. Next year he has to pay taxation on anything he makes irrespective of his losses in the previous year.

Mr. Mann: Does not that apply to wheat growing and to all industries?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Of course it does.

The Minister for Mines: Does not it apply to the salaried man who loses his job?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No.

The Minister for Mines: Such a man would have paid his tax in the previous year when he was in work.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Premier said there was no need for anyone to be out of work.

Mr. Underwood: The salaried man only pays when he has got it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Our deficit will not be reduced by taxation. Taxation always has a tendency to reduce a man's energy. The Arbitration Court has laid it down that £4 a week represents a decent living wage; yet a young man, or a girl, in receipt of a salary of £100 is taxed by the Government. There is nothing fair about this. It is wrong in theory and wrong in practice. I would like to know when it is intended to revert to the pre-war conditions in respect to the licensing law. There is no war on at present. A little while ago a referendum was taken with regard to licenses, and I consider it was nothing short of the squandering of thousands of pounds merely to pander to a section of the community.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They very nearly got a majority.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But who voted? I am opposed to anything which seeks to restrict the liberty of the people in this way. Such an expression of opinion should be taken through the ballot boxes. If the people have not sufficient faith in their parliamentary representatives to give effect to their wishes, let them secure someone who will represent them fairly and squarely. In connection with every referendum there is some red herring drawn across the track. There is no reason why such a vote should be restricted to three or four licenses. Why not take a vote on the whole of them, or not at all? If the liquor traffic is not to go, let it stay here.

The Minister for Mines: That is logical, anyhow.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Regarding the proposed redistribution of seats, the older members of the House will recollect the famous Bill introduced by the Wilson Government, which necessitated the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) almost breaking his neck to get down to Augusta.

Mr. Wilson: I managed it, anyhow.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I consider that the question of the redistribution of seats should be the subject of an inquiry and report by an independent commission consisting of, say, the Surveyor General—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do not call him independent.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: He ought to be. With the Surveyor General I suggest the Chief Electoral Officer and the Chief Justice. Such a commission could decide whether any seats should be cut out. I consider that there are too many members of Parliament. Instead of having 50 members in this Chamber, there should be about 20, and I would not mind if I were one of the 30 who had to go. Instead of having 30 members in another place there should be—

Mr. Heron: None at all.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Well, say an executive of seven. I believe it is not open to us to alter the Constitution.

Mr. Lambert: Why not let the President sit there on his own?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: This is where the Labour Party proved themselves insincere on the previous occasion. They stumped the country with huge maps, saying "Look at the depths to which the Wilson Government would stoop!" Look at the way they cut this out, and put that in, and did something else!" But did they alter it?

Hon. P. Collier: Does the hon. member know we attempted to amend it?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, but when another place threw out the Bill, the Labour Party were not game to face the country.

Hon. P. Collier: Where was the insincerity? We passed the Bill and it was rejected in another place.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Why was not it passed the second time; that would have shown sincerity. The Labour Party could have said, "We cannot carry on unless this Act is amended or altered," and they should have gone to the country on it.

Mr. O'Loghlen: We would have had an election every week.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I suppose it is too much to ask members to vote away their own seats, but an independent commission should be appointed to divide the State into provinces. I would like to see elective Ministries appointed from the floor of the House.

Mr. A. Thomson: How are you going to do it?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There would be no chance of the member for Katanning being appointed, I feel sure.

Mr. A. Thomson: That does not matter; tell us how you would do it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Party politics is the curse of this country. A man is appointed as a Minister, but from what I can see of it, Ministers do not run their departments; the heads of departments run the Ministers. There are too many ins and outs. The term of Parliament should be extended. If the Labour Party introduce something which is calculated to be a good thing for the country, the Gov-

ernment oppose it because they reason "We cannot have this up against us at the next general elections." Members may laugh, but these old and tried professional politicians—of whom I regard the hon. member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) as one—cannot refute my statement. If the life of Parliament were extended and the system of elective Ministries adopted, Western Australia would possibly rise from the mire she is in to-day. Every member must realise that it is impossible for the State to continue drifting as it is doing at the present time. If the drift continues, so surely as the sun rises there will come a time when her paper will not be honoured.

Mr. A. Thomson: Nonsense!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I remember when the Labour Government had a deficit of £300,000 or £400,000, there was an awful cry all through the country about the Government rushing us headlong to bankruptcy. We are now practically on the verge of bankruptcy. I can see unification staring us in the face, and unification I regard as a curse. In the eyes of the Commonwealth Parliament I believe Western Australia is only a very small patch, and if unification ever comes about, we shall be regarded only as a blot on the map. Unification will come unless some honest attempt is made from every part of this House to stop the financial drift. Last month there was a shortage of £100,000. I do not know where the money comes from: I wish my bank would allow me the same scope as the Government appear to have. On the subject of elective Ministries I cannot claim to be an authority, although I have my own views. A man who is supposed to know a great deal said to me the other day, "If you appointed Ministers from the floor of the House, you might have your Minister for Mines voting against your Minister for Works." I replied, "Quite right, if the Minister for Mines and a majority of the House thought that the Bill introduced by the Minister for Works was not in the best interests of the country."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Elective Ministers do not vote at all; they only speak.

Mr. Lambert: They are kept in cages.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Is that so? I do not wish to detain the House longer, though I feel that, as a new member. I may not have done justice to my argument. As I go along in this Chamber, I shall endeavour to familiarise myself with political ideas. I desire to congratulate the member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) on her victory, and on being the first lady to win a seat in an Australian Parliament. I believe that the lady said it was not good for man to be alone. In moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, the member for West Perth asked for more parks for West Perth, and for more fresh air for West Perth. I wish I could persuade the member for West Perth to influence her married friends to come along with their children into the rural districts, where there is any amount of fresh air, and where there are endless vistas of natural

parks. Too much centralisation is the trouble of this State. I consider that instead of having 50,000 people, as the Premier said, working for the rest of the community, we should have a drift of population from the towns into the rural districts. The development of the South-West, in particular, is going to be one of the finest things that ever happened in this State. But two things must go together in the South-West: a land settlement scheme, and development of the sawmill industry. As for the three State sawmills working there, I say there is room for another dozen sawmills; and I care not whether they are carried on by State enterprise or by private enterprise, providing only that the South-West is developed. I repeat, the solution of the financial difficulty to-day existing is bound up with the development of the great South-West. Nobody knows the South-West. People come along and drive through that country, but they inevitably fail to recognise its great possibilities. When the Premier introduces his railway Bills, I shall expect to see among them at least six railway Bills for the South-West. I want only short lines—15 to 20 miles—to serve the settlers and to develop the South-West. But I want those spur lines to be built almost immediately, if that is possible. Once again, the development of the South-West is a question of vital importance, representing, as it does, the only possible solution of Western Australia's financial problem.

On motion by Mr. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 10th August, 1921.

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

QUESTION—BOULDER AMBULANCE TRANSPORT.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Mines: In view of the frequent occurrence of serious accidents on the Boulder mines, will the Minister endeavour to secure the