

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I regret exceedingly that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. have made use of political influence to exercise a lever in Parliament.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You cannot blame the firm.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have a high regard for the co-operative movement and for the Westralian Farmers Ltd. so far as that institution represents the co-operative movement. The chief blame rests not upon the firm but upon Parliament. Every step that we take now makes the position more difficult to rectify in the future. Some hon. member said it was too late to make an alteration now. There is very little in that argument. The men in these big commercial institutions are pretty shrewd, and their one object is to put themselves in a strong financial position. They see clearly that unless they get the pull of the lever in Parliament their interests will suffer. These big corporations, using the influence of Parliament to put cash in their own pockets, constitute the one big danger in Australia to-day. The salvation of the public lies in free open competition with the State impartially holding the scales between the various sections of the community. Since in this we cannot have open competition with the State standing aloof, we have to judge between these big corporations and the Labour ideal, in which the State itself handles these matters. As yet the Westralian Farmers Ltd. are not a gigantic corporation, and have not their claws very deeply into this country.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are they not a political corporation?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It depends upon the light in which we regard them. I have no time for Government institutions, but I greatly prefer them to the building up of gigantic corporations with a pull in Parliament. If the Government and the Country Party are going to force these corporations upon us, they will be fought to a finish. The only course open to the people is to join forces with the Labour Party, who unlike these big corporations, are working for the masses, unswayed by any consideration of putting money into their own pockets.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: I move—

That the Committee do now divide.
Motion put and passed.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	7
Noes	12

Majority against .. 5

AYES.

Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. A. Lovakin	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. G. W. Miles	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. R. J. Lynn	(Teller.)
Hon. J. Mills	

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Progress reported.

RESOLUTION—STATE FOREST DEDICATION, REVOCATION.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting the Council's concurrence in the following resolution:—"That the proposal of His Excellency the Governor for the partial revocation of the dedication of State Forest No. 5 be carried out."

House adjourned at 11.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 19th October, 1921.

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

QUESTION—PARLIAMENTARY TOUR OF THE SOUTH-WEST.

Mr. A. THOMSON asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to defray the whole of the expenses of members of Parliament making the proposed tour of the South-West? 2, What is the estimated cost of provisions, attendants, railway and motor cars necessary? 3, Owing to the state of the finances, is it wise to incur this expenditure?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. The Government will provide transit, meals, and accommodation only. 2, This cannot be determined until the number intending to travel is

ascertained. 3, Yes. Improvement of the financial position of the State depends largely upon the development of our magnificent resources, and more particularly our agricultural lands. This tour is designed to afford members first hand information regarding the South-West, which is considered necessary, as members will be asked to vote money for its development, and possibly pass legislation dealing with the settlement of land adjacent to railways. A similar trip to the wheat belt last year resulted in great advantage to the State, and more particularly to the wheat growers.

QUESTION—OIL PROSPECTING AREAS.

Mrs. COWAN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has he seen the map published in the last issue of the "Sunday Times" which discloses that the whole of the State has been taken up for oil prospecting purposes? 2, Was it contemplated when the Mining Act Amendment Act was passed last year that such enormous tracts of country should be taken up by single individuals? 3, Is £5 per annum the total revenue that the State is deriving from the granting of each of these enormous leases? 4, Apart from Freney and Oakes and one or two other names of leaseholders that are known to be genuine, will he inform the House: (a) who the other licensees are, (b) what proof he has of their *bona fides*, and (c) whether it is true, as many of them have declared, that they have taken up these areas for speculative purposes only? 5, If all the applicants are *bona fide*, how will, say, A. J. Mellor, who holds a lease in the most inaccessible part of the State, be able to comply with the conditions to commence and continue the search for oil within 30 days?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, The map published by the "Sunday Times" shows areas applied for, which embrace the whole of the State, but several of these applications have not yet been dealt with. See further reply to question No. 2. 2, Yes. Large areas are necessary when making investigations regarding the possibility of the occurrence of oil, and such areas are only available under a license to prospect. The policy of the department, however, is to limit the area where it is reasonably accessible, and as an instance it is not intended to grant the application as applied for and shown on the map referred to as O.P.A. 31 and O.P.A. 36, each of which will require to be divided into at least six separate areas. As a further instance of this policy will the hon. member compare the sizes of the licenses granted in the South-West which is easily accessible, with those in the balance of the State, which is not so accessible. Further, as a precaution against the shepherding of large areas, the conditions of the license under Regulation 25b, paragraph (c), provide for "cancellation by the Minister, or to amendment of the description of the occupied land by reduction of the area

thereof by the Minister upon application by any person for a license to occupy any portion of the land occupied by a licensee if prospecting thereon by the licensee is not being carried out to the satisfaction of the Minister."

3, Yes. This is only a registration fee and is not intended as a method of obtaining revenue, our anxiety being in the direction of enabling and assisting in the discovery of oil. When such is found in payable quantities a lease must be taken up in lieu of the permit, and the provision as to payment of royalty when oil is discovered will satisfy our anxiety in regard to revenue. 4, I am unable to answer this question in the form it is submitted by the hon. member for it infers that some of the applicants are not genuine. So far as I am able to ascertain all the applicants are genuine, and, as a proof of their *bona fides*, are required to enter into a bond of £50 as security for the due performance by the licensee or his transferee of the conditions of the license. With respect to query (a) in the question under reply, the applicants are as shown on the map referred to. 5, I am not in a position to state when or how Mr. A. J. Mellor or any other licensee proposes to commence and to continue the search for oil. Section 7 of the Mining Act Amendment Act of 1920 grants me discretionary power to extend the time beyond the 30 days mentioned in the question.

QUESTION—AVON VALLEY, LANDS UNUSED.

Mrs. COWAN asked the Premier: 1, Has he seen the suggestions by Mr. Surveyor Lefroy regarding the acquisition of a considerable area of land in the Avon Valley, which is not being put to practical use? 2, Is it his intention to lay upon the Table of the House the report furnished by Mr. Lefroy, who conducted the classification on that large area, which is within seven miles of a railway, and a summary of whose recommendations is contained in the report of the Surveyor General presented to this House on the 27th September?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, I will lay the papers on the Table of the House.

MOTION—STATE FOREST DEDICATION, REVOCATION.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [4.36]: I move—

That the proposal of His Excellency the Governor for the partial revocation of the dedication of State Forest No. 5 be carried out.

Yesterday, in accordance with the provisions of the Forests Act, I laid on the Table a proposal by His Excellency the Governor for the partial revocation of the dedication of State Forest No. 5. To comply with the Act it now remains for a resolution to be passed by both Houses of Parliament. The position

is very simple. It would appear that some time ago two locations, Nos. 2716 and 2717, were leased and financed by the Agricultural Bank. Location 2717 has on it a fair quantity of marketable timber, and the Forests Department were prepared to take it over. This was agreed to, but the bank would not agree to the security being divided, and so the Forests Department had to take over both lots. No. 2716 has no marketable timber whatever on it. There is now an applicant for that block for cultivation, and the Conservator of Forests has agreed that the dedication of this, as a State forest, should be revoked. Therefore, a resolution of both Houses of Parliament becomes necessary.

Question put and passed.

On motion by the Minister for Mines ordered—

That the resolution be transmitted by message to the Council and its concurrence desired therein.

BILLS (3)—REPORT ADOPTED.

- 1, Stamp.
- 2, Auctioneers.
- 3, Constitution Act Amendment.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1921-22.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £975:

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.41]: I do not suppose there was ever a time in the history of the State when the Estimates were received with graver concern. In the happy old days of recurring surpluses it must have been very cheerful for members of Parliament to enter with zest into the discussion on the Estimates, pointing out the disabilities under which various districts were suffering, and advocating the carrying out of necessary public works. But, after perusing the Estimates before us, I must confess that I approach their consideration with grave concern. I thank the Premier for the mass of information he has given us. The Budget he presented was the most informative I have ever had the privilege of listening to. I have searched that Budget carefully for a ray of hope for the betterment of our financial position, and I regret that I have been unable to find any such consolation. It seems to me the Premier, on a careful consideration of the position, was deserted by the spirit of optimism for which he is renowned. Indeed, he has every reason to feel pessimistic, and to view the future with the deepest concern. He prefaced his speech by stating that probably the committee would want to know why his

estimate had failed. Last year he estimated a deficiency of £399,000, but the actual deficiency was £686,726. He went on to say that this was due entirely to public utilities and strikes. There is a certain amount of truth in the statement that even the Country Party has some responsibility in the matter as well as the Labour Party. The Premier emphasised the fact that the increased expenditure on wages and salaries came to £824,750. He hoped the Committee would remember that was the result not of administration, but of awards which had been given by the Arbitration Court and by the reclassification board which the Government had appointed. One is forced to the conclusion that government is entirely taken out of the hands of those who are supposed to guard the public purse. This large expenditure of £824,000 has been forced upon the Government by Mr. Justice Northmore and others. We see from the paper every day that responsible officers are appearing before the Public Service tribunal stating that Mr. so-and-so is entitled to higher remuneration than he is now receiving. I have no objection to people receiving adequate remuneration for their services, but it must greatly concern the administration to have responsible heads of departments advocating that higher salaries should be paid in Government positions.

Mr. Troy: It is a case of "you scratch my back and I will scratch yours."

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member has taken the words out of my mouth. They say "If I can get your salaries raised, naturally I shall receive an increase also." Ministers, who are alleged to be responsible for the affairs of State, are not getting that loyal support from their official heads to which they are justly entitled. I cannot congratulate the Government upon the appointment of Mr. Munt as Assistant Public Service Commissioner. In these times we are supposed to be economising and the appointment strikes me as strange. Evidently Ministers considered that it was in the interests of administration, and they had some idea of having an assistant public service commissioner who would see that the recommendations of Mr. Miller and Mr. Munt, so far as reforming the service was concerned, were put into effect. If many private firms were run on the same lines as some Government departments they would soon be in the insolvency court. That is where we are trending unless some attempt is made to stem the tide. I regard the appointment of Mr. Munt as unnecessary. Members have been circularised by the union of which Mr. Stevens is secretary, setting out that that union proposes to test the validity of the appointment. Members of that union are apparently not prepared to give loyal support to the Government. Evidently officers of departments do not approve of the appointment. They think the appointment should have been made by seniority. The sooner we abolish that system the better.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is not the law now.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is not the law, but custom very often establishes a principle when it is against the law. The hon. member has been a Minister himself, and can speak with considerable experience. No doubt when he was Minister for Works he often wished he had the privilege of a private employer, so as to be able to replace certain officers by others who would do more efficient work.

The Minister for Mines: He could not do that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is one of the difficulties facing the Government, and which also faces private members.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: In making appointments you have to take merit as well as seniority into account.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That does not always count.

The Minister for Mines: The trouble is to judge of the merit between, say, two officers.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have no desire to cast any reflection on departmental officers, but very often when a man has arrived at a certain position of responsibility he will not recommend any man for promotion who is likely to endanger his own position. I may be accused of taking my position as member for Katanning too seriously, but I do say it requires a greater spirit of optimism than I have to calmly view an accumulated deficit of £5,000,000. This Committee should lead the way in the matter. The country is anxiously waiting to know how long the present drift will continue. I do not think it is within the power of any man to square the finances at once. It will take a long time, and it will be a painful process of what I may term regeneration. As a private member I cannot accept the responsibility of the present position as calmly as the Government appear to do.

Mr. Davies: You must do so.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will not accept it. Members should be prepared to stand solidly behind the Government and let them know that despite the fact that privileges and facilities may be taken away from us we will give the Government the support necessary in these times or make room for others who will do so. The late member for Perth, Mr. Pilkington, when he entered this Chamber some three years ago, said that drastic retrenchment was required. I stated at the time it was not in the interests of Western Australia to adopt the method of drastic retrenchment advocated by him. We have arrived at the stage when we will have to seriously consider the position of the State's finances. A private person may have been accustomed to buy three suits of clothes a year, but when he finds his income is restricted he is compelled to purchase only one suit in the year. That argument can be applied with equal force to the State's finances. The Leader of the Opposition said last night we had arrived at the stage when stern and

severe economy was called for; when we will have to do that which will hurt, that we must discontinue living beyond our means, and that economy will have to be practised. Later on I intend to move in a direction in which I hope to get the support of members, so that they may show the sincerity of their desire to effect much needed economies. This will also show people that the Government are making an endeavour to balance the ledger. The Premier stated that after this year we should endeavour to reduce our deficit at the rate of £100,000 per annum. Why should we wait until after this year? There is no time like the present.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is reducing it this year.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Not according to my figures.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am taking the Premier's figures.

Mr. A. THOMSON: He estimates a deficit of £570,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is £100,000 less than last year.

Mr. A. THOMSON: His previous year's estimate was £399,000, and it actually was £680,000.

The Premier: There were good reasons for that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I admit that.

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

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Government have not exercised the economy which should have been exercised in a great many ways. Is it not time that the Committee directed Cabinet that unless some apparent effort was made to stop this appalling financial drift they must make room for others who have the courage of their convictions, and do those things which are unpleasant and which hurt, and thus risk unpopularity? It does not matter if these steps do mean depriving people of certain privileges and facilities they now enjoy.

The Premier: You mean the taking away of the station-master from Broomehill.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will admit that the Commissioner for Railways has seen fit to close the old-established station of Broomehill, one of the oldest towns on the Great Southern line, a town, too, which boasts of a large hotel, quite a number of shops, two large stores, and a generally prosperous community. The Commissioner considers, of course, that this is one of the economies it is possible to effect, but I wish to show how the people in my district view the matter. I would not have referred to it but for the interjection of the Premier. The people at Broome Hill cannot help drawing comparisons between their town and Cranbrook, where there is a tumble-down hotel, a small store, a travelling hawker, and half-a-dozen houses. At Cranbrook the station-master is retained. I have suffered a good deal politically by some of the actions of the Commissioner of Railways in his desire to effect economies, but I have advised the people that they may

have yet to put up with greater hardships than having two or three railway officials removed from their particular centre. It is essential that economies should be effected, and if the Commissioner, after giving due deliberation to the matter, considers that economies are capable of being effected in certain directions, I shall not interfere. The alternative which has been put up by the Commissioner is that if the people at Broome Hill are prepared to pay to the extent of £200 per annum, the Railway Department will reinstate the station-master.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Have they left the station buildings standing?

Mr. A. THOMSON: There are not many there.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: At East Fremantle they shifted the whole blooming lot.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The station at East Fremantle was for the convenience of passengers only, but by reducing the status of a town like Broome Hill, serious harm is done by affecting the value of property. However, as I have said, I would not have referred to the subject but for the interjection of the Premier. The Government will have to face the existing position seriously, even to the extent of making themselves unpopular by perhaps having to take away facilities and privileges enjoyed by the public, and those in Government employment. I do the present Administration the justice to say that I honestly believe they are prepared to take those steps provided they get a mandate from this House.

The Premier: We do not want it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Then why does not the Premier effect the economies which are necessary?

The Premier: We are doing so.

Mr. A. THOMSON: When I sat on the Opposition bench, I heard the Premier and other gentlemen who were also on that side telling those who were on the Treasury bench that what was required of them was business acumen.

The Premier: You never heard me say that in the whole of your life.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The member for Katanning did a good deal of that himself.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I admit that, I have been bitterly disappointed with the results and I am quite justified in saying that the country is also disappointed. When the change over was made the country looked for some tangible result.

Mr. Troy: And the country is still looking, after five years. I thought the Government had given it up as a hopeless job.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Then God help the country! We cannot continue as we are doing. We have appeal courts and railway employees and others asking for increased wages. I am afraid there will be a serious awakening. Whilst I accept the Premier's sincerity in his Estimates, wherein he sets out that the deficit this year will amount to £571,000, I am not prepared to accept

that estimate with the confidence that I should like. I feel that the times which are ahead of this State will not justify the Premier's optimism. If the present condition of affairs continues, instead of having a deficit of £570,000 it will probably be nearer £750,000. That is easy to arrive at. We have only to take the position as regards the price of wheat. We know there has been an abnormal drop. We saw in the Press that a drop of twopence a bushel means a loss to the Commonwealth of one million pounds and that the present reduced price means $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions. I know from the knowledge I possess of my district that, from the average which is likely to be obtained, and the price we are likely to get, there will not be too many farmers in the happy position of being able to pay income tax next season. True, they will have to pay land tax but that, after all, is a very small amount. Therefore I say candidly that the Premier is more optimistic than I am if he considers that he will receive the same amount of money from taxation this year as he received last year. The Premier anticipates receiving £110,000 by amending the Licensing Act, and it is gratifying to know that there is such an avenue which can be taxed. I hope that the Premier's deficit will be less, but unless different methods are adopted there have been in existence during the last two or three years, my estimate of the deficit will be closer to the mark than his. If my figures are correct, we shall exceed last year's figures in connection with Government utilities by £377,779. It is reasonable to assume that an endeavour should be made to keep the figures down to those of last year.

The Premier: Expenditure is largely in connection with public utilities.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I recognise that fact. I am not dealing with those that come under special Acts of Parliament; I am only dealing with those that come under the purview of this Committee. We should at least make an attempt to keep the figures down to those of last year.

The Premier: They are less.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The total does not show it. Last year the total estimated expenditure on public utilities was estimated at £4,568,988, and this year the estimate is £4,946,767. I am not administering the departments and probably I am not aware of the difficulties facing Ministers, but I have no doubt each Minister will tell us that the expenditure in each department has been cut down to the bone. That may be so, but the figures which have been submitted by the Premier give one grave cause for concern. I was struck by the remarks of the Premier when he said that a good deal of the expenditure was what he described as domestic, that is to say, educational, medical, public health, police, gaols, lunacy, charity, and aborigines, and that these departments would require

£1,110,760, while the revenue they would produce would be £76,289. The Premier told us that from taxation he expects to get £1,033,000, or a total of £1,109,289. That is an appalling position for any country to be in, and I think it calls for some effort to be made to rectify that position. I have no intention of dissecting the various departments.

The Premier: The expenditure all goes in education and medical works.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is so, but it is appalling to think that the whole of the money raised by taxation and the whole of the revenue raised by these departments, I have referred to, have been swallowed up and a deficit left. To me it is astounding, and I take this opportunity of congratulating the Premier upon drawing attention to this State of affairs. I have already indicated that I have no intention of dissecting the mass of figures presented to the Committee by the Premier. I do not think an ordinary private member can follow figures of such a nature when we find, on turning to the annual report of the Auditor General for the financial year ended 30th June, 1919, that on page 10 he says—

Without a dissection of the whole of the entries for the year against the appropriation "Advance to Treasurer" it is not possible to say how much of the £400,000 provided by Parliament was used. The returns do not give the information and the book-keeping system does not provide for marshalling all charges in a convenient manner against the appropriation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Have we his latest report before us?

Mr. A. THOMSON: It was laid on the Table of the House last night. In the Auditor General's report for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1920, exactly the same statement appears on page 12.

The Premier: When did he say that?

Mr. A. THOMSON: That appears in his reports for the financial years 1919 and 1920.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We used to give returns even for the State ships.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am dealing with the present position and not the past, and when we find that the Auditor General in the two succeeding years makes the statement that he, as Auditor General, is not able to follow the returns, how can any private member assimilate the mass of figures placed before the Chamber? It cannot reasonably be expected that he should do so. I cannot go into the separate items supplied by the Premier, but it is time we secured a business expert to go through our departments. I am not blaming the present Premier or the present administration for the condition of affairs as we find it to-day. The system is one that has grown up with the departments.

The Premier: In addition to that, it is in accordance with an Act of Parliament. If

you desire to get over that difficulty, it will involve an amendment of that Act.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is so, but it must be realised that no business man would accept such a statement as that which we have received from the Auditor General in the two reports I have referred to, without looking round for a new manager for the department who could not supply the information desired.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: In such circumstances there is no option for you but to vote against the Government.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We recognise that the Government are in control and are morally responsible for the present financial position.

The Premier: Were we responsible for the war?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not say the Government were responsible for the war, nor yet that they are responsible for the whole of the deficit.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are responsible for four millions of it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: So far as I am able to judge, successive Governments have not paid that attention to economy that we would desire, particularly in view of the abnormal times and the abnormal amount of money the State is spending. We want a business expert to investigate the various departments to see whether more up-to-date business methods can be introduced.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is not so long ago that McGibbon went through the Government departments. That should satisfy you.

Mr. Mann: Can you run a Government department on the same lines as a private business?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have never been in charge of a Government department and I cannot say whether it is possible or not. The Auditor General, however, says that we are not getting the information we should receive and it is impossible for him to check the figures, and that our book-keeping system is wrong. There is a direct mandate from the Auditor General, and if the Committee are not prepared to act upon it, we will be lacking in our duty.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Has he shown how the system should be altered?

Mr. A. THOMSON: No, but if a report such as he has presented to the House were presented to me in connection with my own business I would ask what steps could be taken to obviate the repetition of such a report, and how the book-keeping system could best be altered. A book-keeping system which can be condemned by our Auditor General, should warrant the attention of members, and this matter should be taken into consideration seriously.

Mr. Teesdale: Is it not time that we received some suggestions from the Auditor General? He has been there long enough to give us some of his ideas on the subject.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not know that we have any such suggestions.

Mr. Teesdale: It has become an obsession with him.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not agree with that statement. The Auditor General is there to carry out his duty.

Mr. Teesdale: He is there to make suggestions as well.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is for the Auditor General to make his report and for those in authority to have regard to his report and statements and, if necessary, to amend the existing Act so as to get over the difficulty. Why should we not amend the existing legislation? Why should we not alter the system? If we are not getting what we are entitled to under our existing system is it any wonder that we are in our present parlous condition? In such circumstances we would be justified in getting a private business expert to go through the Government departments and make a report to the Government. It is the common practice in other parts of the world in connection with large business houses to have an expert investigate the system in operation and by this means thousands of pounds have been saved. If such a step were taken in connection with Government departments, in all probability a much better system would be evolved and the ultimate result would be the more economical working of the country's affairs. Under the existing system two men sit alongside each other and, instead of discussing a business matter as would be the case in an ordinary business house, one man writes a minute on the file and hands it over to the man next to him, who reads it and adds his quota: "I concur." So it goes right through the whole ramifications of the service.

The Premier: If you could do away with the file system, that would be all right.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If the Country Party were in charge, they would want to get rid of the files all right. They would not want to have anything on record.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am not in a position to say whether it is right or wrong. It is for the Government to say that in view of the report, some better system might be adopted whereby at least the Auditor General would be able to compile a more favourable report and not condemn the book-keeping system in operation. In ordinary private life, many a man has gone through the Bankruptcy Court because he has not known what his actual position was, owing to no proper set of books being kept. When the various Votes are dealt with, I intend to move, not as an indication of want of confidence in the Government, but as a direction and mandate from the Committee, that all Votes should be reduced by 10 per cent. I know that that is a very drastic proposal.

Mr. Mann: If that is done, it will amount to a vote of no confidence.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not agree with that statement.

Mr. Mann: It is always accepted as such.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not think so. It is not necessary to accept it as a vote of no confidence, but merely as an indication that the country is looking to Parliament to say that something must be done to stem the drift. Such a motion, if carried, would strengthen the Cabinet in its endeavour to see that the drift is stopped, and that the amounts allocated by Parliament shall not be exceeded.

Mr. Mann: Have not the Government done that already?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not think the figures show that they have. We have been told that there is an estimated deficit of £570,000 for this year. I do not know anything more than that. I take the assurance of Ministers that they have cut down the Votes of their departments to the bone. I am not going to doubt that statement for one moment, but I believe that the men in charge of the various departments have taken good care to see that they have a little bit up their sleeves.

The Premier: I do not think so.

Mr. A. THOMSON: As a State we cannot afford to drift along the present lines indefinitely. If the Committee would give a mandate to the Government, not by way of vote of no confidence—

The Premier: You cannot get away from that if you move in such a direction.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the Committee agree to a 10 per cent. reduction being made—and I see no reason why it should not be carried as an earnest of their desire to see economy practised—I do not see that it should be taken as a vote of no confidence in the Government. The Leader of the Opposition said that economy must be effected.

The Premier: How would you rectify the education vote? By closing the schools?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I knew that whip would be held over the heads of the Country Party.

The Premier: I am not cracking any whip at all. I am simply asking you a question.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I expected that it would be stated that if such a reduction were made it would be at the expense of the country schools, which would have to be closed.

The Premier: I made no such threat. I merely asked you how it could be done.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not know, but I know we are spending more than we can afford. I am only using the Premier's own statements that the whole of the taxation and the whole of the revenue from the various departments is swallowed in the cost of what he calls domestic expenditure, and we are faced with a deficit under that heading.

The Premier: The loss is really in connection with the public utilities which you have not touched yet.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will probably deal with them at a later stage. I am voicing my own views.

Mr. Mann: Are they the views of your party?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am speaking for myself. I have not discussed the matter with my party and they are at liberty to speak as they think fit. I was returned to this Parliament pledged to economy.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The conference said that, you know.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I would remind the hon. member that the election took place before the conference was held.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The conference said it also.

Mr. A. THOMSON: When I faced my electors, I said that economy would have to be effected. I am returned here pledged to secure economy. The conference must have exercised judgment and good sense in also stressing the need for economy.

The Premier: Everyone agrees that we want economy.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am pleased to hear that statement. If the Premier holds that view, he should be prepared to accept the proposals I intend to make when the various divisions are before the Committee.

The Premier: If you take 10 per cent. off the railways, what will happen?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I believe a saving could be effected in the railways very easily. In reply to an interjection made by the member for North-East Fremantle, the Premier stated that the amount of money directly under the control of Ministers was three million pounds.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is all under the control of Ministers.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is not, and the hon. member knows it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is; the whole of it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Ministers have power so far as actual expense is concerned, but we know that members' salaries and judges' salaries and various other items of that description come under special Acts; also that there is no power to abolish our interest or sinking fund obligations. I am simply dealing with the statement of the Premier that the actual amount of money under Ministers' control is three million pounds.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the other amounts account for only two million pounds out of seven million pounds.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am merely quoting the Premier's statement. If my proposal were given effect to, and I sincerely hope it will be, we would reduce the estimated deficit by £300,000, but there would still remain a deficit of £250,000. Even by making these reductions, the estimated expenditure of this year would still exceed the expenditure of last year by £77,700. It is necessary to effect economies. In view of the fact that our primary and secondary industries are faced with a falling market, it is pretty clear that the State will be faced with a falling income. I hope I shall be wrong in this prediction. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than

proof at the end of the 12 months that my statements were wrong. I would be the first to congratulate the Premier on the fact that his optimism had been justified.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Move your motion and you will not have him as Premier. You will have someone else.

Mr. Mann: Would you support him?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Remembering that the prices of primary and secondary products are falling we have other problems to face. Probably what I am going to say will not be very acceptable to my friends on the Opposition benches. I noticed during the discussion on the Supply Bill last night that fears were expressed that an attempt was about to be made to reduce wages. I am sorry to say that, in my opinion, this position will have to be faced, and on a day not very far distant. I would strongly recommend my friends on the Opposition benches to consider whether it is not possible to arrive at a scientific method whereby we can adjust wages to rise and fall automatically with prices. If we can arrive at such a basis, we shall be in a much happier position than we are in to-day. It is of no use disguising the fact that owing to the abnormally high cost of wages, which are at the basis of almost all manufacturing costs—in fact in a certain class of business the wages amount to one-third of the total cost—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I saw a jacket marked 21s., and the last I bought was 4s. 3d. The difference there is not due to wages cost.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member ought to be thankful that he did not have to buy one to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have three or four at home.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Then the hon. member should distribute the surplus to his friends. I admit the force of the Premier's argument that the administration of the finances has been affected by the high cost of Government requirements, but still the position has to be faced. Much as the Opposition may fight against any such proposal, there is no doubt we will be faced with this position.

Hon. T. Walker: What position?

Mr. A. THOMSON: That it will be necessary to accept reduced wages or there will be more unemployed than there are at present.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Oh, we all anticipated that from you.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have no desire to urge that wages should be brought down, but we have to consider the fact that our primary and secondary industries have to compete with other parts of the world, and that we shall have to come into line with them or be unable to compete with them. The sooner we realise this, the better it will be for the State and for the Commonwealth.

Mr. Mann: In what part of the world are wages lower than they are here, except in Asiatic countries?

Mr. Heron: You kept the price of wheat up to 9s.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I did nothing of the sort; the price was fixed by the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, it was not.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I should say it was fixed by the conference and by the wheat board. On that question I was more consistent in my vote than the hon. member. I was consistent in my argument in that I supported the principle of an open market. I said, "Give us the world's market value." The hon. member supported the fixing of a maximum, but not a minimum price.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Government fixed the minimum.

Mr. A. THOMSON: How long can we go on producing wheat if it costs more than we can get for it overseas? How long will our farmers continue to grow wheat under these conditions? If wheat growing becomes unprofitable, they will transfer their attention to something else.

Mr. Angelo: That is only a red herring across the track.

Mr. J. Thomson: Why not start with members of Parliament and reduce their salaries?

Mr. O'Loughlen: There is no need for you to take yours if you do not want it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the member for Claremont moves that salaries be reduced by 10 per cent. he will have my strong support. I do not think it is of much use me tabling such a motion, because when I attempted it once before, I was beaten very badly. We have had somewhat similar evidence to-day. When the session opened, I moved that certain papers be laid on the Table, but the House refused me that privilege. The papers I referred to are those which were laid on the Table to-day at the request of the member for West Perth.

The Premier: You were not here to move the motion.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There was opposition to the motion when I moved it. I was quite sincere when I said I proposed to deal with it at a later stage.

Hon. T. Walker: You knew that the papers would not be ordered. It was only kite-flying on your part.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I asked the Government to treat the motion as formal, and they refused to do so. I never expected that it would meet with any opposition. I wanted the information for this Committee. I wanted to be in a position to discuss the question of taxing unimproved land values.

The Premier: These papers would not have helped you much.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Statements have been made that there are large areas of unutilised land adjacent to railways. This point was touched upon by the Leader of the Opposition last evening. I approach this question with an open mind. If I am satisfied that it will be in the interests of the country to increase the taxation, and provided that an equitable system is suggested

to attain the object in view, it will have my support, conditionally on its inflicting no hardship upon land owners. It has been stated frequently that there are large areas adjacent to the railways, which ought to be put to profitable use. I travel from Kataning to the city every week, and as regards the land from Spencer's Brook right to Midland Junction, I have very grave doubts as to its being put to any profitable use.

Mr. J. Thomson: Wait until the Esperance railway is built.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I believe I am endorsing the sentiments of every member on the cross benches when I say I have no desire that large tracts of land, which might be profitably utilised, should continue to remain idle. However, we have to remember that the owners of such land have taken it up under certain conditions, and if they have complied with the conditions, it would be unjust to penalise them. York is considered to be one of the best farming districts in the State, and there are farmers with areas of 3,000 to 5,000 acres in that district, but a considerable portion consists of hilly country and is useless except for grazing purposes. The same thing applies in my own district. If it is possible to arrive at a scientific method of bringing idle lands into use, I shall be prepared to give the matter serious consideration.

Hon. T. Walker: That will cure the difficulty.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am of opinion that serious consideration of a public question on my part is likely to prove of as much benefit to the country as its consideration by the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker); and incidentally I may remark that I represent more people than does that hon. member.

Hon. T. Walker: Why not accept a compliment when it is offered to you?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition said that one of our troubles was that we had too many miles of railway relatively to our population—3,500 miles of line for 330,000 people. To a certain extent, that criticism is well founded. It must be admitted that there are too few people in this State. But I want the Committee to realise that our railway system is carrying a considerable burden which rightly is chargeable to the Treasury, to the country as a whole. The only means by which we can open up and develop this great State of ours—which, unfortunately, does not possess many rivers—is to put out railways and so enable people to settle upon the land. I congratulate the Premier on his expressed intention of introducing more immigrants. More than any other portion of the Commonwealth this State lacks population; and I am glad to extend the right hand of fellowship to newcomers. Now let me say that in my electorate there is an agricultural area to which a railway was to have been constructed as far back as 1914—before the war. The line in question has been surveyed and authorised.

The whole of the land in the area was taken up on the strength of the promised railway. Unfortunately, however, owing partly to the war and partly to the non-retention of the Public Works portfolio by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin)—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Your vote lost that railway and you admit that you have been disappointed ever since.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have not said that I am disappointed. I acknowledge, however, that the finances have not been squared. Unfortunately, for the reasons which I have indicated, that line of railway has not yet been constructed. The settlers on the area referred to, having to cart their produce over a distance of 30 miles to the nearest railway station, were reluctantly obliged, one by one, to allow their holdings to be forfeited. The Premier recently visited that portion of my electorate, and then and there gave an assurance that the line would be constructed as soon as possible. As a result of the Premier's promise, there is not one vacant block left in that area. The larger proportion of the blocks have been taken up by men from overseas, and they are all looking forward eagerly to the day when the railway will be completed. The same thing applies, I presume, to the Esperance district and the Esperance settlers—on which head I shall offer a suggestion at a later stage. However, the people to whom the Premier promised that railway must be given railway facilities if they are to be enabled to carry on farming operations profitably. To those who assert that we already have too many miles of railway, I reply that, while on the face of things it may appear to be so, we must always bear in mind that the only means available to us of developing this country is to push out railways and so enable settlers to get their produce to market. I acknowledge that adjacent to existing railways there are large tracts of land which should be put to better use than is the case at present. A question which arises, however, is how we are to determine what is the most profitable use to which land can be put. After all, the man in possession of the land, the owner of the land, is entitled to some consideration if he puts it to what he considers profitable use. The only alternative to taxation of unimproved land values is Government resumption of land, similar to that adopted in connection with soldier settlement. I approach the question of unimproved land values taxation with an open mind. Indeed, as the result of my roads board experience, I am and have for years been a strong supporter of the principle of unimproved land values taxation. On becoming a member of the Katanning road board, I made myself responsible for inaugurating a system of unimproved land values rating in the central ward. The same principle, naturally, applies to other areas. One must, however, give such matters very grave consideration, because the dwellers in our agricultural areas are already

taxed by reason of their distance from the metropolitan area and its markets. They have to bear the railway freights incidental to conveying their products from their holdings to the markets, for it is the producer who has to pay rail freight in every instance. He gets the price which his goods bring in Perth, less the rail freight. Generally, that is the position. But the country producer pays rail freights both ways. He not only pays them on the products which he sends to market, but also pays them on his requirements in the form of machinery and supplies which he has to obtain from Perth. As the producer has likewise to pay general taxation and road board rates, one must view his position with a considerable measure of circumspection. From the latest report of the Commissioner of Taxation, which contains a table showing the incidence of land tax, it appears that metropolitan and suburban land pays 48.73 per cent. of land tax, while country rural land pays 42.13 per cent. I approach this subject with a certain degree of diffidence, but if in the interests of the country as a whole it is essential that more money should be raised through taxation, then I am sure the party with which I am associated is ready to assume its share of the burden. Unless caution is exercised, however, we may find the country districts again having an undue burden of taxation placed upon them. The Commissioner's analysis of land tax assessments shows 54,206 acres of land from Midland Junction to Fremantle of a taxable value of £7,008,967, as against 17,609,037 acres of country land alienated or in process of alienation, of a taxable value of £7,328,038. These values are at the improved rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the £1. Seeing the respective figures, one might feel inclined to argue that metropolitan land is already paying double the taxation imposed on rural lands, and that therefore the two classes of land would be on the same footing if the tax on the latter were doubled. But that does not work out in practice. The average value of an acre of land in the metropolitan area works out at £130. Of course I know that in Hay-street and certain other portions of the city of Perth the value is more than that per foot of frontage; but the average value of the aggregate of metropolitan-suburban land works out at £130 per acre. Applying the same process to unimproved rural lands, one finds that the average value for taxation purposes works out at 8s. per acre. I contend that properties in the metropolitan area as a whole, with a few isolated exceptions, have reached their maximum price. No doubt some of the most valuable city properties may yet increase a little in value; but, taking metropolitan values as a whole, they are at their maximum. Indeed, they are over their maximum so far as my experience goes. I have a block of land which I purchased 25 years ago, on first coming to this State, for £35—which sum it would not realise to-day. It is situated in a suburb between

Perth and Fremantle, but that suburb is not Claremont.

Hon. T. Walker: How can anything be above its maximum?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I say that metropolitan land has reached its maximum. If the hon. member wants to juggle with words, no doubt his objection is well-founded. Undoubtedly it is impossible to get above the maximum, because the maximum is the maximum. What I mean to convey is that the prices ruling to-day—this, I trust, will suit the hon. member's fastidious taste—are not likely to increase considerably, or even to be maintained.

Hon. T. Walker: That is clear.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, clear as mud. Turning to rural lands, we must admit that a man who clears and cultivates a property necessarily increases its value from the taxation point of view. We know there are areas of land in my district, as also in yours, Mr. Chairman, which in the initial stages are valueless, but which as the result of years of cultivation may become worth £1 per acre. In some of our older settled districts land has been sold at as high a price as £6 per acre. However, to-day that land is being taxed on its taxable value.

The Minister for Mines: Not at all.

Mr. A. THOMSON: As I understand, the basis of taxation to-day is what land will reasonably bring in the open market, less improvements of course. In the case of some holdings the clearing itself is worth more than £1 per acre. Then there is the fencing. However, to avoid splitting straws, I will bring the unimproved value down to £3 per acre.

Mr. Latham: Where?

Mr. A. THOMSON: In York, and in other places. If the tax were to be doubled, then probably in two or three years' time the country districts would be paying about 70 per cent. of the State taxation. However, I shall be quite prepared to give consideration to the question when it comes before us, and if a just and equitable method can be found for bringing idle lands into use, probably I will support it. Now I propose to quote from the speech made by the Minister for Mines on the Address-in-reply.

The Minister for Mines: It will be the best part of your speech.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Minister for Mines has a great opinion of himself.

Hon. T. Walker: He can never hope to equal you in that.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not quote from "Hansard" of this session.

Mr. A. THOMSON: No, I am quoting from notes I took down when the Minister was speaking. The hon. member was dealing with non-paying railways. He referred to the Magnet-Sandstone line of 93 miles, the loss on which, he said, was £50,765. He referred also to the Bullfinch line of 20 miles, the loss on which, he said, was £14,807. For the six months ended 30th June last the tonnage carried over the Sandstone railway

was 1,007 tons. The gross earnings were £1,400, the passengers 37, and the passenger earnings £18. On the Bullfinch line during the six months ended 30th June last the tonnage carried was 540 tons, the earnings £250, the passengers 250, and passenger earnings £30. It will be seen that those two railways are showing very serious losses. I entirely approve of the suggestion made by the Minister for Railways that the rails in those lines should be lifted and used in other districts. The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) is very desirous of having a railway constructed at Esperance. The reply he has received, like the reply which I received in respect of a railway which requires to be built in my electorate, was that the excessive cost of the rails prohibited such construction. I understand that the cost of rails to-day is £1,200 per mile, whereas in pre-war days it fell to £500 per mile. Certainly it would be economically sound to lift the rails from those lines which are not paying for the coal used, and relay them in districts urgently requiring railway facilities, such as Esperance and my own district and, perhaps, that of the Margaret River. The roadway in the dismantled lines could be retained exclusively for the use of the Railway Department, leaving the stations standing for the receipt and despatch of goods, and providing a fast motor transport for passengers, with suitable transport for the goods. And if, in the future, the price of rails were to recede to a reasonable mark, and if in the meantime the districts at present served by those non-paying railways were to progress, the lines could be once more relaid. In Victoria, prior to the bursting of the boom, railways were run out in all directions in suburban areas, and at a later period the rails were lifted and used in more suitable places, being replaced again when the traffic warranted it.

Mrs. Cowan interjected.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member is quite wrong in saying that I refused to support that return. I was not in a position to give that information. The hon. member must be in the same unfortunate position in respect of that return as I was when I asked for a return showing the area of idle land adjacent to railways. The Leader of the Opposition, an ex-Minister for Railways, has declared that we have too many miles of railway.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Too many for the population.

Mr. A. THOMSON: And he gave reasons why the railways should be unprofitable, declaring that there was so much vacant land adjacent to railways. He contended that that land should be brought into use, so that the traffic on the railways would be increased. I will support him in that contention as far as I think just and right in the interests of the country.

Hon. T. Walker: How far is that?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I now want to quote from the report of the Commissioner of Railways dealing with the coal supply. On a previous occasion I advocated the establishment of a State coal mine, with a view to supplying the railways. If the Railway Department had their own coal mine, they would be able to save approximately 5s. per ton on the coal consumed.

Mr. Mann: Are you now advocating another State trading concern?

Mr. A. THOMSON: No, but we have approximately 18 millions invested in the railways and, paying a Commissioner £2,000 a year to administer them, we instruct him to run them economically. It sounds all right until we remember that, having regard to Government policy in connection with the supply of coal, we are simply asking the Commissioner of Railways to do the impossible. An important contributing factor to the failure of the railways to show a profit is the policy of successive Governments.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Hear, hear! Carrying fertilisers at a halfpenny per ton.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If all matters of policy gave such a return in railway freight as is given by the produce which those fertilisers create, the railways would be highly profitable. The carrying of fertilisers at a low rate is merely a sprat to catch a mackerel. In the wheat belt the super increases the return of wheat by 100 per cent.; therefore it is a sound business proposition for the Railway Department to carry super at a nominal rate.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Even at half the cost to the service?

Mr. MacCallum Smith: They are carrying wheat at a loss.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Nothing of the sort. Admittedly the interest and sinking fund on the railways swallow approximately 26 per cent. of the earnings of the department.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition stated that one of the principal reasons why the railways are not paying is that there is so much idle land adjacent to them. That may be a contributing cause, but it is not the only reason why the railways are running at such a loss. I have said that I could hardly understand why previous Governments had not their own coal mines with which to supply their own requirements. The Railway Department and Electricity Department are the largest consumers of coal in the State, seeing that they take practically 75 per cent. of the output. I am not opposed to the use of Collie coal. In the interests of the State we should foster the coal industry, which means the employment of so much capital within Western Australia. Last year the railways used 249,000 tons of Collie coal,

and approximately 40,000 tons were used by the electricity scheme. The Commissioner in his report states that the price of coal has been increased by 3s. per ton from the 27th September last owing to the higher wages granted* to miners, and that this made the price 19s. at the pit's mouth. The policy of the Government compels the Commissioner to use coal which in the opinion of the officers of the department is not of the best quality from the steaming point of view. The railways have to take from two companies, coal which does not give as good results as the coal which comes from other collieries. I do not want to inflict any hardship upon those who have invested money in our coal mines, or upon those who are employed in them. The Commissioner, however, is not running the railways; it is a matter of policy and the Government lays down the proportions in which coal must be taken. By this means they are increasing the expenditure from the administrative point of view. The Commissioner is not getting the results he would if he were given a free hand. He estimates that about £12,000 could be saved annually if he used only Newcastle coal. In view of the employment that is given in our coal mines I think this expenditure of £12,000 is justified, but it means an additional £12,000 which the Railway Department has to carry. That should be taken into consideration when discussing the administration of the department.

Mr. Wilson: That is only for coal up Geraldton way. The Commissioner makes a profit on Collie coal used down here.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member must naturally speak for the industry he represents. I am a strong supporter of it, too. I do not think the hon. member will disagree with me in the statement I am going to make.

Mr. Wilson: You had better leave coal alone and stick to wheat.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There are two mines in the Collie field which the railway officials would cut out to-morrow if they could.

Mr. Wilson: They would cut out the lot.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is not fair to saddle the Commissioner with unsuitable coal when better results can be obtained from other coal. One of the factors contributing to our financial position is the Railway Department, but some allowance must be made for that when we consider the policy of the Government in regard to it.

The Minister for Mines: What difference would your argument, if followed out, make to the deficit? If we were to make up the loss elsewhere we would still be that amount short.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The department is carrying a loss which should be charged in some other direction. It is loaded with charges which should not be set against it. On the goldfields line the department had its

own water supply, which was adequate for the purposes.

Mr. Mann: In good seasons, but it was not a permanent supply.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Government of the day then said they must use the goldfields water supply, and the minimum charge set against the department was £20,000 a year. Notwithstanding this charge the Railway Department continued to use their own water supply, because it is more economical from the boiler point of view. In his report the Commissioner shows that the scheme water is not satisfactory for locomotive purposes as it contains some 30 grains of salt to the gallon. When there was a shortage last year the department was no doubt very glad to have the supply available.

Mr. Mann: Does not the farmer have to pay water rates if the water passes his property, even though he does not use it?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The goldfields water supply was established for the goldfields people. There is no doubt the private individual is obliged to pay for water whether he consumes it or not, but why charge the Railway Department £20,000 a year for that which it does not use in order to show a profit in another department? This savours of bolstering up one department at the expense of another.

Mr. Mann: You could not run the railways without a water supply.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We all know that, and that is why the department went to such expense in providing their own supply. In his report the Commissioner deals comprehensively with the question of water supplies and the necessity that had arisen for haulage of water.

The Minister for Mines interjected.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Despite the interjection of the Minister, I contend it is not a proper charge to make. It is like taking money out of one pocket and putting it into another and declaring that a certain amount of business has been transacted. The Railway Department have the right to use their own water supplies and yet they are compelled to pay this minimum of £20,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They paid more than that last year.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It makes the position of the Railway Department appear to be much worse than it is. There is another contributing factor to our deficit. If members will turn up the Commissioner's report they will find that he makes reference to the continual increase of wages and salaries, and he declares that these increases have made it absolutely impossible for the railways to show a profit. He points out that the increases granted to the salaried staff totalled 16.35 and to the wages staff 17.75, and the average wages paid this year totalled £268 as against £230 last year. Hon. members have argued that one of the factors militating against the railway system paying is the vast areas of land not being utilised to the fullest extent. I am prepared to admit that that is one of the reasons, but I also think that

another reason is that over which the Commissioner has no control, and to which I have just referred. He has been compelled by the classification board and the Arbitration Court to pay enormously increased wages until the position has reached almost breaking point. The position is serious, and we shall soon have to face the question of decreasing wages or decreasing privileges if we are to make the railways pay without doing an injustice to any particular individual. If hon. members were to lead the way by agreeing to a certain percentage reduction in their salaries, I am certain that the rest of the community, or I should say the Government employees section, would agree to a corresponding reduction. In making that statement, I do not for a moment infer that members of Parliament are overpaid. I admit, of course, that members have many calls, but we cannot get away from the fact that the unrest in the civil service became more acute from the date that members increased their own salaries by 33½ per cent.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Bosh!

Mr. A. THOMSON: It may be bosh, but there is no getting away from the fact that that was responsible for the civil servants marching in a body to this House and subsequently going on strike.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The women forced that strike.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The fact remains that it came about largely as a result of the action that members took.

Mr. McCallum: Set the example and see how many individual members of the service will follow.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I maintain that my services are just as valuable to the State as those of other members, but I claim that if members reduce their salaries by say 10 per cent., we could easily save that amount from the calls which are made upon us.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Would you curtail yours? If you received requests, you would still send donations. Of course, you would, especially if there were a few votes depending on them at election time.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Immediately a member makes suggestions in the direction of effecting economy, he is accused of attempting to gain notoriety.

Mr. Teesdale: Are you speaking privately or as the Deputy Leader of the Country Party?

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the hon. member wants a reply to that question he had better give notice of it.

Mr. Teesdale: You are condemning the Country Party; you have representation in the Government and you are criticising your own policy.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am discussing the policy of the Government and I am speaking as the member for Katanning.

Mr. Teesdale: Then that is all right.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I was returned pledged to economy, and I am attempting so far as it lies in my power to carry my

pledge into effect. I believe that 90 per cent. of the members of this House were returned pledged to economy. I am wondering whether a majority of those members are sincere in their protestations.

Mr. Teesdale: The increase which you received was confirmed by your constituents, so what are you making a fuss about?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not think that the increased salaries to members was made a question at the elections. I am evidently incurring the displeasure of hon. members and I am going to be unpopular amongst my fellow members because I am advocating what I consider to be the correct principles that should be adopted.

Mr. Mann: They are not taking you seriously.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I was never more serious in my life, but I doubt whether 75 per cent. of the members of this Chamber are serious in their protestations.

Mr. Pickering: I rise to a point of order. I ask that the hon. member withdraw that remark.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Sussex takes exception to the remark made by the member for Katanning and it must be withdrawn.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If I am asked to withdraw the remark, of course I must do so, but speaking for myself I am sincere in the statements that I have made to-night. Regarding the Railway Department, if hon. members take the trouble to read the excellent report presented by the Commissioner, they will find the astounding fact recorded that in 1913-14 the total expenditure for salaries, wages, fuel, stores and materials, incidentals and interest amounted to 18s. 10d., with a profit of 1s. 2d. That was turned into a loss in 1919-20 of 3s. 6d. The position facing the Railway Department to-day is that we have an expenditure of 23s. 1d. to earn 20s. If that is so and that is how the country is being run, I feel that I have done my duty in drawing attention to the position. Whether I am successful or not in having the reductions I propose given effect to, is for the House to decide. I recognise that the gravest responsibility rests on the Cabinet to administer the affairs of the State, but I desire to impress upon the House that there is a greater responsibility on members to see that Cabinet carries out the pledges that we made to the country to effect economies and to put forth some effort to stem the financial drift of the State.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.2]: When I criticised the finances on the occasion of the introduction of the first Supply Bill this session, the member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) said my story was a pitiful tale. If that were so, what sort of a tale has the hon. member told to-night?

The Minister for Mines: A sort of fox terrier's tail. There is not much in it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It would be impossible for anyone else to put up such a state-

ment as that provided by the hon. member to-night. Let us see what he has said, because there may be some justification for his statements. He started off by referring to statements made previously that it would be better for the State if the Ministry then in control of the finances were put out of office and others possessing business acumen put in their places. Then he said a change of Government was made, and men of business acumen were placed in charge of the Treasury benches. He said he was disappointed with the results. For my part, I think the hon. member is disappointed in more than one way. Perhaps the member for Katanning has not said why he was disappointed.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is an assertion that does you credit.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am merely quoting the hon. member himself, for he said—"I have been disappointed."

Mr. A. Thomson: It is the innuendo that does you credit.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He goes a little further, because during the last election he went through various parts of Western Australia pointing out the necessity for returning the Premier and his Government to power.

Mr. A. Thomson: I ask for withdrawal of those remarks. I never did any such thing.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

Mr. A. Thomson: The member for North-East Fremantle said that I went round the country pointing out that the Premier should be returned to power. I never did anything of the sort.

Mr. Troy: There is no point of order in that.

Mr. A. Thomson: I simply advocated the return of members of my own party.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I will put it in another way. The member for Katanning went to various parts of the State and asked the people to again return them to power. By "them," he meant those who were in charge of the Government.

Mr. Troy: The member for Katanning went to Geraldton and made a mess of it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for Katanning advocated the return to power of those sitting on the Government side of the House, and that included the Country Party, the National Labour Party, and the National Party. The member for Katanning went about pointing out to the electors that it was in the best interests of the country to return those members to power. He now says "I believe the country has been disappointed since the change has taken place." If the hon. member honestly believes that statement, how could he honestly go about the country asking the people to permit the present Government to continue in control of the finances? If he was, as he said, disappointed, and he believed the country was disappointed, too, he should have told the people of the State that he had been of the

opinion that the change of Government in 1916 would have resulted in an improvement in connection with the finances of the country, but that such an improvement had not taken place, and that in the circumstances the best thing they could do was to return the Labour Party to power to take charge of the finances. If the member for Katanning honestly believes the statements he made to-night, he could not have taken any other action. Instead of that—and he says he is genuine and honest and very few other members, according to his remarks, are anything of the sort—

Mr. A. Thomson: I never said anything of the kind.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member had to withdraw his reference to 75 per cent. of the members, and that is a pretty large proportion of the House. In my opinion the member for Katanning has not studied the Estimates at all. He has taken the report of the Auditor General, which I have not had the pleasure of seeing yet, and the report of the Commissioner of Railways and has come to the conclusion that the country is going to the dogs.

Mr. A. Thomson: Of course, I did not hear the Premier's budget speech, did I?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member did not rest there. He said that though he had no desire to move a vote of no confidence in the Government, he intended to move that each vote should be reduced by 10 per cent. and then actually sat down without doing it.

Mr. A. Thomson: Are we dealing with Votes now?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Of course we are. We are dealing with the Vote: "Legislative Council, £975." In effect the hon. member told the Premier: "I am going to give you a smack in the eye, but I do not intend it to hurt you." If he gives effect to his threat, he may secure more support than he may desire, in which case there would be a possibility of the Premier coming over to the Opposition side of the House; if that were so, then the member for Katanning would not be able to get those things he is so anxious to obtain. The member for Katanning does not mind moving votes of no confidence; it does not matter who the vote applies to, so long as it is one of no confidence. He also said that we should have an expert to go through the Government departments to put them in a sound position. It is not so many years ago that the Government paid two experts to go through the Government departments, and one of them was Mr. McGibbon, who stands high in the opinion of the hon. member. I think that would be about nine or ten years ago. I know that when we were in office we had to deal with the classification they put up. Since then things have gone on as they were. The member for Katanning said that the Government should be able to carry on their business in the same way as private companies or firms. If ever I am a member of

a Government again, I trust the hon. member's suggestion will be given effect to, and if that is so we shall leave no records as to what we do. It would be one of the best things that could happen to any Government.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: What about the silver fish?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have heard about them as well, but if the member for Katanning's suggestion were carried out, we would have no records at all. If that were so, then the Government on going out of office would not leave behind them any records as to what had been done. On the other hand, we know that public affairs are totally different from the operations of a private company. It is necessary for Governments to leave behind them complete records of what has been done so that everything may be disclosed as fair and above board. The member for Katanning has moved for returns. We have papers lying on the table of the House. If there were no records kept in Government departments, how would it be possible to know what has happened? How would it be possible to secure any of the returns as asked for from time to time? Public business is essentially different from that of a private concern. It does not matter a hang to the public what a private man does. He may burn papers every night and it will not matter to anyone else, so long as the individual is in a sound financial position. It would be different for a Government to adopt that course of action because it would be immediately suggested that the Government had something to hide, something which they did not wish the public to know of and, in fact, they would be accused of burning something that probably never existed. It is in the interests of good government that true records should be kept. The member for Katanning has been long enough in Parliament to know that this is so.

The Minister for Mines: Look at the records we have to keep in connection with Parliament itself.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is so. The member for Katanning also disavowed his responsibility for anything in connection with the finances of the State. He said: "I do not take any responsibility for the actions that have been taken." It was surprising to me to hear him make such a statement. It was also asserted that the control of the financial position has been taken entirely away from those who are supposed to protect the public purse. I have looked up "Hansard," and perused the debates when the Public Service Appeal Board Bill and the Railway Classification Board Bill were before this Chamber. The member for Katanning never once raised his voice in opposition to those two measures. While I objected to the principle at the time on the ground that it was placing the responsibility with outside bodies, it must be remembered that it was Parliament that took the matter out of the hands of the Government. The

Government introduced the Bill but Parliament took the powers away from the Government when the measures were before this Chamber. To-day we are in the position of having no powers except those for levying taxation to meet the cost imposed upon the State by outside bodies, not responsible to the public or the State. That position was created by Parliament. The hon. member commented strongly regarding the action taken by the various courts in connection with wages. With all due respect to the officials—I know they do not like me but that does not worry me much—it appears, he said, to be a case with the officials of “you scratch my back and I will scratch yours,” the result being that if the salaries of the lower officers were raised, the salaries of the others would follow suit. Is that a fair proposition to put before members for their consideration?

Mr. A. Thomson: The judge himself made that statement.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not care a hang. A judge can say what he likes, but the member for Katanning is the representative of a respectable community and he is the mouthpiece of that community for the time being. Who is better qualified to speak upon the duties of an officer in a department than the man who is in charge of the department?

The Minister for Mines: Hear, hear! That is so.

Mr. A. Thomson: Do you agree with what Judge Northmore said?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Judge Northmore said a lot of silly things, but no doubt he found the court was very dead and made those statements to liven it up. No one could testify to the services rendered by an officer better than the head of the department, and when the head is summoned to the court, he has to attend and give the position as it appeals to him.

Mr. A. Thomson: But they get special information from the East to bolster up the cases.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They can get information whence they like. Unless the court is able to obtain information, we should wipe it out. The court has to decide on the information presented to it, and who could give that information better than the heads of the departments?

Mr. Troy: Who puts the State's position before the court?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Commissioner is present. The present conditions have been created by a vote of this House, and the hon. member should realise it. I supported the Public Service Act, because it was the understanding on which the strike was settled. I held the view then, and I hold it to-day, that if the Arbitration Court is good enough for the porter, it is good enough for the officer. The fact remains that some person must explain to the court the workings of the department in order to enlighten the judges, and no one but our officers can do this. We may not agree with them, but they

have the opportunity to put the truth before the court, and if they do anything else, they are liable for their actions. I do not intend to take the line of action which the hon. member says was taken when the Labour Government were in office. If I did so, I would say that since 1916 the Government have spent approximately 39 millions of money and would ask what they had done with it. Then some members would say, “Let the dead past bury its dead.” We used to show not only the money expended during the year under review in comparison with that of the previous year but the details for various years. When the Premier introduced his Estimates 12 months ago, I was of opinion that he was rather too optimistic. There was a decided change in his demeanour this year. It was the most pessimistic Budget Speech I have heard delivered in this House. I said last year I thought the Premier was basing his opinion on the large export of produce which had been piling up for some years previously. During 1919-20 the value of our imports and exports was the largest in the history of the State. When the surplus products had been received and sent away, we reverted to normal trade, and the Premier did not take that into consideration as he should have done, but concluded that we were going on swimmingly as before.

The Premier: No, I told you so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The trade of the State depends a good deal on the finances as they affect the Government. No country can continue to import more than it exports; yet this is the position. Last year imports were valued at £14,158,000, while our exports amounted to £11,811,000. We cannot continue in that way; we are bound to come to an end, and a bad end it will be for the State. This has had an important bearing on the financial position of the Government during the last 12 months. I do not say that the Government should not exercise economy. Economy is necessary, but it should be practised in the right direction. I do not intend to deal with the general finances. The Leader of the Opposition put up a very clear, concise and convincing statement last night, and a very fair statement it was, too, much fairer than that of the Deputy Leader of the Country Party who is supporting the Government. I intend to confine myself entirely to the Estimates before us. It is true, as the hon. member stated, that Parliament has passed over many of its powers to special boards, but Parliament still has reserved the right of raising money for the purpose of paying the charges which these special boards entail. The Government have been looking around to ascertain where they can effect economies. If members peruse the Estimates carefully, they will find only a few items where economies have been effected, and I regret that these comprise first of all the casual workers. The Government have reduced the Works Esti-

mates. Secondly, come the sick and afflicted. They have reduced the Hospitals Estimates. Thirdly come the poor and the needy. They have reduced the cost of the Old Men's Home and the Old Women's Home and of outdoor relief. We are placed in the position of reducing our hospitals, the medical attendance for the sick, the nourishment for the poor and the work for the casual hand, while at the same time we are placing in the hands of boards the power to make the position of those on the staffs much better paid and more secure than before. The Premier expects to receive this year by way of revenue £7,050,910. I intended to take up the Premier's challenge with regard to the year 1915-16, but seeing that his figures were so misleading, I decided not to do so.

The Premier: What figures?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In 1915-16 the whole of the cost of running the trading concerns was charged to Consolidated Revenue; to-day only the interest and surplus are placed in the Consolidated Revenue account. This means a difference of several hundreds of thousands of pounds on each side. Consequently, the figures the Premier quoted in making a comparison are not worth considering, because it is not fair to make such a comparison unless the cost of the trading concerns is deducted. I am of opinion that the Premier will not realise the revenue he expects.

The Premier: It is principally from business concerns.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier expects to get an increase of £145,462 from taxation.

The Premier: There is £110,000 due.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No doubt, but some of it will still be due after the 30th June of next year. Is it a sign of the times that there will be an increase from income taxation this year? Is it not a fact that every business house in Western Australia is dismissing, or has already put off, workmen, and that hundreds of men are out of employment? Is there any possible chance of realising what was received by way of income tax last year? Yet the Premier estimates an increase. I hope he will realise it, but I am afraid he will not. Then he expects to receive £151,000 from licenses. I do not know what amendments he proposes to make to the Licensing Act, but there is a possibility that this measure will not go through. A very large increase is suggested. I hope he will not realise the amount he seeks from licenses, because he intends to have license fees paid in accordance with the quantity of liquor consumed. I hope the people will not consume the liquor, and will thus prevent the Premier from realising his estimate.

The Premier: You might break out, you know.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There are public utilities from which I do not think the Premier will receive the amount he expects.

From the Harbour Trust he is not likely to realise his estimate, as shipping has fallen off considerably.

The Minister for Mines: But it will come again.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Of course it will have to come in order to make up the increase. There is an agitation on foot at present that harbour dues should be reduced, and there is some justification for it. During the period of the war a surcharge was imposed to enable the trust to meet the expense consequent on the scarcity of shipping calling at the port. This no longer applies and people are justified in asking that the surcharge be removed. In the case of many other items in the Estimates, I am afraid the Premier will not realise his expectations. I hope he will get all and more, but the outlook is very doubtful. Dealing with expenditure this year, the Premier expects to expend £7,622,638, an increase of £146,347 over last year. But the Premier, in placing the Budget before us, pointed out that he had to meet a large increase under special Acts and interest and sinking fund. That amount is £259,307 more than was paid last year. From a casual glance at the Estimates, seeing that the expenditure shows an increase of only £146,000, and that interest, sinking fund and special Act charges represent £259,000 more than last year, one would think that some saving was being effected in the cost of administration in this State. Anyone would draw that conclusion. But I defy anyone who looks through the Estimates and examines them carefully, to discover any quarter in which the cost of administration has been decreased. The Works Department shows a reduction of £17,233—a reduction in the matter of funds provided from Consolidated Revenue for carrying out repairs and renovations of public buildings. It means that there is £17,000 less to be expended from revenue in employing the casual worker, who, by reason of having so much lost time, is the worst paid man in the community. But salaries in the Public Works Department have increased by £5,943. Thus there is no saving in administration cost; none whatever. No doubt the Government will expend a certain amount from trust funds, loan funds, and the Sales of Government Property Account. Thus the cost of administration of the Works Department will appear very small indeed. The Government have reduced compassionate allowances by £5,241. That expenditure involves no administration cost. The Health Department shows a reduction of about £20,000 in expenditure; the Government have cut down the subsidy to hospitals and homes for the aged by £18,839. The saving is taken out of the poor and sick out of their nourishment. While that is so, there is an increase in the Health Department's staff of one or two officers, extra inspectors, and one or two clerks, with the result that salaries show an increase of £1,072. In my opinion, the Government should have introduced legislation

making it compulsory for every local authority to have a health inspector holding the certificate of the Royal Sanitary Institute, London; such health inspector to be paid by the local authority but appointed by the Government. While there are men with that qualification to be found throughout the country, the Government are unnecessarily paying other inspectors to travel all over the State to see that those men do their work. North Fremantle, East Fremantle, and Cottesloe Beach have, jointly, a health inspector appointed by the Government. I believe his salary is about £300 a year. The inspector is engaged by the Government, and paid through the Government, and is entirely independent of all local authorities in the matter of his work. The local authorities concerned repay the inspector's salary to the Government. Now, what need is there for the Government to send along another inspector to see that this one does his work aright? And the same position obtains throughout Western Australia.

Mr. Latham: That would apply only in the metropolitan area.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No; throughout the State. Every health inspector in Western Australia has to be a certificated man. In the Lunacy Department I find that the cost of provisions and comforts for inmates is cut down by £4,849. But the total decrease of expenditure in that department is only £2,504. Thus the administration cost of the Lunacy Department has not been reduced. Outdoor relief has been cut down by £5,944. I want hon. members to know where these Estimates make reductions. If the Treasurer this year has to pay £250,000 more in interest, sinking fund, and depreciation, and still shows only an expenditure £146,000 greater than last year's it is plain that he must have cut down some departments. I have been showing hon. members how the departments have been cut down. The cutting down has been done not in administrative cost, but at the expense of those who cannot help themselves. The State Labour Bureau is an excellent institution, and the means of assisting men to obtain employment in the country.

The Premier: The Labour Bureau repays that amount.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But the Premier has cut down the Estimates by £1,467.

The Premier: It appears on both sides; it makes no difference.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But there has been cutting down to that extent. In connection with the Mines Department a reduction of £1,827 is shown in the subsidy to the Miners' Relief Fund.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, as compared with what was paid last year.

The Minister for Mines: That is right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Aborigines Department have reduced the amount found necessary in the past for looking after the aborigines properly and supplying them with

food and blankets. Administration cost has not been cut down in that department, but the amount for the aborigines is reduced by £1,488. The Government Printing Office have increased their staff, and cut down their wages vote by £1,386. A close scrutiny shows that throughout the Estimates, from end to end, no attempt has been made by the departmental officers to effect any reduction in administration cost. The cutting down has been done entirely in the directions I have indicated, which represent about £60,000 out of the total of the Premier's savings. While we on this side believe in economy and in keeping revenue and expenditure as near as possible one to the other, we say this is not the class of economy we stand for.

The Minister for Mines: You cannot get that economy with the offices scattered as they are.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The class of economy we stand for commences at the head and not at the bottom, commences with those able to look after themselves and not with those who are compelled to go to the Old Men's Home or the Old Women's Home, commences with the strong and healthy and not with the afflicted. This economy has started at the wrong end; it should have started at the top, and not at the bottom. We are told that some of the departments show decreases. Let us take the Agricultural Department, of which the latest Minister has taken charge. The Agricultural Department shows a decrease of £5,980. Unless we scrutinise the figures carefully, we will believe in that decrease. We are likely to say, "At last a start to decrease expenditure has been made by one department; the new Minister has set an example." But let us see what the position really is when analysed. The estimated expenditure of the Agricultural Department for this year shows a decrease of £5,980. But the Narrogin school farm has been transferred to the Education Department. The expenditure on the Narrogin school farm is estimated to amount to £6,470.

Mr. Troy: But that is added on to the Education Department's expenditure.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes.

The Premier: I bet the farm did not cost that amount.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is the amount provided for it.

The Premier: Last year?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This year. If this £6,000 for running the school farm were added to the Agricultural Estimates, it would more than swamp the decrease of £5,980. Then there is another large sum in connection with providing settlers with seed wheat.

The Premier: That is just a cross entry.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But the figures show in the Estimates. This means a further addition of £3,253. Then where is the decrease of £5,980? There is no decrease whatever; there are merely transfers from one department to another.

The Minister for Agriculture: I can explain that matter.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I hope so. Now let us take the Treasury, where the Premier is in charge. The Treasury shows a decrease of only a few hundred pounds. But let hon. members realise that the Taxation Department has been struck off the Treasury. Were the case otherwise, the Treasury Estimates, instead of showing practically no increase, would show one of £21,000.

The Premier: Interest on overdraft instead of interest under special Acts.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That has increased a little, but not by £21,000. I am not going to say that because this £21,000 is saved to Consolidated Revenue, it will save the taxpayers, for I believe they will have to pay it just the same through the Federal Department. The Health Department shows a decrease of £20,430, of which £19,000 comes entirely from the hospitals and the homes. The Minister for Justice shows a decrease for the first time.

The Premier: You cannot show a decrease in the Education Vote with children increasing in all directions.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister for Justice shows a decrease of £4,081. It is worth recording.

The Premier: You ought to be fair to him. He could not do it on education.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Education is not the only portfolio he has held. Last year we had a general election, and also a local option poll, neither of which will be repeated this year. They cost more than the £4,081 shown as a reduction, and so the Minister for Justice could not well help himself. If we had another election this year and another local option poll, there would be an increase there also. I ask, Is it not necessary that we should tell the officers of that department that Parliament is not satisfied that they should deal only with those who cannot help themselves? It is true that the increases have been brought about by special boards. That being so, instead of cutting out hospitals and cutting down the cost of running homes and supplying food and nourishment, and dismissing poor old cleaning women, it is the duty of the officers to see whether they could not dispense with the services of some who could obtain employment elsewhere.

Mr. Pickering: Did you try to regulate it that way when you were in office?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: So great was the prosperity of the State when we were in office that there was no necessity for cheese-paring economy. After a close perusal of the Estimates, I have tried to show members where the reduction in expenditure has been effected. Is it not time to see whether some of the large spending departments working on loan moneys should not also be carefully scrutinised? Of all sections of the Estimates which the Deputy Leader of the Country Party should have dealt with, the Agricultural Bank, the Industries Assistance Board

and the Soldier Settlement Scheme are the most important. Yet we had not one word from him regarding those sections. Officers in those departments are increasing year by year.

Mr. Latham: And the muddle grows, too.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Because the expenditure is met by the farmer and by loan funds, little or nothing is shown on the Estimates, and so the Deputy Leader of the Country Party lets it go. If there are any departments of State requiring looking into, it is the departments I have mentioned. They have an immense army of clerks.

The Premier: What doing?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is what I want to know.

Mr. Latham: Making jobs in the Terrace.

The Premier: Nonsense!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There are hundreds of men in those departments, and they are increasing every year.

The Premier: And the business is increasing every year.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Why, the hon. member said the other night that the business of the Industries Assistance Board was decreasing! I hope Parliament will not agree to pass the Estimates of the Agricultural Bank until we get the annual report of that institution, which we have not had since 1913. If that is a criterion of the way in which the bank trustees are carrying out their work, they stand for condemnation.

The Premier: You must be fair. They have seven millions of money to manage.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The greater reason why we should have their report. They are the custodians of all that money, placed at their disposal by Parliament, and the law requires them to furnish to the Minister every year a report for presentation to Parliament. They have not presented a report since 1913. I ask the member for North Perth (Mr. MacCallum Smith), a director of the Western Australian Bank, whether he would be satisfied without an annual report from the manager of that bank. We should not vote money unless we have a report as to its management. At the beginning of the session the Premier promised that he would lay the report on the Table. It is not here yet. Of course it may not be worth much when it arrives, for it may be found that everything is all right; but until we see the report we cannot be sure of that. It is a disgrace to the trustees of the bank, and Ministers countenancing such neglect have no right to continue in office.

Mr. J. Thomson: Why did you vote against the motion for the return dealing with the railways?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Because that return would have been misleading.

Mrs. Cowan: Would this report be correct?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, because in the Agricultural Bank they keep an account for every customer. You asked for sectional returns. We already have the report of the

Commissioner of Railways, together with the balance-sheet complete, but we have not had any report at all from the Agricultural Bank since 1918. We do not know whether interest is being maintained, nor do we know what money is being let out or kept in. If the trustees would furnish us with a report like that of the Railway Department, we would be satisfied. It is a scandal that this should go on from year to year without a serious protest.

Mr. Pickering: Move the adjournment.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot, since I have spoken. The hon. member can do that. I hope the Premier will see into this grievance.

The Premier: I told them the report was wanted. It takes a little time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A little time! They have had since 1918. Is it any wonder that the people are dissatisfied with us when we allow a thing like this to continue? We have here a report of the Industries Assistance Board, but we cannot get one from the Agricultural Bank. I hope members will not pass the Estimates of the Agricultural Bank until that report is here. The clear duty of the Premier is to suspend the trustees of the bank immediately.

Mr. Angelo: You would then have a run on the bank.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If I were Premier the trustees would have gone out long before this if they refused to give me a report. No bank manager in Western Australia could hold his position for five minutes if he neglected to submit a report to his directors.

Mr. Angelo: Bank managers are given a week in which to provide a report.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have waited for three years. The position should be immediately rectified. I am not going to deal to-night with the State Trading Concerns.

Mr. Pickering: We will do that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Because, no matter what truthful statements are made in regard to those concerns, there are many people who want to bury them. One association, anxious to bury them, has for its president a maker of tombstones, and naturally he has an inclination towards burials in any shape or form. The State Trading Concerns speak for themselves.

Mr. Pickering: They do, indeed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Estimates of the trading concerns presented to us also speak for themselves. Apart from the Wyndham Meat Works they are all paying their way.

Mr. Pickering: On paper.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, in cash. And the Estimates show that last year, after paying interest, sinking fund and depreciation, they contributed £8,000 to Consolidated Revenue. That is more than any private institution in Western Australia has done. I was amused to-night to hear the remarks of the member for Katanning on the question of the water supply. He asked why the Railway Department should have been compelled to pay for

water they did not want. One of the reasons is that the goldfields water supply is supplying the agricultural districts with water at considerably less cost than it takes to get it there.

Mr. McCallum: And less than the mines are getting it at.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is one reason why it is necessary to make provision so that the Railway department should pay a fair share of maintaining the cost of this scheme, which was established very largely for the benefit of the Railway department. Last year that department only paid for the water received, and this ran into considerably over £20,000.

Mr. Harrison: The farmers paid more for their water than is represented in the waste over the weir.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When the water is running over the weir, the farmers are not in need of it. There are one or two matters in connection with the railway department which require explanation. The Premier says the railways are largely responsible for the deficit. According to the estimates 26 new appointments have been made in that department during the year. These are appointments of men who have been moved to higher grades, and of necessity they appear specially on the Estimates. This represents an increased cost of £10,176.

The Premier: They were in the service before.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Prior to that time they were not graded and were not specially mentioned on the Estimates. It is difficult to ascertain the exact position of the railways and to find out what savings are estimated for this year, and where increased expenditure has occurred. Under the heading of wages and salaries there is an increased expenditure of £175,863. The Commissioner of Railways expects that his stores will be cut down by £50,000 this year. We are voting the Commissioner of Railways approximately two millions of money for expenditure on these Estimates, but we have no detailed information as to how the money will be spent. We are also voting to education half a million of money, but have practically no information with regard to the expenditure.

The Premier: Salaries take up a large proportion of that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier said that owing to the strike on the railways there was a loss of £153,000.

The Premier: That was the actual cash loss.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He says the railway strike cost the State £153,000. This means that the deficit would have been less by that amount had it not been for the strike. If the railways had realised this £153,000 they would have had an income of £3,978,000 for the year, but they only received £2,757,000. If another strike takes place I hope the Government will not be so anxious to start off

with a motor service. That should be the last resort. I do not believe in doing anything that will extend any industrial disturbance. Monger & Co. tried to break the strike, but in my opinion they merely extended it.

The Premier: The motor service took food to the people.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It did not prevent the railway strike, but had the opposite effect. I hope in future the first line of action will be towards settling a disturbance and not extending it. Those who were so anxious to rush in and extend the trouble should mind their own business. If it had not been for Monger & Co. the country would not have been in the financial position it is to-day.

The Minister for Mines: I do not admit that at all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They can talk and blow about economy and tell the people here, there, and everywhere to reduce this and reduce that, but at the same time their hands are in the Treasury coffers every week. The member for Katanning, as the mouthpiece for that party, knows that quite well.

Mr. A. Thomson: I ask that the hon. member should withdraw the statement that I am the mouthpiece of Mr. Monger.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I never said anything of the kind.

Mr. A. Thomson: I ask that the statement should be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Katanning says that the hon. member stated he was the mouthpiece of Mr. Monger, and asks that the statement should be withdrawn.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I did not make that remark, but if the hon. member says I stated he was the mouthpiece of Monger & Co. I will withdraw the statement, if it will satisfy him.

Mr. A. Thomson: It does not worry me.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: So long as I have been connected with the Labour Party, I have never refuted statements made by its head.

Mr. A. Thomson: You have to obey the Brisbane conference.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have not yet seen the report, but in the meantime I endorse what the Leader of the Opposition has said.

Mr. Teesdale: You will not do so when you see the report.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are not discussing the Brisbane conference.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some people who preach economy make no attempt to practice it.

The Minister for Mines: Only for the other fellow.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: My friend, who is the head of the Country Party, advocates economy.

Mr. Troy: Who is the head?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am referring to Mr. Monger. Whilst he advocated economy

at the conference, no matter what it might cost, he was sending his representatives throughout the country pointing out to the farmers the amount the party had been able to drag out of the Treasury through the Government.

Mr. Harrison: How could they do that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I gave some instances of that the other night, when the hon. member was not present. If the Country Party carry out the dictates of their leader they cannot preach economy.

Mr. Troy: They can preach it but do not practise it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I challenge the Country Party to practise it. Will the Leader of the Country Party in this Chamber move that the Estimates be reduced by 10 per cent. on behalf of his party?

Mr. Latham: He cannot do that while you are speaking.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If he will do that he will get more support than he likes. Such a suggestion is only put up to mislead the people. If economies were practised in the manner suggested by them, the people they represent would be the greatest sufferers. The member for Katanning said the Railway department was using too much Collie coal, but the price for three tons of Collie coal was equal to one ton of Newcastle coal. When he was speaking on this subject he said nothing about the freight on fertiliser of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton as against the freight on firewood of 5d. per ton per mile.

The Premier: Firewood has the lowest freight of the lot.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member also stated that the policy of the railways was in the hands of the Government, and that they were not controlled by the Commissioner. He did not say that a party in this House, of which he is a member, controlled the Government, and that therefore the policy in connection with the railways was the policy that party dictated to the Government.

Mr. Latham: Is it worth while continuing these bonuses that you speak of?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That depends on whether the State can afford them or not. It is not worth while giving these concessions to farmers whilst other sections of the community get none.

Mr. Latham: Even if it stops the industry.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It would not stop the industry.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask hon. members not to interrupt. They will have an opportunity of refuting any statements that may be made by the member for North-East Fremantle.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: My objection is to those who are getting benefits all the time and who are endeavouring to cut the throats of those giving the benefits.

The Minister for Mines: That is not correct.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is correct, and it is a wrong policy to adopt.

The Minister for Mines: I say that the people in the country expressed those opinions, or desired them to be expressed on their behalf.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have said repeatedly that the people who have sent certain representatives here would be disgusted if they knew what was put up on their behalf in this House. I am referring now to those who hold responsible positions, officials of the Primary Producers' Association who go about belittling the Government. When the Minister for Mines was a member of the Labour Party he never minced matters if anyone acted in this way. The hon. member cannot contradict this. He knows well that he would never have hesitated to tell them to go to hell straight away.

The Minister for Mines: I would do it now.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What the hon. member would do now, I do not know. It is unbecoming for a member of this House to attack the Government in the manner that we have listened to to-night, and it is surprising to find, after such an attack, that that member still retains his seat behind the Government. When the present Minister for Mines was at the head of the Labour Party, I heard him on occasions turn round to those of his supporters and ask them to shift to the other side of the House for having offered criticism not half as strong as that which we have heard to-night from the member for Katanning. The present Minister for Mines said to them straight out on those occasions, "We do not want you." Other members can bear me out in this.

Mr. A. Thomson: The Government have a good defender in you to-night.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They certainly have not one in the hon. member. The hon. member urges them not to take a certain line of action; he tells them that they are running the country to the dogs, and that if the State is not bankrupt now it soon will be. In fact, he declared in practically so many words that the Premier was no longer fit to hold the position as Leader of the Government, and not only the Premier, but the Premier's colleagues as well. The hon. member condemned the Government lock, stock and barrel. If my Leader made a speech of that nature, there would be a leading article in the next morning's newspaper calling him everything for daring to criticise the Government in that way. Of course I do not blame the member for Katanning because he is obeying the dictates of the party of which he is a member.

Mr. A. Thomson: That statement is not correct.

Mr. Troy: Were you speaking for yourself?

Mr. Angelo: He said he was speaking for himself and not for the party.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The time has arrived when the Government should consider the advisableness of providing an adequate water supply for the metropolitan area. We have it on reliable authority that the water we now get from the bores may give out at any time. In that event there will be a serious shortage in the metropolitan area. The Government should, therefore, make a commencement in the direction I have stated. Of course it will take several years to complete the scheme, but when a start is made I trust that an expensive board will not be appointed to carry on the work. We have costly boards in many directions. Take, for instance, the Fire Brigades Board. I notice that there is a sum of nearly £10,000 provided on the Estimates and that is only one-fourth of what they spend annually. It is a considerable sum of money to spend to secure protection from fire in the metropolitan area. I consider it should be materially reduced.

The Minister for Mines: Throw them on their own resources and they will reduce it all right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It means that the people have to pay through the local authority, and through fire insurance premiums. If we appoint a board to control the metropolitan water supply, I am afraid that the costs will go on increasing.

The Minister for Mines: Such a board would be entirely different, because it would be a trust, and it would have to live on its own resources.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A water supply board has never been asked for by the people. A few local authorities met together and decided that they would ask for a board, but the question was never submitted to the ratepayers in any shape or form. An adequate supply of water for the metropolitan area is urgently needed and as it will take many years to carry out the scheme, an early commencement should be made with it. There are other matters that require attention in the metropolitan area, and I trust that the finances will improve to permit us borrowing at a reasonable rate of interest so that we might carry these out. I am disappointed with the Estimates, for on closely scrutinising them, I find that nothing has been done to curtail administrative costs, and that reductions have been made entirely against the weak, helpless and inficted—those who cannot help themselves.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [9.25]: The Premier in his Budget foreshadowed increased taxation. We have a Bill already submitted giving us some new items in the way of taxation, and when this Bill comes before the House, it will be a much debated measure. I suggest that the present would be a good time to review the whole of our taxation measures. The Leader of the Opposition last night pointed out that our taxation

statutes were about 15 years old, and that the incidence of the taxes although fair and reasonable at the time those taxes were imposed, was now out of date, and consequently unfair. Let me give an example of the unfairness of one of the methods of taxation. We know, in connection with the pastoral industry, that the increases of herds at cattle stations is from 25 to 30 per cent., and that normal sales would represent $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Under the taxation system existing to-day, every calf has to be allowed for at the rate of £2 5s. As only a third of the calves that are dropped are sold, that is the sales being only $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. as against 25 per cent., it means that the pastoralist will be taxed at the rate of £7 for every calf that is born. At the present time we know that pastoralists are not getting £2 a head net for their cattle. Take sheep. The average charged for every lamb born is 8s. At the present time owners are not getting in many instances more than from 3s. to 5s. a head for their sheep. What is to be the effect if the present taxation continues? It means that there will be no increase in number of cattle stations and no increase in sheep. The pastoralists, looking at it from a business point of view, will take steps not to have their herds increased and that will affect the pastoral industry disastrously. The Government are preaching produce, produce, but if taxation is to continue on the lines I have indicated, the Government will be disappointed at the result so far as the increase in the herds is concerned. There are many other instances where taxation measures which were equitable and fair some years ago are unfair to-day. Therefore, I suggest to the Premier that we should consider taxation generally and review the whole position carefully.

The Premier: Wipe out the whole lot.

Mr. ANGELO: No. I recognise that we must have taxation, but the existing measures are unfair and should be revised. Western Australia has suffered owing to her abundance of meat supplies. There are to-day tens of thousands of fat sheep and cattle in this State for which no market can be obtained. The trouble regarding the meat business at the present juncture is that the industry is largely under the control of the British Government. In England at the present time all the cool storage space is filled. There is a tremendous quantity of canned meat held. It is impossible to expect England to take any more of our meat until these stocks are disposed of. It appears to me that they are holding those stocks in order to make a profit and to save themselves from any loss. At the same time we have this abundance of meat to contend with in Western Australia. Stations in Western Australia require a considerable amount of fencing wire, barbed wire and netting, and many other things for use on the pastoral holdings. I would suggest that the Premier should discuss at the forthcoming Premiers' conference the question of

making some arrangements to dispose of our surplus meat in order to obtain these necessary goods and so enable the requirements of the pastoral industry regarding wire and netting to be satisfied. It is the practice in connection with station properties to re-fence portions of the property each year and thus in time complete the renewal, but the position, owing to the war, has been that the renewing of old fences has not been carried on, and it will shortly become necessary to renew the whole of the old fencing. If we cannot dispose of our meat for cash, it may be possible to dispose of it by means of exchange for goods. We are told in the Press that it is impossible to sell meat to Germany because Germany has no money with which to pay for our commodities.

Mr. Troy interjected:—

Mr. ANGELO: The member for Mt. Magnet suggests it would be disloyal to send meat to Germany. That is an exploded idea. We know that Germany has to pay a large amount of money to Great Britain.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Germany bought our wheat.

Mr. ANGELO: Quite so. If they cannot pay for our meat, can we not arrange some method of exchange between Germany and Western Australia?

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Prime Minister's words ring in our ears: "Never again."

Mr. Latham: It was good propaganda.

Mr. ANGELO: How can we help to relieve the position except by an exchange of goods?

Mr. MacCallum Smith: How much have we to get from Germany?

Mr. ANGELO: I forget the figures, but Great Britain and Australia have to receive a tremendous sum from Germany, and I think the best way would be to arrange some system of exchange with Germany so as to enable us to place our meat with that country and receive in turn some of those stocks which are so necessary in connection with the pastoral and other primary industries. We could receive in exchange fencing wire, barbed wire, netting, explosives, cyanide, and many other things required for station properties. Prior to the war, we paid £10 a ton for fencing wire; it now costs £40 a ton.

Mr. Troy: The Prime Minister will take exception to your remarks and he will make a speech before the National Party's conference.

Mr. ANGELO: At the present time the value of the mark stands at 735 to the pound sterling, whereas before the war it was about 25 to the pound sterling. In view of this position, members can see how greatly the exchange position is in favour of Australian traders. People say: "Why should we not buy the wire and other requirements from America?" There the exchange is 25 per cent. against us as compared with pre-war conditions. The dollar stands at 3.90 now as against 4.85 before the war. It will be seen that difficulties confront the pastoral industry in the disposal of its products and in procuring necessary supplies. As we have more meat than we can use, why should we not embark upon a trade which will enable us to secure things necessary for the expansion

and improvement of our pastoral lands? If such a scheme as I refer to were adopted, the Fremantle Meat Works, the Carnarvon Meat Works and the Wyndham Meat Works could commence operations straight away, because the exchange of goods suggested would relieve the position at Home and enable us to export meat to England to recoup their stocks. I believe something could come from the suggestion I have advanced. If it could be brought about and these requirements for the pastoral holdings could be procured, there would be no unemployment in Western Australia, because the necessary improvements on the stations would necessitate the employment of great numbers of men in putting up fencing, etc. Reference was made to the development of the North-West during the course of the Budget Speech, but I must confess that I was rather disappointed with the Premier's statements in that connection. We know that the Budget Speech is probably the most important utterance delivered during a session of Parliament. It is published far and wide and its contents are regarded as showing the trend of the policy of the Government. The Premier told us that a North-West Department had been established and a staff appointed. He explained the reason for the establishment of the department in the following words:—"What we propose to do is to get enough men there to produce for the requirements of Western Australia." That in my opinion is not by any means the chief reason for the development of the North. The necessity for the immediate development of the north is a far more important one than the mere growing of what we may require in Western Australia. It is not a North-West matter nor is it a State matter. It is an Imperial problem. We all know that in close proximity to the North-West is the teeming East. As one writer said the other day, one can almost smell the East on the spice-laden breezes that come down from the North.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The breezes will not do us much harm.

Mr. ANGELO: It is not the breeze, however, that we have to fear. I was told by a man who was recently in the North-West that when he was out on a lugger he counted no fewer than between 30 and 40 Malay prows engaged in catching dugong along our coast. That shows how close these foreign people really are to Western Australia when their little fishing boats can come down and operate along our coast and ship their catches back to the Dutch islands under our very noses. Every year this menace, which is so close to our shores, is increasing. Within a week's sail of our northern shores there are a thousand million coloured people.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Will not the Washington conference settle that problem?

Mr. ANGELO: No!

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why not?

Mr. ANGELO: I do not think the Washington conference will have any effect on this matter whatever, unless we help ourselves. We must help ourselves. This danger is becoming more serious each year, for the people I refer to are increasing at the rate of five million souls per annum, a figure equal to the whole of the population of Australia. We are told by British military

experts that when the next war takes place the storm centre will be, not in the Atlantic, but in the Pacific. The strength of a chain is its weakest link, and from Geraldton to Darwin we have the weakest link in the defence not only of Australia but of the whole Empire. We have only 5,000 people along a coastline nearly 3,000 miles in extent. We are proud of our white Australia policy, but what will be the use of that policy, unless we are able to do something to defend and maintain it?

Mr. O'Loughlen: What do the Government propose to do about it?

Mr. ANGELO: Although I have pointed out this matter every year since I have been in the House, I emphasise that I am not by any means alone in recognising this menace. Lord Jellicoe, when he was here, was careful regarding his utterances in public. It is well known, however, that at a semi-private function he spoke his mind.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Northcliffe said something similar.

Mr. ANGELO: Lord Jellicoe made no secret of the danger and pointed out this menace that is so close to our shores in the northern parts of Australia. General Birdwood also told the people of Australia what he thought.

Mr. Troy: So did Billy Hughes.

Mr. ANGELO: I will read a few sentences from a recent speech by the Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes. He said:—

The war and the Panama canal have shifted the stage upon which the great world-drama is to be played. In the future it will be in the Pacific. The American navy is now in these waters. Peace in the Pacific means peace for the Empire and for the world.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Yet some people object to America securing an interest in Australia.

Mr. ANGELO: Lord Northcliffe, in the course of an interview with a Sydney paper, said:—

Australians do not seem properly awake to the fact that they live in an age which has lately proved itself to be not distinguished by respect for international rights. To-day moral right to territory is in itself no right at all. Moral right must be based on capacity in arms. Among people of relatively equal individual fighting strength capacity in arms is measured by numbers, and by this standard Australia's present position and her immediate future are precarious.

Later on, he said:—

You may, perhaps, if you proceed wisely and quickly and unselfishly, keep war for ever beyond your shores.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Most prophets are alarmists.

Mr. Troy: Who is going to attack us?

Mr. ANGELO: Does the hon. member think that these great experts in military, naval, and diplomatic matters would sound warnings such as these if they did not expect something to happen?

Mr. Marshall: The last war was to end all wars. Now you have a different argument altogether.

Mr. ANGELO: The last war has altered affairs completely. It has increased the responsibility of Australian public leaders.

Mr. Marshall: Why do not you stick to the one thing?

Mr. ANGELO : The time has come when the Government must say whether they are going to develop the North in a serious way. A paltry vote out of revenue or the expenditure of a few thousand out of loan funds will not be sufficient. They should say whether they intend to take the matter in hand seriously. They must develop the North or get out of it.

Mr. O'Loughlen : Are you a member of the Northern Development League ?

Mr. ANGELO : Certainly.

Mr. Marshall : With big interests at stake.

Mr. ANGELO : Unfortunately I have very small interests at stake. As an old West Australian I would certainly like to see Western Australia retain its greatest asset, but if the Government will not proceed more speedily to develop the North-West, the time has come when they should allow it to be developed as a separate State.

Mr. Troy : Hear, Hear ! It is too big for one State.

Mr. ANGELO : The Premier should make some announcement, and now is a good opportunity to do so. This is the feeling of a great many West Australians, because of the menace that confronts us.

The Minister for Agriculture : The Federal Government should do that. We have put you up to prepare our case.

Mr. ANGELO : It is time the Government said whether they are capable and willing to do this job or whether they are ready to hand it over to someone else. They have a responsibility to the Empire which they do not seem to realise. If they have not the money and cannot do it, the sooner they make the announcement and let the people of the North-West apply to become a separate State so that they can borrow the money to develop it as it should be developed, the better it will be. We will not be safe unless within the next five years we get a population of at least 50,000 people in the North-West, whereas at the present time we have only 6,000. To make this rapid development we want good communication by water, we want railways inland from the various ports, and closer settlement must be encouraged in every way.

Mr. Marshall : You will have Brearley flying up there presently.

Mr. ANGELO : It would be impossible to take 50,000 people up there in an aeroplane. I expect the Federal Government will reply, "Look at what we have done ; we have given you an aerial service." But the people of the North-West never asked for it.

Mr. Teesdale : A scandalous waste of money ; never asked for it, did not want it, would sooner have had telephones.

Mr. Marshall : You want it for national defence.

Mr. ANGELO : I implore the Government to make public their intentions. It is an absolute necessity from an Empire point of view that the North-West be populated.

Mr. O'Loughlen : If you can induce your party to give an ultimatum, it will be done.

Mr. ANGELO : Effective occupation is the only title to that territory. It must be effectively occupied.

Mr. McCallum : What does Monger say about it ?

Mr. ANGELO : I do not know that I have ever discussed the matter with him, but I am certain he would see it in the same light and would endorse probably all I have said.

Mr. Troy : How will closer settlement be brought about ? There are a lot of excuses for not doing it.

Mr. ANGELO : I believe a good living can be made in the North-West on from 10 to 15 acres under irrigation, but it is impossible to make a decent living under present pastoral conditions on less than 100,000 acres.

Mr. Marshall : Are you in favour of the resumption of big leases ?

Mr. ANGELO : No, that would be repudiation. I have said again and again that if these big stations can be purchased at anything like a reasonable figure, they should be cut into smaller areas. There are stations being sold every day. If the Government intend to go in for closer settlement in that direction, why not purchase these and cut them up ?

Mr. Marshall : Why purchase ? Why not resume them ? They were taken up under conditions rendering them liable to be resumed.

Mr. ANGELO : I am afraid the principles of the hon. member do not accord with mine.

Mr. Marshall : Pastoralists took them up knowing the leases were liable to be resumed under the Land Act.

Mr. Pickering : But resumed under certain conditions.

Mr. Marshall : Still they can be resumed.

Mr. ANGELO : I am opposed to repudiation of any kind. If the Government intend to make a serious attempt to develop the North-West, they cannot do it by votes out of revenue. I am as keen as anyone for economy. I believe in it.

Mr. Pickering : Still it does not apply to the North-West.

Mr. ANGELO : This is no parochial matter. My electors and the electors of Roebourne would probably be better pleased if they were left on their own.

Mr. O'Loughlen : The resident magistrate certainly would be.

Mr. ANGELO : We are sent into this Parliament to look after the interests of this State, and I must think beyond the claims of my own electors. When we realise the menace which has existed for years and which is becoming more serious every day, it is time to look to the interests of the State, the Commonwealth, and the Empire to which we belong.

Mr. O'Loughlen : The Government have appointed a Commissioner for the North-West.

Mr. ANGELO : What is the good of that ?

Mr. O'Loughlen : No good ?

Mr. ANGELO : I do not wish to be misunderstood. To have a Minister, a Commissioner, and a staff of two or three at a cost of a couple of thousand pounds will be useless for developing the North-West, without money and plenty of it.

Mr. Troy : Who is the Minister ?

Mr. ANGELO : The Minister for Education.

Mr. Troy : He does not know the North-West.

Mr. ANGELO : If the Government intend to take the development of the North seriously in hand, they must do it by way of a special loan. If they went to the Commonwealth Government.

or to the British Government and explained that they wished to develop the North in the interests of defence for the Commonwealth and the Empire, and not particularly for the State, I feel sure that they would get the necessary money at a very low rate of interest, if indeed any interest at all was charged. The case should be put before the Premiers' conference by our Premier and he should discuss it with the Prime Minister. Everybody is impressing upon us the importance of this matter. Here is a suggestion which might result in good. The "Morning Post," a London paper, is publishing a series of articles advocating a more even distribution of the Empire's white population. According to the Press reports this is being done with an eye to defence, especially of isolated places such as the North-West. We all know that the British Empire spent huge sums of money on Gibraltar and Aden, not for the purpose of production, but merely for defence purposes.

Mr. McCallum: To get rid of the unemployed in England.

Mr. ANGELO: Well, let them send some of their unemployed here to be settled in the North-West. If they spent money in populating the North, they would be achieving their object from a defence point of view as well as bringing about considerable production. The Premier said the people in the North-West must be assisted and encouraged to grow bananas, pine-apples and peanuts. The Premier must have heard that popular song at the Shaftesbury Theatre which ends with the words—"car-barges, car-beans, and car-rots." I trust that is not his idea of what the North-West can produce. I would like to tell the Premier some of the things we can produce.

The Premier: I want you to produce them; I do not want to hear about them.

Mr. ANGELO: How can the people produce them when there is no land available?

The Premier: There are two million acres.

Mr. ANGELO: But it has to be surveyed and cut up, and some assistance must be granted in the way of instruction, advice, and direction. In the South-West there are attached to the Department of Agriculture about 20 experts whose duty it is to instruct the people what to produce; and the Government suggest giving us one inspector to do the whole of the vast North-West! I have spent something like £5,000 without any knowledge as to how to spend it. Much money has been lost, certainly, but if I had had instruction and advice as to how to grow things, I feel sure that the enterprise would have resulted in a big profit. To mention some of our difficulties. We might keep our own gardens and orchards clean, and neighbours, possibly Chinamen, might not take the same trouble. There is no one to compel them to do so or to instruct them what they should do, and the consequence is that pests which formerly were unknown in the North have spread all over the place. We do not know how to get rid of them, but if we had an inspector or an adviser, he might be able to suggest methods to cope with these pests. The pests attack vegetables, fruit, and everything else. I shall not take up the time of the Committee by reading out a list of all the things we can grow in the North; but there is hardly a fruit grown in the South, except apples and pears, but can be produced in

the North, besides any number of other fruits which cannot be grown here. There are one or two aspects of the matter we ought to know a little more about. With respect to citrus fruits—oranges, mandarines, lemons, and so forth—Mr. Despeissis says in his report—

Some of the finest oranges I have seen and tasted are grown on the Wooramel, the Gascoyne, the Minilya, and the Derby. Some specimens sent to the Agricultural Department from the Gascoyne on being exhibited in Perth attracted a great deal of attention for their size and colour. Nowhere in Western Australia, probably, is a larger area of deep-rich, typical orange land found than along the northern coast.

We all know that in many southern portions of the State oranges do not do too well, owing to the soil being too shallow. But in the north we have 18ft. of soil, and I believe that some day the Gascoyne will be the orangery of Western Australia. With regard to grapes one well known authority says—

A visit to the gardens along the Gascoyne in the early summer would convince the most sceptical that the grapevine flourishes in the district. I picked at Carnarvon on the 20th December some ripe Muscat of Frontignac (Constantia), which I brought back with me and showed on Christmas Eve. The same variety ripened its fruit on the Swan on the 22nd January. As a rule grapes ripen on the Gascoyne three to five weeks earlier than in Perth.

The same authority says that the time will come when there will be a tremendous export of grapes from the Gascoyne to Java and Singapore, and also to the south here during the earlier part of the season.

Mr. Marshall: How much land is available for selection on the Gascoyne?

Mr. ANGELO: Only about 30,000 square miles! Mr. Moody, the late Fruit Industries Commissioner, went up there to settle 250,000 people.

Mr. Marshall: Where is Mr. Moody now?

Mr. ANGELO: He has gone to a very good position in the Eastern States.

Mr. Marshall: Was that why he got the sack here?

Mr. ANGELO: I have here a long article on cotton growing, which I do not intend to read. However, it states that cotton can be grown very profitably in the North. With regard to rice one expert writes—

This crop should become for the Tropical North what wheat now is for the southern portion of Australia.

According to the last issue of the "Statistical Abstract" Western Australia during the 12 months ended on the 30th June of this year imported goods to the value of £3,715,000, all of which could be produced in the North.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Why did not you do it?

Mr. ANGELO: Because we had not the necessary Government assistance. All we want is Government supervision and facilities for transport.

Mr. Teesdale: And Government money.

Mr. ANGELO: We are not too much in need of Government money. The time has come when the Government must declare definitely

whether they are going to develop the North, or whether they recognise that that is impossible with our limited population and our limited means; whether they endorse what the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) has said, what the Minister for Mines said last session, and what the Minister for Works said to me only the other day. The last named expressed himself as follows:—"We cannot do it; the sooner the North becomes a separate State, the better." I do not know what the Premier thinks on the subject. He can get the people to settle in the North if he spends money there to provide transport and cuts up the necessary land. In floating the necessary loan either from British capitalists or even the British Government, the Premier would do well to point out that the project is an Imperial one, and that therefore the necessary funds should be lent at the cheapest rate. People can be attracted to the North if one goes the right way about it. How is it possible to settle people there unless some place is prepared for them to go to? For years we have been asking the Government to cut up some of the agricultural lands on the Gascoyne. A scheme is wanted for the damming back of the river and the creating of an irrigation farm. Similar requests have been made by the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) for settlement further North. There is an ideal site for an irrigation settlement on the Millstream, which would irrigate sufficient land to settle 3,000 or 4,000 people. Again, in the Kimberleys there are numerous places where closer settlements could be established. With regard to the Millstream proposal, let me point out that Western Australia is importing canned fruits from Mildura and from California. At Mildura the price of land is now about £300 per acre. Here, land can be obtained for practically nothing. Thus there is a handicap of £6,000 in favour of the settler in Western Australia as regards a 20-acre block. I felt a sense of disappointment upon reading that paragraph in the Premier's Budget Speech which deals with the North. I had looked for the declaration of a bold policy of development in the North, having regard to the menace from the Far East. However, I see the proposal is step by step development, which will not increase our population by more than 1,000 a year, whereas the North wants 10,000 people per year at least for the next five years and greater increase later. I hope the Premier and his Ministers will give this matter serious consideration, and as soon as possible make an announcement whether they will actively develop the North or leave the matter to be done by a separate State.

Progress reported.‡

BILL—ARCHITECTS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th October.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [10-14]: With regard to this Bill I had implicit faith that the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin), who obtained the adjournment, would resume the debate. We have recently dealt with one or two measures of a somewhat similar character to this: the Auctioneers Bill and the

Land Agents Bill are cases in point. By passing the Auctioneers Bill we have established a precedent for the registration of various bodies in this State. Recognising that it is in the interests of the public to have a registration board for auctioneers and land agents, we must acknowledge that it is of much more importance that we should have a registration board for the members of a profession such as architecture. Architecture has been fittingly described as the oldest profession in the world. It is a profession calling for considerable study and training. It has been frequently said in this Chamber that the health of the community should be studied in every conceivable way.

Mr. Troy drew attention to the state of the House; bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. PICKERING: When the measure was introduced last session it evoked considerable opposition. It is only fair that members who will have to vote on this important measure should at least hear the arguments I have to adduce in support of it.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Did you introduce the Bill?

Mr. PICKERING: The hon. member has a keen sense of humour, which he shows on every occasion. If the hon. member paid that attention to his duties as a member of Parliament which I endeavour to pay to mine, he would know who introduced the measure, and it would not be necessary for him to ask me if I were responsible for it. I am keenly interested in the Bill, and I regret that the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has not afforded me an opportunity for replying to any criticism he may have to make upon it. The architects have honestly endeavoured to see that the measure as nearly as possible approximates the wishes which hon. members expressed last session. The criticism indulged in by the "West Australian" should embolden the Government to proceed with the measure, inasmuch as the only real objection taken to the measure was aimed at the clause empowering the architects' board to issue summonses for witnesses and take evidence on oath. When I was requested to meet the architects in conference, we went very carefully through the whole Bill with the idea of meeting the wishes expressed by hon. members last session. The architects did not insist upon the retention of the clause empowering the board to summon witnesses and take evidence on oath, but when the question was submitted to the Parliamentary Draughtsman he expressed the opinion that the clause should be retained. I can assure hon. members that if they think that provision inimical, the architects will meet them on any reasonable basis. The main object of the Bill is to give registration to architects. Considering the vital importance of buildings to the community, it is essential that the men entrusted with the construction of various edifices should be fully qualified. It is essential also that no injustice should be done to any architects at present practising, and therefore it is provided in the Bill that anybody who has been practising as an architect for twelve months prior to the passing of the measure shall be entitled to registration. The Bill provides for the formation of a provisional board to deal with registration until the appointment of the permanent board.

It provides also for the appointment of the necessary registrar, and it sets out that, after the passing of the Act, every architect shall be properly qualified before he can secure registration. The system of education contemplated is of a most liberal nature, placing as few obstacles as possible in the way of those desirous of becoming architects, so long as they can prove themselves to be fully qualified in that capacity. The Bill does not seek to prevent anybody from designing his own building. What it does say is that in future no unqualified person shall describe himself as an architect. Anybody who recognises the vast amount of work and responsibility required of an architect will agree that a proper system of education is essential. As an architect of many years' standing, I realise that the qualities required in an architect are very diverse and not frequently found in any one person. An architect requires an artistic temperament, a good working knowledge of mathematics, a close acquaintance with business principles, and a thorough practical knowledge of the work he has to supervise. It is difficult to find in any one man those various qualities. It is almost superfluous to say that, in the life of every individual, the architect is of considerable importance. From infancy to death he follows our destinies. He provides our homes, our schools, our training colleges, our churches, our legislative halls and our factories. It will be admitted that I am not drawing the bow of imagination when I say it is essential that properly qualified men should be available when it is desired to employ an architect. This measure is due to the general community. I do not pretend that it is not desired by the architects, but I believe it is necessary also to afford protection to the public. I do not think I need depart from the advice tendered to me by the Premier on more than one occasion, namely that if one desires the successful passage of a measure, the less one says about it the better. I regret very much that I should have been forced to make my speech to-night, because I cannot possibly anticipate the objections that may be voiced by hon. members. I can only hope to have in Committee an opportunity for answering both queries and objections. Although I have to thank the Minister for Works for the generous manner in which he moved the second reading, I cannot expect that he should have the same familiar acquaintance with architecture as I have. I can only express the hope that hon. members will give careful consideration to the Bill. If I can throw any light on any of the clauses, I trust I shall be given an opportunity for so doing. I hope a more generous feeling will be evidenced towards the Bill this time than was shown last session. I do not think there will be found in the Bill much to which exception can be taken. In Committee hon. members will be able to make such adjustments as will be satisfactory to them and to those who desire the passing of the measure.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [10-30]: I did not anticipate that the Bill would be dealt with to-night. I have read it through very carefully. There is a considerable difference between this Bill and that which was introduced last session. The majority of the obnoxious provisions contained in the former

Bill are excised from this one. It is very different from some other measures we have had placed before us dealing with questions of registration. There will be no expense whatever to the Government. There are one or two matters which I intend to deal with in Committee. The board, for instance, is to be given all the powers of a law court in regard to issuing summonses and making it compulsory for the people to obey such summons. I do not think that power should be placed in the hands of the board. Some slight alterations will have to be made with respect to persons being trained in any college, school, or educational institution. The clause in question provides that this privilege is only extended for a period of five years, and that after that time no person so trained can be qualified to become a registered architect. Application must be made within five years after the commencement of the Act. The limitation should be struck out. I object to the clause which deals with the question of the approval of the board in connection with candidates. A proper system of examination should be set up and the standard fixed by the board.

Mr. Pickering: That will be done.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The clause does not say so. No matter where candidates for registration receive their education, so long as they pass the necessary examination they should be entitled to register. It should not be left to members of the board to refuse registration because a person has not been trained in an architect's office. There are many youths who are engaged in the building trade and who have attended technical schools in order to become proficient architects. Not only have they a theoretical knowledge of their work, but a practical knowledge of it because of their employment. They may turn out to be better architects than those who have served for a number of years in an architect's office. This limitation should be struck out, as should also be struck out the words "approved by the board." Any person who has been practising as an architect for 12 months prior to the passing of the Act, can, it is true, be registered, but what will be the position of the qualified man who has been acting as assistant in an architect's office?

Mr. Pickering: That is provided for.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He must have had at least seven years' experience before he can be registered. Many such men draw all the plans, get out all the estimates, and make all the preparations for the erection of buildings. They thoroughly understand their work; they have never practised as architects, but only as assistant architects. In relation to engineers, there should also be an improvement in the Bill. It is true the measure provides this time for the registration of engineers as architects. Many engineers have been trained as architects in connection with that profession, and have put up some of our largest buildings. There is a provision whereby an engineer with three years' experience can be registered, but he must make application within 12 months after the passing of the Act. After that period no engineer can be registered. I am pleased that the board are not to make it compulsory for training to take place in any particular architect's office. If a person is qualified he can be registered. I do not think any member desires that the board should not have power

to deal with unprofessional conduct, but the Bill goes further than that. Non-professional conduct means wilfully disobeying the regulations or orders issued by the board. The board may increase the rates of remuneration to such an extent that some architects may think they are too high. If they refuse to carry out the instructions of the board, they may be accused of non-compliance with the laws of the board, and no matter what they may feel, action can be taken on a summons. They would be brought before the board and this board would condemn them for not carrying out orders. The report of the board would be placed before the Supreme Court, and it would be taken as evidence of the facts of the case. The clause dealing with the matter does not say whether the person so charged can defend himself at the Supreme Court, or whether the court has to decide on the evidence placed before the board. If the Supreme Court decides against the architect, his name is removed from the register and he cannot practise, and so loses his means of livelihood. That is a severe punishment for a man who may be doing what he believes to be right in the interests of the public. It is true that no person can be stopped from drawing plans for remuneration, as was provided in the former Bill. He may not pose as an architect, but if he is a contractor or has a knowledge of the work, he can charge for drawing plans and doing similar work. I look upon the Bill as a fair one, which opens the door to everyone who can qualify to practise in the profession. There is an error in the schedule dealing with the question of a quorum. The clause speaks of six members of the board being necessary and the schedule of only five. That is a matter of amendment at a later stage. I have no objection to the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill

Clauses 1 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Effect of summons by the board:

Mr. A. THOMSON: This clause gives drastic powers to the board, and requires some explanation from the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In order that Clause 10 may be made effective, it is necessary that the board should have power to call witnesses by summons, otherwise they may refuse to appear to give evidence on oath.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Many witnesses appear before boards in response to invitations by letter to do so, and they give evidence on oath. As a matter of fact 90 per cent. of the witnesses who give evidence before select committees attend in this way.

Mr. A. Thomson: It seems a drastic power to give to a board.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The penalty also is so drastic that such a power should only be given to the Supreme Court. There is no objection to the board holding an inquiry, but if they find that a person has been guilty of unprofessional conduct they should bring that person before the court, and it should then be

for the court to say whether that person should be debarred from practising the profession of an architect.

The Minister for Mines: A person making charges should make them on oath.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Is it proposed to vest this board with all the powers possessed by the Supreme Court?

Mr. Pickering: The Legal Practitioners Act contains practically the same clause.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I hope the clause will be struck out.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 20th October, 1921.

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

PAPER—MINISTERIAL INVITATION TO VISIT STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East): As requested by Mr. Sanderson yesterday, I desire to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the invitation to visit the Straits Settlements received by the Minister for Mines (Hon. J. Scaddan) from the Straits Settlements Government.

BILL—PERTH HEBREW CONGREGATION LANDS.

Introduced by the Minister for Education and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Supply Bill (No. 3), £1,047,000.

2, Northam Municipal Ice Works.

Passed.