

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 5th October, 1915.

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

ASSENT TO SUPPLY BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to Supply Bill No. 2 (£650,000).

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Mines: Return in connection with the position of the accounts of the trading concerns as on the 2nd October, 1915.

By the Minister for Lands: Audit of accounts of North Fremantle salyards.

By the Attorney General: Annual report of Department of Land Titles.

PAPERS—RETIREMENT OF DR. HOPE.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): With the indulgence of the House I desire to make a short explanation in connection with the retirement of Dr. Hope. At the last sitting the leader of the Opposition said Dr. Hope had been forced out of the service by ill-treatment. The facts of the case are these: Some months ago Dr. Hope applied for an increase of salary to the extent of £100. The Government, in view of the fact that they are not giving increments to anybody who is more than £160 above his minimum, and of the further fact that Dr. Hope is £170 over his minimum, declined to accede to the

request. Dr. Hope thereupon asked to be allowed to retire as a protest. To this Cabinet agreed. I have the papers here and I move—

That these papers do lie upon the Table.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: What is his salary?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): £1,020.

Question passed.

QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVICE, ACCRUED INCREMENTS.

Mr. SMITH asked the Premier: In view of the fact that the Public Service Commissioner, as admitted by him in the *West Australian* of the 24th September, in ignorance of the exact nature of the promise made by the Government to the civil service, struck out wrongly in March last the claims of about 40 appellants for accrued increments under the appeal board decisions, do the Government intend to authorise the payment of the amounts withheld from these officers?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Premier) replied: The statements made by the Public Service Commissioner to the *West Australian* newspaper did not imply that any claims had been struck out by him, neither did they affect the decision of the Government as conveyed in a reply given to a previous question asked by the hon. member on the same subject.

QUESTION — GAOL PRISONERS AND THEIR TREATMENT.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Attorney General: 1, Is it a fact that George Hughes, who was convicted of unlawful possession of gold on the 25th April last and sentenced to six months' imprisonment with hard labour, is being permitted to serve his time in the Kalgoorlie lock-up under conditions inconsistent with the terms of his sentence inasmuch as—(a.) He is not being treated as an ordinary prisoner; (b.) He is al-

lowed to occupy a room instead of a cell, using his own bedstead, etc.; (c.) He is allowed extraordinary liberty—can be interviewed by his friends and does no hard labour; (d.) He is practically living as a boarder instead of a prisoner, and enjoys freedom of action quite unknown to other prisoners? 2, Is he aware that another prisoner—Bozin—convicted under the same charge and sentenced to five months' imprisonment with hard labour, was in the ordinary course sent to Fremantle gaol to serve his sentence? 3, If so, will he state upon what authority such preferential treatment has been accorded to the prisoner Hughes, and who is responsible therefor?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, This prisoner has been permitted by the Comptroller General to serve his sentence in Kalgoorlie on the grounds of ill-health, but otherwise the conditions of his sentence have not been varied. 2, Yes. 3, Answered by No. 1.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I would like to ask the Attorney General if he will inquire into the rumour that Hughes has been permitted to attend a race meeting.

The Attorney General: It is not true.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And has attended a prize fight in Kalgoorlie, and is often seen in the streets of Kalgoorlie and in intercourse with his friends.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In the first place it is not the affair of my department at all. In pursuance of the hon. member's question I caused inquiries to be made and forwarded a memo. to the warders up there asking them to state fully the treatment meted out to Hughes and to other persons. If it will meet the hon. member's desire I will ask permission of the Colonial Secretary to bring that report down and lay it on the Table.

Mr. George: Who is Mr. Hughes, and why should he have preferential treatment?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: He has not.

QUESTION—OCEAN CURRENTS AND THEIR TEMPERATURE.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: Is it his intention to lay on the Table of the House the reports on the temperature of the ocean currents around Western Australia, furnished to the Fisheries Department by Mr. J. J. East?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Premier) replied: The reports have already appeared in the Press and will be laid on the Table of the House if desired.

QUESTION — EXPEDITIONARY FORCES, BEHAVIOUR IN THE STREETS.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I desire to ask, without notice, has the attention of the Acting Premier been drawn to the undue amount of drinking indulged in by recruits in the City and suburbs to-day, and if he intends to take any action to prevent its recurrence?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: My attention has not been drawn to it. I myself have observed a number of soldiers in uniform in the streets to-day.

Hon. Frank Wilson: More or less under the influence of drink?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know that they were indulging in drink to an excessive extent.

Mr. Male: There was nearly a riot this afternoon.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I understand that most of the soldiers to be seen in the streets to-day are men who have just arrived from the Eastern States.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: That cannot be, for they are not all in uniform; some of them are in dungarees.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: But it is so. Most of the men in the City to-day have just arrived from the East, but I am not aware that they have been doing anything very desperate in the way of indulging in drink. Perhaps, after a voyage of four or five days from the Eastern States, just a little latitude might be allowed these men.

Mr. Gilchrist: But the police were struck pretty freely by them to-day in St. George's-terrace.

Mr. Male: The police can hardly hold them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Statements of this kind are to be deprecated unless hon. members are quite certain of the facts. It is very easy for statements of the kind to be somewhat exaggerated.

Mr. Gilchrist: But I saw it myself.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It may be so, but even if it is so—

Hon. Frank Wilson: Will the Government take action to stop it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is no need for the Government to take action. The police will do their duty in regard to soldiers, just as in regard to anybody else. There is no occasion to give special instructions to the police in this regard.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1915-16.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 30th September on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. McDowall in the Chair.

Vote—*His Excellency the Governor*, £1,540:

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [4.45]: I am going to refer to some remarks made by the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) when he was speaking on the Budget. I was not present in the House at the time. I understand, however, he referred to a certain paragraph which appeared in the paper with which I have something to do. The words of the paragraph were, "The words are those of Jack and the work is that of Jimmy." I think the hon. member put the cap on a little too soon. He might have remembered the old French proverb, "He who excuses himself, accuses himself." I do not think there is anything in the paragraph which points to the hon. member for Irwin as being the member referred to.

The Attorney General: Does it mean "Jimmy" Mitchell?

Mr. SMITH: Those of us who know the member for Irwin, and know his abilities as a financier, would never have credited him with the authorship of the Budget speech which was delivered to the House by the Premier a few weeks ago. Knowing his ability as a financial critic I am sure we would never have imagined that he was the person referred to.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You might tell us who was referred to.

Mr. SMITH: I will tell the hon. member presently. There are others who might have been referred to. He is not the only "Jimmy" in the House. As a matter of fact, the reporter who wrote this paragraph wrote it in a jocular manner, and the hon. member took it too seriously. I spoke to the member of my staff in question and he said he had in his mind the hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell).

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: If your employees can tell you tales like that you ought to get rid of them.

Mr. SMITH: It might even have referred to myself.

Mr. Bolton: I can hardly think that.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It might have referred to the hon. member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs).

Mr. SMITH: After listening to the member for Subiaco I am quite convinced that it could not possibly refer to him.

Mr. Carpenter: We accept your apology.

Mr. SMITH: After this explanation I hope that in future the hon. member for Irwin will not rush in and come to the conclusion that he is the only pebble on the beach or the only "Jimmy" in the House. The Premier, in the course of his Budget speech, told us that it was going to be the shortest on record. That is quite true. I think it is also the most colourless and most dispiriting Budget speech ever delivered in this House. Considering the position the country is in, I must say I am greatly disappointed with the proposals which have been brought before us. The country, as a whole, has asked for bread and the Premier has given it a financial stone. Practically he

confessed his inability to meet the situation. He tells us that he has enough loan funds to keep going, at the rate at which he is now going, until the end of November, but after that he does not know what is going to happen. He is going to Melbourne, he says, to raise more money, but unless "Uncle Cohen" is kind to him he does not know how he will meet the situation. He issues a veiled threat to the civil servants that a Black Wednesday is coming along and that retrenchment is in the air.

The Minister for Mines: Not at all.

Mr. SMITH: That is the inference that I drew from his speech. I am sure that members of the civil service and other people outside drew the same inference, and I think they were quite justified in doing so. I do not think that the civil service should be threatened in this way.

Mr. Carpenter: He advocates a policy of retrenchment.

Mr. SMITH: Why should they be made to stand the brunt of the Premier's wild orgy in his waste of the substance of the country?

Mr. Bolton: That is the policy of the *Sunday Times*.

Mr. SMITH: That is nothing of the sort.

Mr. Carpenter: It is your leader's policy.

Mr. SMITH: I am not here representing the *Sunday Times*; I am here representing the electors of North Perth. The Premier led me and other people outside the House to believe that if he was not able to raise loans when he went to Melbourne, panic finance would be introduced.

Mr. Bolton: When did he say that? Was it "Jack" or "Jimmy" who said that?

The Minister for Lands: You have been reading the *Sunday Times*, surely.

Mr. SMITH: Members must know what is going to happen when he introduces this panic legislation. Panics have a nasty habit of extending and spreading. They are catching. If the Government get panic stricken in their finances the panic will extend to the business houses throughout the State. The result will be

that the calculations of the Government regarding their revenue will be considerably upset. With reference to the Estimates of revenue for the year, I will try to show the House why I think these estimates have been grossly exaggerated. I am sure when I put my views before members they, too, will come to this conclusion, notwithstanding the fact that they may be on the opposite side of the House. The Premier referred to the splendid part which the volunteers from Western Australia had played in the work of the Empire at the front. I quite agree with him. I think that the Western Australians have done more than their share. They have acquitted themselves, indeed, better than we expected or hoped they would. Their fighting has been admired throughout the world, and their deeds at the Dardanelles will be something to remember. While, however, we are congratulating ourselves on their splendid heroism at the front, we have forgotten these men here. Returned officers have told us that the Western Australian men were the only soldiers who received no cable of congratulation at the front from their own State. Why did not the Premier, as head of the State, when the news came through of the splendid fighting of our men, send a cable to the trenches congratulating these men? It would have been some little encouragement to them. Instead of that, we find that this was the only body of troops from Australia which was not congratulated by the people at home.

Mr. George: They were too keen about cabling for steamers to do that.

Mr. Foley: They were doing their duty. They did not want their legs pulled.

Mr. SMITH: I trust the Premier will make amends for this neglect. It is not too late now. Many of the men are returning wounded. I asked in a question the other day if the Government were prepared to give returned wounded soldiers preference for any vacancies which might occur in the service, and the answer was that they were so prepared.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Because some of the men are having a drink to-day questions are raised in Parliament.

Mr. SMITH: I trust that the Premier will act up to his promise. It is an easy matter to say in this House, "yes" or "no" to questions which are asked. I trust that the Government will make it their business to instruct the under secretaries of each department, not only to give wounded soldiers preference, but to make their intentions known publicly so that there will be no doubt about it, and that returned soldiers will know that they are not being forgotten. While priding ourselves on the splendid bearing of our men at the front, I do not think that the Western Australian Government can take any credit for it.

Mr. Foley: A lot of their subordinates were at the Dardanelles.

Mr. SMITH: The Premier's speech led us to believe that the present Government were the mainspring in the business, at all events, I do not think that any special credit was due to them in that respect.

Mr. Foley: It is no party fight, Labour and Liberal supporters are fighting side by side: they are all on a level.

Mr. SMITH: The Government could have done a little towards the Empire's cause. In fact they could have done a good deal, but were not in a position to do so. What a splendid advertisement it would have been for Western Australia if we had been able, instead of going to the Old Country to borrow money to carry on with, to say, "We have husbanded our resources in such a way that we are not only able to suspend borrowing, but to go on the London market and take up our own stock and help the Mother Country in that direction."

Mr. O'Loughlen: Has any other State in Australia done so?

Mr. SMITH: The Malay States have done so, for instance. I believe they have taken up a million of the war stock. Why should we not have done so also?

The Minister for Lands: I suppose you think the younger States ought to have been the first to move in this direction.

Mr. SMITH: The Premier is like a spoilt child hanging on to its mother's apron strings, and worrying for bread and jam when it might be doing something.

The Minister for Lands: Or when it might have had a stew.

Mr. SMITH: Instead of helping the country, the Government were hindering it. When the Commonwealth Government got a loan of 18 millions and it was then plainly stated that this was the last they would get and that no more was to be expected from London, the Premier, instead of taking this hint, continued to spend at the same rate that he had been spending money at all along.

The Minister for Lands: You said just now that if expenditure was curtailed, civil servants would be put out of work.

Mr. SMITH: I said nothing about curtailing expenditure.

Mr. Harrison: What have they done in regard to our agricultural production during the last four years?

Mr. SMITH: The Premier has now reached the end of his tether, and comes along with this shameful proposal to do away with the sinking fund.

The Minister for Lands: He said nothing of the sort.

Mr. Munsie: More copy for the *Sunday Times*.

Mr. SMITH: The sinking fund is being turned into a sort of system of chits. That reminds me of the hard-up drunken father bursting open his child's money box and taking the money out and putting an I.O.U. in place of it. We have been accumulating this money as a sinking fund to the credit of the country in order to pay off our indebtedness, and now when we are hard up the Premier, instead of curtailing his extravagant expenditure, is opening the money box and taking out the few pounds which are in it and replacing them with an I.O.U.

The Minister for Lands: Where can expenditure be curtailed? It would assist us if you would inform us.

Mr. SMITH: The Government never take advice.

The Minister for Lands: Try and pick out a few items.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Wait till we come to the items.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Do not let them worry you.

Mr. SMITH: I will give the Minister some items directly. The Premier may argue that this is a legitimate way of financing for the future, but the Government, to my mind, are only sparring for wind. As the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) said, it was absolutely illegal to even contemplate that the sinking fund should be tampered with in this way. It is as plain as the English language can possibly make it.

The Attorney General: Has it been tampered with really?

Mr. Munsie: Nothing of the kind, and the hon. member knows it.

Mr. SMITH: When this proposal is placed before the trustees they will not consider it for a moment. Why spoil our good name by even suggesting such a proposal. After all, supposing the Government are able to arrange the hypothecating of the sinking fund, it is only a drop in the bucket, some £300,000 which they will soon spend in a couple of months of the financial year. In dealing with this matter the Premier told us he was going to issue this stock but he did not say at what price. The price of that stock will be in the vicinity no doubt of £95, but the trustees can purchase old stock at £90 and some at £83. What sort of business men would the trustees be if they took up this new stock at £95 when they could purchase old stock at £83. To my mind, the scheme is altogether unworkable and not worth while. I suggest that the Government should try the issue of premium bonds. That is a method of finance which would be successful and popular in Australia, and as the Premier is desirous of initiating new ideas, this would be a system of borrowing by the issue of premium bonds that would be advisable. There is no gamble about it and it would be more popular with investors and money-lenders than the present issue of stock. Another way of raising the wind is that adopted by the New South Wales Government by which arrangements were made with the railway contractors Norton, Griffiths and Company. That firm undertook to construct £10,000,000 worth of work. It was another way of borrowing £10,000,-

000, and I am certain there are many persons in this country who would be willing to build some of our railways and accept in payment Government stock.

The Minister for Lands: You are in favour of a system like the Norton, Griffiths and Company's arrangement?

Mr. SMITH: Certainly, your conferees in New South Wales have done the same thing.

The Minister for Lands: I simply wanted to pin you down to that statement; you agree to the principle.

Mr. SMITH: If the Government cannot borrow money and contractors are willing to do work and charge the Government the cost, plus five per cent., then I am certainly in accord with the idea. I am not in accord with the principle of drawing up agreements to erect works such as we have heard about in this House of late; I am not in accord with the sort of agreement that no business man would draw up.

The Attorney General: Why the Norton, Griffiths arrangement?

Mr. SMITH: That agreement was drawn up in the daylight and the agreement is a businesslike one. It is not similar to the agreement that was entered into for the construction of the refrigerating works which was done in the dark.

The Attorney General: What do you mean by the dark?

Mr. SMITH: The House knew nothing about it. It was a surprise sprung on members, and the contract was no sooner entered into than the Government turned round and cancelled it. The Government immediately saw they had made a mistake and did their best to get out of it. The keynote of the Premier's speech was that of practising economy, but I can find no intention on his part to practise economy. He tells us plainly that he intends going on at the same rate as he has been going and as long as present funds will last. He wants the people to live, so to speak, on the smell of an oil rag and he is going to spend money in the same reckless way that he has been spending it in the past. We know that the revenue of the Government is larger now than it has ever been. In the past the people

have been generous; they have provided the Government with more money than they ever had to spend before, yet the Government have ended the year with a deficit of a million and a quarter pounds, which is very large for a small population like we have in Western Australia. When we listened to the Premier's speech last year he told us that he intended to end the financial year with a reduced deficit of £700,000. What is the result; instead of having reduced the deficit he has increased it to £1,250,000.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: That statement was made before the war broke out.

Mr. SMITH: Has the hon. member been asleep? Was not the war on at this time last year? Let the hon. member wake up and understand what he is talking about. I wish to show that the present system of including stocks paid for is scarcely fair to the country. The Premier explained in his speech that a considerable quantity of sleepers and material had been paid for out of revenue and had helped to swell the deficit. That is not a proper way to look at the position. If the Government hold a large quantity of sleepers and material that should be shown. The deficit has been shown every month but there is no reference to stocks held in hand and it would reduce the deficit materially if that were shown. I think the Government—and I want to be fair to them—should show this clearly; they have been told about it often enough. The member for Irwin has been emphatic on that point. He is a business man and saw the weakness of the position and pointed out where the Government should have improved matters in that respect. The member for Irwin also pointed out that the State trading enterprises ought to be put on a business footing. They ought to be capitalised, so much capital allowed for each department and the department worked on the capital allotted. If this were done we should know what each department was doing; we should know if the department was losing and how much, and if the department wanted more money they would have to come to Parliament and ask for it and explain what it was

wanted for. If the House then thought the proposition a fair one the money would be voted.

The Minister for Lands: That is the position to-day.

Mr. SMITH: We have been told that over and over again but the Government continue in the same muddling style, advancing money to buy all sorts of things. The Government have not made up their minds how much money they should spend in each department. Take, for instance, the State Implement Works. If the Government take members into their confidence and place the position before the House, it would be to the advantage of the Government. Because I suggest this improvement I do not say that I am in favour of these State enterprises; personally, I think some of them ought to be scrapped. We ought to cut our loss; we are losing money every day. We ought to cut our loss instead of building up greater liabilities; there is ample precedent for this. There is the case of the Fremantle dock which was stopped. It was found that there was no bottom to it and the Government decided very wisely to stop the work. It seems to me that there is no bottom to the State Implement Works; it will take as much money as the Government will give it. There is no bottom in it and it would be better to stop such an enterprise. Of course, some of the State concerns would have to be brought to a standstill gradually. Someone should be appointed liquidator to dispose of them to the greatest advantage.

Mr. Foley: We ought to get a good bit for our railways.

Mr. SMITH: No doubt the Government would stick to the trams and the water supplies. Although the tramway department is paying handsomely the Government are extorting large charges from the people who use the trams. The profit last year was something like £40,000 which was extracted from the people by charging extravagant fares.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Did the Government raise the fares?

Mr. SMITH: No; the trams were purchased by the Government and the

people were given to understand that there would be an improved service and reduced fares.

The Minister for Lands: That is not correct.

Mr. SMITH: The same fares are charged, there is a worse service, and the tramways are being run to rack and ruin. The rain comes through the roof of some of the tramcars and the lines are going to rack and ruin. The Government, instead of using the immense profit they are making out of the trams in improving the service, are using the money to bolster up other services.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Some services must show a profit to make up for the loss on others.

Mr. SMITH: That is what I say. The Government are using the £40,000 which they are taking from the people to bolster up other concerns.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What about the education, the police and the law; there is a loss there?

Mr. SMITH: Why take it out of the Perth people? The Water Supply Department show a profit, if we can believe the return supplied by the Government, a profit amounting to between £20,000 and £30,000. But the Government have done nothing to extend or improve the service. We still have to use the same muddy water and at the same time there is an ample supply in the hills which could very easily be conserved. Instead of the best service in the State we have what is positively the worst, and simply because the Government will not utilise the money which the people pay in the direction of carrying out improvements. The member for Bunbury in addressing the House on this subject the other night drew attention to the fact that Ministers had too much work to do. That must be very patent to hon. members, but the Ministers do not seem anxious to be relieved of any portion of their duties. The other day a deputation waited on the Premier and suggested that the water supply should be handed over to the control of a board, but of course the Premier would not hear of it. He did not believe in the idea but thought that

the Government were the proper authority to administer the water supply.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Why?

Mr. SMITH: Because he knew that he would lose his handsome profit if he handed over the control of it to a board.

Mr. Bolton: Was that the object of the deputation?

Mr. SMITH: The object was to see that the department controlled their own expenditure.

The Minister for Works: You represented only a small section.

Mr. SMITH: The object of the deputation was to endeavour to bring about better management of the department and also to secure a reduction of the rates. This House has heard times out of number reference made to extraordinary charges imposed for putting in services.

Mr. Munsie: Have not the Government reduced the charges in Perth?

Mr. SMITH: No, unless the hon. member is a favoured person.

Mr. Munsie: Nothing of the kind. They have been reduced to everyone. The people are getting water now 6d. cheaper than before the Government came in.

Mr. SMITH: The member for Bunbury also made what I consider an unfair attack on the civil service. He indicated that the Government service was full of slackers.

Mr. Thomas: That is incorrect.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member then made some remark to the effect that the Government were not getting good value for the money which was spent on the civil service. I think the hon. member will agree that that was what he indicated. Such a remark is not fair to the civil service, because, while admitting there are a good few slackers in the service—

Mr. Bolton: You are saying now what you accused the member for Bunbury of saying.

Mr. SMITH: The Government are not getting good value, but at the same time they do not encourage the civil servants to return good value for the salaries they receive. The Government are to blame in this respect and I wish

specially to refer to their neglect to carry out a promise made by the Premier to pay some members of the civil service some back increases. An answer was given to my question this afternoon with reference to this matter, and on that subject I would like to refer to a report which appeared in the *West Australian* of the 24th September which states—

The Civil Service Commissioner (Mr. M. E. Jull) drew the attention of a representative of this journal to an extract from the *Civil Service Journal* reprinted in yesterday's *West Australian*, and stated that the remarks appearing in his annual report regarding back pay to July 1, 1911, under the heading of "Appeal Board Decision" were made in ignorance of the exact nature of the promise made by the Government and of the terms of the letters held by the association from the ex-Premier, dated September 6, 1911, and another from the present Premier written during the following month.

That, to my mind, clearly indicates that the Public Service Commissioner would have recommended something different from that which he did recommend if he had known of the existence of those letters. I will leave it to hon. members who have honourable ideas regarding the carrying out of promises, if that is not so. There is another matter out of which the Government are making a huge profit at the expense of one class. I refer to the Workers' Compensation Fund. The Government claim the credit for that fund, which stands now at something like £18,000. That amount is far more than is necessary to provide for the payment of compensation, and I do not see why the Government should extract so much money out of the workers.

The Minister for Mines: We pay that; the workers do not pay it.

The Minister for Works: And we are paying 33 per cent. less than we were paying to the insurance companies.

Mr. SMITH: It would be better if it were 50 per cent. less.

Mr. Bolton: Your troubles about the workers! They do not pay into that fund.

Mr. Thomas: He has his wheel in a rut now.

Mr. SMITH: Like a Government train the other day. If the railway system were kept up to a safety standard, as ought to be done, probably derailments like that which we read about the other day would not occur. That is a clear case where starvation of plant and material, and lack of supervision, were responsible for a serious mishap. I have referred to the Estimates which I consider are grossly exaggerated. I would like now to refer to some of the items. Take the income tax, in regard to which the Government expect a decrease of £645. Last year the revenue from this source amounted to £80,645 and this year the Government anticipate getting £645 less. Is that a business proposition? Do hon. members think that incomes in Western Australia during the past year have only been reduced to such an extent that they will return the Government only £645 less?

Mr. Munsie: If we get a good harvest that amount is not very much.

Mr. SMITH: Unfortunately the people who will get the harvest will have to pass it all over to the Government. To my mind that appears an absurd estimate, and I am sure the total will be very much less than the Government expect to receive.

Mr. Munsie: We shall see how it will come out.

Mr. SMITH: I hope the hon. member will not be disappointed. In regard to dividend duties, the Government expect an increase. Fancy an increase in dividend duties in the year such as the one we are going through!

Mr. Bolton: Lots of people are making profits out the war.

The Minister for Mines: What about all the specials of the *Daily News*?

Mr. SMITH: There are very few people indeed, or even companies, who have made increased profits in Western Australia lately, and in this respect I think

the Government will be sadly disappointed.

The Minister for Lands: You remember that the Act was amended last session.

Mr. SMITH: I am allowing for all that.

The Minister for Lands: Then you did not forget it; you are allowing for it.

Mr. SMITH: I did not forget. The totalisator tax, we find, is put down at the reduced sum of £125. It does not look as if racing is going to be curtailed. I suppose the report of the select committee on horse-racing is going to be shied into the waste paper basket.

The Minister for Mines: Oh no! We will deal with it.

Mr. SMITH: If it comes in this year the Government will deal with it, and I take it that racing will be considerably curtailed.

Mr. Hudson: You should not anticipate the report of the committee.

The Minister for Mines: We might cut out the bookmakers and try and increase the totalisator betting.

Mr. SMITH: I think the Government must have forgotten that they were going to curtail racing. They seem to have forgotten that just as they have forgotten many other promises which they made and which apparently they have no real intention of carrying out. With regard to licenses, there again the same argument applies. The Government anticipate a reduction of £238. If the Government are sincere in what they say regarding the closing of hotels and the consequent reduction of licenses, how do they explain that they estimate such a small reduction? When the measure now before Parliament is enforced the prices which will be paid for ingoings will be considerably reduced.

The Minister for Mines: They will not affect licenses.

Mr. SMITH: But the Government get a certain percentage.

Mr. Bolton: You are at sea again.

Mr. SMITH: If I am it shows that I am not used to trafficking in pubs like my

friend who interjected. In regard to mining, I notice that the decrease is estimated at only £169. Although the Premier painted a very rosy picture of this industry, he anticipates that very small reduction. That simply shows us the reckless way in which the figures have been arrived at. Here is the Treasurer painting a glowing picture of the mining industry and he tells us that there is going to be a great increase in it, but notwithstanding that he estimates that he is to receive £169 less than it returned last year.

Mr. Foley: That is no criterion against an increase in the mining industry.

Mr. SMITH: If the mining industry is going to improve the Treasurer ought to get a greater revenue.

Mr. Foley: Why?

Mr. SMITH: The State batteries, on the other hand, are expected to show an enormous increase, including £25,000 from the tailings treated. All I can say is I hope the estimate will be realised.

The Minister for Mines: That is a transferred account and appeared under a different heading in previous years.

Mr. SMITH: Then apparently we shall not receive anything extra. Coming to State ferries—

The Minister for Mines: It is time we got to sea.

Mr. SMITH: The ferries are estimated to return £1,615 more than last year. Here is a fine example of how State enterprise fails where private enterprise has been successful. When the ferries were taken over by the Government, the people were promised a much improved service and reduced fares. I do not live across the water, but I am told the fares have been increased and that the service is no better than it was under private ownership. I am further told that the owner made anything from £1,500 to £2,000 a year profit, and yet, now that the Government have taken the ferries in hand, they are not able to make them pay, but have been compelled to run them at a loss. There is something rotten in the State of Denmark, when, with all our resources, the Government cannot run a

little ferry boat without making a huge loss.

The Minister for Lands: Would you agree to charge the same fares as the private company were charging?

Mr. SMITH: I cannot imagine where the increased traffic is coming from, unless the Premier is going to put his bull pup in the Zoo.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: What about his pigeons?

Mr. SMITH: If they were across the river they might attract a little more traffic, but much more will be required to increase the revenue to what the Premier estimates.

Mr. Bolton: We are listening to the voice of Jim, but the figures are those of John of your staff.

Mr. SMITH: State hotels are expected to return £6,989 more than last year, an increase of 25 per cent. I do not know whether a wave of drunkenness is expected to come over the State, but something of the sort must happen if the estimate is to be realised.

The Minister for Mines: Two more hotels will be open.

Mr. SMITH: Hotels like Kwollyin, where they are taking only 10s. a day?

The Attorney General: That is the one which will grow. It is in a farming district.

Mr. SMITH: Does the Attorney General hope that the consumption of drink will grow?

The Attorney General: I hope all hotels will be shut, but this shows the value of your argument.

Mr. SMITH: I would like to know the opinion of the average publican regarding an estimated increase of revenue. I doubt whether any publican is making ends meet at present. How the Government can expect to make this enormous increase in returns I cannot imagine. Seeing there is a proposal to close hotels a few hours earlier than has been the custom—that is, if the Government are genuine in their intentions—this must result in a considerable reduction in revenue. Without doubt this return cannot be realised un-

less the Government countenance drinking in their hotels after hours.

The Minister for Mines: You are an awful pessimist.

The Attorney General: You are worse than the member for Northam.

Mr. Foley: You cannot get a drink in State hotels after 11 o'clock. I am sure that applies to four of them.

Mr. Male: Well, can the member for Leonora?

Mr. SMITH: The famous State Implement Works are credited with an enormous increase of £54,000. Last year the revenue was £73,000, and this year it is estimated at £128,000. Goodness knows where this increase is coming from—an increase of 75 per cent. on last year's business! Is there any implement shop in Perth which would calculate an increase during the current year of 75 per cent.? Perhaps the Premier is including some of the bills which will mature this year. Probably the Government have sold a lot of machinery and accepted payment in bills which will fall due this year. If so, this statement is very misleading. These bills should have been included in last year's Estimates, and should have been shown thus instead of swelling this year's revenue.

Mr. James Gardiner: You cannot do that as things exist now.

Mr. SMITH: If the business were run as an ordinary business concern, it should have been shown. I do not know whether the Government anticipate selling a lot more machines to the farmers, but from my knowledge of them, and I know a good many farmers, I can honestly say that the name of the State factory is not too sweet among them. The work turned out there has not been satisfactory, and I hope the Government, for their own sake, will see that the implements turned out are an improvement on what have been supplied in the past.

Mr. Thomas: Several farmers at Beverley told me a very different tale the other day.

Mr. SMITH: I have been told that farmers are not satisfied with them, and that as soon as they put on the wheels the implements fell to pieces.

Mr. Taylor: You must have been talking to St. George's-terrace farmers.

Mr. Munsie: Give the Government some credit; they have put in another manager.

Mr. SMITH: As regards the State sawmills, an enormous decrease of £114,317 is estimated. I do not think the Government have made sufficient allowance for the slump which is likely to be experienced during this year.

The Minister for Mines: You are an awful pessimist; you are the worst thing we have struck yet in the way of a pessimist.

Mr. Taylor: You are suffering from cold feet.

Mr. SMITH: I would like to ask if the Government contemplate doing anything in the direction of testing the validity of the powellising patent. The Premier suggested that the Federal authorities should test the validity of the patent, but they turned the proposal down, and I think the State Government should now test it. It is a dreadful incubus for the State Government to pay this royalty for many years to come and often for no return at all, and seeing how the contract was entered into, I think we would be justified in going to the court and endeavouring to have the patent upset. The State brick works last year were estimated to yield £6,500 and the net return was only £991. There is a brilliant estimate! Most of the bricks sold, I suppose, were actually taken by some of the other departments.

The Minister for Mines: They have only just started.

Mr. SMITH: This year the works are expected to produce £14,000, an increase of £13,000.

The Minister for Mines: They are getting a move on this year.

Mr. SMITH: I do not know who drew up this estimate. It must have been that financial genius who was going to wipe out the national debt by turning out bricks. Otherwise I do not know how the Treasurer could have arrived at such an estimate. Perhaps the real explanation is that the Government are going to juggle with these figures and sell bricks to other Government departments which

will be charged up for them irrespective of what they cost.

Mr. Bolton: Are you a financier?

Mr. SMITH: I am taking a leaf out of the Government's book. These little tricks have been practised in the past and I have no doubt they will be extended in future. The salary paid to the manager of the brick works is set down at £500 for last year, while he spent only £2,253. In other words it cost the country 5s. to control every pound of expenditure. That is a brilliant performance.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I think the hon. member is mistaken.

Mr. SMITH: I hope so. I am only quoting the figures from the Treasurer's estimates.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The balance was expended out of Loan money.

Mr. SMITH: The Government are very good at spending Loan money. Comparing the brickworks with the implement works, where salaries were £2,029 and the expenditure £140,270, it cost the country in the latter case only 3½d. in management for every pound spent.

The Minister for Lands: On a point of order; is the hon. member in order in going into the items at this stage? He may be in order in going into the items of revenue, but to discuss expenditure is, I think, out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: I think it is in order, on the general discussion.

Mr. SMITH: I am merely giving various heads of items in order to show where the Government are astray in estimating the enormous increases they have placed before the Committee. That cannot be done unless reference is made to the details of the various items.

The Minister for Mines: Cheer up!

Mr. SMITH: I have no doubt the Minister does not like to hear these things, but still we must try and knock some sense into his head in dealing with figures.

The Minister for Lands: I undoubtedly admit I cannot follow you. That is my misfortune, of course.

Mr. SMITH: The manager of the State ferries received a salary of £600.

The Minister for Lands: On what item is that?

Mr. SMITH: We can refer to items as we come to them. The manager of the ferries gets £600, whereas the manager of the Savings Bank receives a salary of £500 odd. The two salaries are out of all proportion to each other. The Water Supply and Sewerage Department are expected to bring in an extra £20,000.

Mr. Taylor: There has been plenty of rain.

Mr. SMITH: No doubt that is the way the Government estimate. There has been plenty of rain, and therefore less scheme water will be used, and therefore the revenue of the department will be greater. This particular estimate I am quite certain is a long way out. Harbour dues are going to show an increase, according to the Government, of £4,261. Goodness knows where it is to come from, with the shipping suspended.

The Minister for Mines: Will not there be a good harvest to handle this year?

Mr. SMITH: But where is the shipping coming from?

The Minister for Lands: We will get the ships.

Mr. SMITH: They are phantom ships, I fear. Seriously, I do not think there is any possibility of the Government estimate for harbour dues being approached.

The Minister for Mines: Do you think there is even one item of revenue that will be reached?

Mr. SMITH: There will be very few indeed. Take the Yandanooka Estate. Last year the Government received from that estate a revenue of £15,000, whereas they estimated £23,000. This year they expect to get £40,000, representing an increase of some £24,000.

The Minister for Mines: And a very conservative estimate, too.

Mr. SMITH: That is an enormous increase. I presume the Government calculated on this enormous increase from the 5,000 acres sown with wheat. I do not think they will get anything like that return.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The Government expect a 25-bushel crop.

Mr. SMITH: Considering the way the wheat was sown on new country, it is doubtful whether the return will be 20 bushels. That would give 100,000 bushels of wheat, from which, apparently, the Government estimate to receive 5s. net per bushel. The return will be more like 3s. net. The Savings Bank is credited with an increase of £3,960 in the face of an almost certain reduction of revenue. It is highly probable that the accounts will be decreased on account of the bad times, and on account of so many men going to the war. Then there is also the competition from the Federal Savings Bank, and that, I must say, is rather serious competition. These factors will have a serious effect on the revenue of the current year. Further, there is a Federal Loan, a very attractive loan. Many people are withdrawing their money from the State Savings Bank to invest in that loan.

Mr. Thomas: Not much went from this State towards that loan.

Mr. SMITH: Owing to the effect of that loan, the revenue of our Savings Bank will be considerably curtailed. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) says that not much money was sent from this State towards the Federal Loan. There are, however, a few more Federal loans to come along yet. Only 13 millions has so far been subscribed out of 20 millions; another 20 millions is to come on top of that; and this State will have to find a fair amount. The Federal loans will, no doubt, be made attractive, and consequently a decrease of deposits in our Savings Banks is pretty sure to occur. I fail, therefore, to see where the Government are going to get the extra £3,960 of revenue they expect. There are several items I might refer to, but, in deference to my friends opposite who think that I am taking rather a gloomy view of things and that I do not see any silver lining to the cloud, I will drop the curtain.

The Minister for Mines: Before you close, give us just one revenue item that you think will reach the estimate.

Mr. SMITH: The total increase expected by the Treasury amounts to £499,455, including £199,000 odd from

the Railway Department. I assume—and I am quite certain that I shall be nearer the mark than the Government will be—that the increase will total only about £200,000. The position will then be worse by £328,000 than the Treasurer anticipates. However, that is the hon. gentleman's funeral. The member for Bunbury waxed rather eloquent at the expense of the Opposition for their failure to point out where savings might be expected. All I can say is that so many savings might be effected as to make it hard to know where to start and where to finish. There is almost unlimited scope for economy. It is no use making suggestions to the Government, because they are never accepted. The Government pooh-pooh anything we recommend to them. They do not receive our suggestions in the spirit in which they are intended, and therefore I fail to see any good in offering them advice. If the Government would meet us in a proper spirit, as suggested by the member for Irwin (Mr. Jas. Gardiner), who said that all parties should assist to effect economies, I am sure that members on this side of the Chamber would be only too pleased to help the Government in any way. It is not yet too late to accept suggestions which may be made. If the Government are sincere in their expressed intention to cut out extravagances, members on this side will be glad to help them. My own view is that in effecting economies the proper way is to start at the top, and I quite agree with the remarks of the member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs) that we could do with a local gentleman in the Vice-regal position, that there is no necessity to go to the expense of importing a Governor. This country can ill-afford to pay an enormous amount of salary and also pay for the up-keep of the Vice-regal establishment. Much wealthier States than Western Australia have a local man for Governor, and I do not see why a similar arrangement should not obtain here. I think the Premier stated last year that it was not possible to make an alteration in the present system unless all the Australian States agreed on the subject. That may be, but

there is nothing to stop the Premier from cutting down the salary. It might very well be reduced to £1,000, or less, so as to make it so unattractive that no Englishman would care to apply for the position, and that, as a result, the position would be given to an Australian. In my opinion, £1,000 per annum is a sufficient salary for the position, seeing that the State pays the cost of the up-keep. At any rate that salary is as much as we can afford in these hard times. I know that my next suggestion will not meet with the approval of some hon. members. It is to cut down our own salaries. Last year I suggested that instead of paying members of Parliament £300 per annum, the State would be doing quite sufficient, as things are, in paying them £200.

Mr. Bolton: You can hand your salary back.

Mr. SMITH: I think we should be setting a good example by cutting down our own salaries in order to help the finances of the State. A considerable amount of money could be saved in that direction. The ridiculous reduction of 7.89 per cent. which was introduced by the Government has gone by the board now, and I understand salaries are being reinstated to the old amount. It is a pity that the Government did not, at the same time as they abolished the reduction in legislators' salaries, see fit to abolish the increased railway freights which have been levied on the people settled on the land. That ought to be done at the same time. A considerable saving might also be made in the upkeep of Parliament House by a reduction in the amount allowed to members for telegrams, postage, and other incidentals. I heard the other day of one member spending 35s. in sending a telegram to his electors. That is simply absurd.

The Attorney General: Who told you?

Mr. SMITH: I daresay you would like to know. It is quite true. It is not a *Daily News* report. Another member of the House telephoned to his home some trivial message at a cost to the country of 2s. 6d.

Mr. Thomas: You are becoming pretty paltry.

Mr. SMITH: If we look after the pence the pounds will look after themselves. These small amounts total up amongst so many members, and mean a considerable sum at the end of the year. Another unnecessary expenditure is to be found in the upkeep of our London office. I agree with other hon. members that this could be considerably reduced, and that a general agent, instead of the Agent General, would be quite sufficient for our purpose. The Minister for Works said we must have the Agent General to superintend the indenting. It seems to me there will be little or no indenting next year; besides, why cannot we do the indenting from Western Australia, as large private firms do? Why should we maintain a high salaried staff in London and provide them with a gorgeous motor-car in order that they may do what we could do as well from Perth? It cannot be argued that the expense is justified on the score of immigration, because recently it was made clear in the House that the Government have no intention of maintaining a policy of immigration. So, having dispensed with that, we can very well get rid of a lot of our expenses in London. Now I come to a little matter of which I have some personal knowledge. As the member for Bunbury knows something about pills, so I know something about printing and stationery. As an example: here is an envelope in use at the Perth Observatory, a more or less ornamental department. They use an envelope made of the best paper procurable and, not satisfied with one printing, they send it through the machine three times. Those who know anything at all about printing will see that this is a deliberate waste of money. On the envelope is printed "On His Majesty's Service" in black; then there is printed in blue "Perth Observatory" and afterwards the envelope is embossed in blue. As I say, it goes three times through the machine. An ordinary business man would use a much cheaper en-

velope, costing one-tenth of what this costs the unfortunate country.

The Minister for Lands: Did you get that information from the Government Printer?

Mr. SMITH: Why?

The Minister for Lands: Because this is stale. An inquiry has been held on the subject.

Mr. SMITH: I say the man who ordered that envelope to be printed in that way ought to have got the sack.

Mr. Taylor: Perhaps he did not know it was so expensive.

Mr. SMITH: I think the Government Printer ought to be authorised to give advice when departmental work is brought into him, and to point out that this or that feature of the work is unnecessarily expensive.

The Minister for Lands: That has already been attended to.

Mr. SMITH: I am pleased to hear it. I did not know it. I am drawing the attention of the House to the fact that we are spending a tremendous lot of money unnecessarily on practically useless work. A saving of 50 per cent. could be made in the collective stationary bill of the departments if they would but adopt common-sense business methods. Here is another case: it is a circular letter from the Minister for Agriculture to members of the House. It is printed on the most expensive paper obtainable, and has been through a printing machine twice, printed in blue and embossed in blue. Was there any necessity to go to this expense? Would it not have been quite sufficient to have had a smaller sheet of cheaper paper, printed but once? No doubt each of these invitations has cost the country 1s. 6d. or 2s. and it might have been turned out in reasonable style for a half-penny. In addition to the circular being printed on unnecessarily large paper, it must be given a foolscap envelope. Then we have the *Statistical Register* for 1915. What is the use of turning out rubbish of this sort, with nearly all blank pages? Anyone who knows anything about printing, knows that this document must have cost £200 or £300 to produce; its value is prac-

tically nil. It would be quite sufficient to have this information filed in the monthly numbers. To go to the expense of printing a bulky volume like this in these lean times is a deliberate waste of public money. I trust the Government will close down on these extravagances.

The Minister for Lands: Now, coming to the cost of advertising.

Mr. SMITH: It all depends on what you mean. I am glad to see the Government have not displayed the same lack of intelligence in advertising as they have in other departments of administration. They have been wise enough to adopt the *Sunday Times* and the *Worker* as media for advertising their agricultural implements.

The Minister for Lands: Is there any chance of economising?

Mr. SMITH: No, I think not; in fact I would suggest that the Government take an even bigger space. The burden of my song is that the Government are too confident of having a big revenue during the coming year. I hope they will have it, but I am afraid they will be disappointed. I would like to impress on the Government the necessity for curtailing all extravagant and useless expenditure. I am not opposed to any expense involved in the real development of the country. The State requires a good deal of Government assistance and support, but when the Government deliberately chuck money away I think the time has come to cry a halt.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle) [7.30]: This afternoon we have listened with possibly conflicting emotions to the somewhat extraordinary speech of the hon. member for North Perth (Mr. Smith). He began by complaining that the Budget Speech delivered by the Colonial Treasurer was colourless. Hearing that complaint, one naturally thought that the hon. member himself intended to give us at least something of a rose-tinted character, and I thought perhaps he would give us something that would be

in the nature of a suggestion that would take us out of the somewhat bad rut which the debate has so far followed. I am very disappointed. The hon. member fell into a very pessimistic mood, and gave us an utterance which, if it represented fairly the true position of the financial state of Western Australia, would give us very much cause for regret. In fact, I could not help feeling, while the hon. member was speaking, that an impression that might be created outside by those who do not happen to know the hon. member, that these remarks would be taken seriously, and that very much mischief might thus be done. His remarks I thought would give the impression that we were on the rocks financially, and making straight for the bankruptcy court. His suggestions, however, for saving the ship of State were so paltry as to be scarcely worth consideration. The pessimistic manner in which the hon. member spoke has been evidenced in the remarks of some other speakers during the debate. I want to ask hon. members to cheer up a bit. I want those who are inclined to take a somewhat sombre view of things to make themselves believe, and if possible make others believe, too, that the picture is not so black as some of our friends opposite may desire to paint it.

Mr. Bolton: It is only the Liberals who are pessimistic, not the Country party.

Mr. CARPENTER: I do want to say that our friends of the Opposition cross benches, so far, have not drawn such doleful pictures or taken such a pessimistic view of matters generally as members of the direct Opposition benches. The member for North Perth appeared to be exulting over the fact that the Government were in difficulties and that the Premier had to go to the Eastern States to hunt up some obliging "uncle" to assist him over the hedge for the time being. I am afraid that party feeling had more to do with his remarks than any desire to help the Government, or the House, or the country into a more prosperous financial condition. When the present unfortunate war broke out we had an

assurance from the other side of the House that during the operation of that gigantic struggle our local politics would wear a somewhat different aspect, that there was to be no party bickering, and that recognising the great calamity which is afflicting us all, in common with other parts of the Empire, we should stifle our party feelings, at least to some extent.

Mr. Allen: Provided—

Mr. CARPENTER: That we should by this means endeavour to pull together for the purpose of overcoming those difficulties which we knew that the war—if it did not actually bring them upon us—would accentuate. As time has gone on, however, that good and pious resolution seems to have vanished into thin air, and during this session it has been evident that party feeling and party spirit have again asserted themselves.

The Attorney General: They were never idle.

Mr. CARPENTER: They were perhaps only lying dormant. At the present time members opposite seem to look at everything from a purely partisan point of view, and are more concerned in discrediting the Government than they are in helping the State to which they profess to be loyal. This same feeling is evidenced outside this House and is evidenced with our friends who call themselves the Liberal party.

Mr. Allen: Do you not think we should be taken into the confidence of the Government?

Mr. CARPENTER: I noticed from something which appeared in the paper during the last day or two that it is the evident intention of what is called the Liberal organisation, to use every means in their power to commend themselves to the people and push themselves forward, even to the extent of making use of the present unfortunate war, and making political capital and seeking in some way to remove the discredit they earned some four or five years ago.

Mr. Allen: Tell us how the war has affected us at the present time.

The Attorney General: It has not affected you in your politics, anyhow.

Mr. CARPENTER: I regret to see that the so-called Liberal League has endeavoured—I hope it will not succeed, though it appears that it is likely to do so—to work itself into the patriotic movement and get control in some direction or another of the expenditure of public money in order to try and boom itself.

Mr. Allen: To what are you referring?

Mr. CARPENTER: I refer to a paragraph, which I daresay the hon. member himself has seen, to the effect that some of the prominent members of the Liberal League are offering their services in connection with the distribution of gifts for the wounded soldiers. They also offer to distribute the money, and to send their ladies down to carry out this work, and, in fine, to spend other people's money. They have opened offices of the Liberal League and they say to the people, "You send your things to us for the wounded soldiers."

Mr. Allen: What?

Mr. CARPENTER: They are opening the Liberal League offices, and notifying the public that they can send their gifts through these partisan offices.

Mr. Allen: That is a despicable insinuation.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member has only to read the newspaper.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Allen: I say it is a despicable insinuation and you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must withdraw. He has repeated these remarks twice. I must ask him to withdraw.

Mr. Allen: I will withdraw if you insist upon it. It is an insinuation which ought not to be made in party politics.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! You must withdraw without qualification.

Mr. Allen: I withdraw without qualification.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow you to make a speech.

Mr. Allen: All right,

Mr. CARPENTER: I am not surprised that the hon. member does not like my calling attention to this.

Mr. Allen: It is an unfair remark to make; you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member will persist in using the expression which is objected to I shall have to take drastic measures. I shall have no hesitation in doing so.

Mr. Allen: I have withdrawn. It is a very unfair remark to make.

The CHAIRMAN: That is all right then.

Mr. Allen: And that is all I have said.

The CHAIRMAN: No, it is not. I am not deaf.

Mr. Allen: Neither am I.

Mr. CARPENTER: I drew the hon. member's attention to the paragraph—

Mr. Allen: Your insinuation is unfair.

Mr. CARPENTER: It is not an insinuation at all. I am telling the hon. member facts as they are reported in the paper. I do not know whether he himself—

Mr. Allen: It does not matter what party does the good, so long as the good is done.

Mr. CARPENTER: I know that it reflects no credit upon the members of the party who are trying to do this.

Mr. Allen: It is unfair and a cowardly remark to make.

Mr. CARPENTER: I hope, at all events, the public will be sufficiently awake to their own interests not to allow any party or partisan motives to use this present unfortunate war for their own ends.

Mr. Allen: You ought to be ashamed of yourself to make such a remark.

Mr. CARPENTER: Members of such a party should not try to make political capital out of the war. It is only a reflection on the growing partisan feeling which has been exhibited throughout the debate.

Mr. Allen: I am surprised at you.

Mr. CARPENTER: So far from endeavouring to help the Government in the abnormal conditions which now exist, the only desire on the part of some

hon. members opposite seems to be to take advantage of these difficulties and to make political capital for their own advantage.

Mr. Allen: Your remarks are unfair and cowardly.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member can interject. I ask him to remove the cause. He can do it if he likes.

Mr. Allen: If someone is doing the work, what does it matter what party he belongs to?

Mr. CARPENTER: If the hon. member and his colleagues persist in this sort of thing I shall take other steps—

Mr. Allen: Why do not you do something to help the cause also?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is addressing the Chair.

Mr. Allen: I thought you had the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: I will soon show the hon. member who has the Chair.

Mr. CARPENTER: The criticism the hon. member for North Perth indulged in this afternoon was typical of that which comes from hon. members opposite. He took the financial statement, picked out item after item, endeavoured to discredit the estimate of the Colonial Treasurer, and tried to make it appear that things were very much worse than they are. He went so far as to say that the Government ought to bring down a monthly statement of their trading concerns so as to show what their stocks in hand were in order that the public might know what the position was month by month. I ask the hon. member, who I presume knows something about the business, if he ever heard of any business concern which gives monthly balance sheets?

Mr. Male: Certainly.

Mr. Smith: Yes.

Mr. CARPENTER: Then, I do not know of any. Will the hon. member say that he can name any business concern which gives a monthly statement of its assets? I am speaking of a balance sheet. The hon. member said that the Government ought to do what any other business concern does, that is, give a monthly balance sheet of their assets so that the

public would know what stocks they had in hand at the Implement Works and other places.

Mr. Smith: I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member said the Government ought to give every month a statement showing the stocks they had in hand. It is an absurd proposition to listen to. That is the sort of criticism which emanates from members opposite.

Mr. Smith: They get out financial statements of receipts and expenditure.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Government get out a financial statement showing the operations of their trading concerns month by month. The hon. member knows very well that nothing more than that can be given. One cannot have a stock-taking every month, and without a stock-taking one cannot tell the public what the assets are worth.

Mr. Smith: I know the Government cannot, but business people can.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member was far from correct when criticising the Workers' Compensation Fund administered by the Government. He complained that the country had £18,000 to the credit of the fund. That was a most remarkable statement. The Government have saved money by establishing a fund, in preference to paying heavy premiums which would go to build up the profits of private insurance companies; and the hon. member wants to blame the Government for making an arrangement of that nature. He misunderstood the whole position. He thought that the Government were in some way getting possession of some of the workers' premiums and not distributing them, whereas the facts are that the workers are getting their compensation according to the Act, and that the cost to the State is not as great as it would be if the Government had continued to pay premiums under the old arrangement.

Mr. Smith: Some of the claims are disputed.

Mr. Munsie: Not nearly so many as the private companies disputed.

Mr. CARPENTER: I was amused when the hon. member proceeded to make suggestions which in his opinion would help the finances. His suggestions were really marvellous.

Mr. Bolton: The envelopes at 2s. per 1,000.

Mr. CARPENTER: I will pass by the envelopes, and the writing paper too. The hon. member suggested cutting down the salary of—

Mr. Smith: That touched you.

Mr. CARPENTER: A gentleman who holds a very high position, and to whom we all ought to defer. The hon. member said he would cut down the salary of that position by £1,000—

Mr. Smith: I said, by £3,000.

Mr. CARPENTER: So that there would be no applicants for the position. What sort of a proposition is that? It seems to me a somewhat sneaky way of abolishing a certain office instead of saying straight out that we are going to abolish the office altogether.

Mr. Smith: Quite right.

Mr. CARPENTER: Instead of saying that, the hon. member wants to cut down the salary bit by bit until no one will apply for the position. If that is the hon. member's way of doing business, I hope no one on this side of the House will adopt it. I hope even that, on second thoughts, the hon. member himself will not approve of the suggestion. Next, the hon. member found fault with the Agent General.

Mr. Smith: No.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member said that we ought to have, not an Agent General, but a general agent.

Mr. Smith: Hear, hear!

Mr. CARPENTER: I expected cheers from hon. members opposite, because apparently they are not aware of what the Agent General does in London. They do not seem to know how important it is that the State of Western Australia should stand as well in London as any other State. It would be a calamity to this State if we took isolated action, and reduced the status and the influence of our London representative while the other

States maintained the status and influence of their representatives. There is something about the English mind—I know it pretty well, because I am an Englishman—which is captivated by a little bit of style. If every other State continued to call its representative Agent General and we called our representative a mere general agent, the British public would think there was something wrong with Western Australia.

Mr. James Gardiner: Victoria had a general agent for some time.

Mr. CARPENTER: I beg the hon. member's pardon. He is quite wrong.

Mr. Allen: South Australia had a commercial agent.

Mr. CARPENTER: But in addition to its Agent General.

Mr. Allen: Yes. Double-banking, and wasting of the people's money.

Mr. CARPENTER: I happen to know that years ago this very question came before the South Australian House of Assembly, when a proposition was brought forward by the Government to reduce the status of the Agent General, and to alter his title to general agent. The South Australian House of Assembly refused to endorse the Government's proposal for the very reason I stated, that South Australia would be making itself small by comparison with the other States. I am quite prepared to argue with any hon. member whether or not it is necessary to keep up the full number of Agent General's offices in the style we do at present, but whatever steps are taken to retrench in that connection should be taken by the States in common.

Mr. Allen: Why could we not take the lead?

Mr. CARPENTER: I am just trying to tell the hon. member. Simply because we do not want to appear worse than other States in the eyes of the British public.

Mr. Allen: That is all nonsense.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member interjects "nonsense," and I suppose he interjects what is in his mind. He knows something about London, I suppose. I had the pleasure of being there about three years ago, and I know that then I felt somewhat ashamed at having to go

into a back street to find the office of the Agent General for Western Australia, while the representatives of other States had good offices in prominent streets. I am glad our Agent General has taken steps to obtain suitable premises, and so to uphold the dignity of this State in London as it should be upheld. There is not much chance at present of our securing a reduction of expenditure in connection with the Agent General's office.

Mr. Allen: It is time we did.

Mr. Male: Do you call Victoria-street a back street?

Mr. CARPENTER: Next, I wish to say a word or two regarding the speech of the leader of the Opposition. That hon. member presumably spoke the mind of those who follow him.

Mr. Allen: Whom do you speak for?

Mr. CARPENTER: I speak for myself.

Mr. Allen: I doubt it very much.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am sorry that my remarks have a disturbing effect upon the member for West Perth (Mr. Allen).

Mr. Allen: You started off in such a strain that I cannot help it.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member's interjections are somewhat lost on me, because he talks rather like a machine gun.

Mr. Allen: I will tell you outside quietly. I am ashamed of you.

Mr. CARPENTER: The leader of the Opposition accused the Government of having indulged in an orgy of borrowing and spending, and he referred to the large amount of Loan money expended by the present Government during the last three or four years. It is quite possible that too much has been spent in some directions.

Mr. Allen: You admit that, do you?

Mr. CARPENTER: I admit it freely. But I want to point out that the bulk of that expenditure during the last four years has been on works—railways chiefly—which were authorised by our predecessors in office, by the Liberal party when they held the reins of government. I have here the figures of expenditure of loan money on railways during the last five years, and they are

as follows: 1910-11, £747,748; 1911-12, £1,316,800; 1912-13, £1,948,876; 1913-14, £1,227,710; 1914-15, £673,175; a total for the five years of £5,914,309. Now, it comes with an ill grace from the leader of the Opposition to chide the present Government for having spent this money, seeing it has been mainly spent to carry out works which he and his party authorised, seeing it is money which would have had to be spent if the leader of the Opposition and his party had remained in office. I remember well that about two or three years ago a motion was moved by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) to the effect that the Government were not spending Loan money fast enough in building agricultural railways. The member for Northam asked the House to affirm that because the Government were not spending Loan money fast enough tenders should be called for railways and contractors should be allowed to build the lines which the Liberal Government had authorised. Now that the money has been spent and the railways authorised by the Liberal Government have been constructed, the leader of the Opposition comes along and says that the present Government have indulged in an orgy of expenditure of Loan money.

Mr. Smith: But railways are not the only thing you spend money on.

Mr. CARPENTER: Just on six millions out of ten millions has been spent on railways. The bulk of the money has been spent on railways. We are being chided by the Opposition for carrying out the works which the present Opposition authorised just before an election in the vain hope of commending themselves to the electors of the State and obtaining a further term of office. I am rather surprised to find the leader of the Opposition still boasting of the boom which his colleague the member for Northam, when Minister for Lands, was guilty of perpetrating; one of the blackest spots in the history of the government of Western Australia. We had a Minister for Lands deliberately engineering a land boom in the full knowledge of what land booms mean, and what their inevitable

result must be—collapse. In spite of that knowledge we found the Minister for Lands of the day sending out surveyors to survey millions of acres irrespective of whether settlers could make a living on them or not. The member for Northam did that, knowing full well that it was impossible to give settlers on those areas railway facilities for years to come.

Mr. Foley: Or water.

Mr. CARPENTER: Yes. In that way untold suffering was brought on the unfortunate men who took up those areas. The result was that many of them threw up their holdings in disgust, and went away to give this State a bad name. Knowing all that, as the leader of the Opposition must know, he still has the temerity to boost the boom of five or six years back for which he and his colleague were responsible. Then the leader of the Opposition adopted a pessimistic tone, and expressed the wish that he could see a way out of the present unfortunate position. I want to ask whether the position is really so unfortunate as some members try to make it appear to be.

Mr. Smith: It is pretty bad buying steamers on the time payment system.

Mr. CARPENTER: There is nothing very wrong about that, is there? Have we not raised our loans on time payment? I guarantee the hon. member has done something on the time payment system. If he had not he would not be a Scotchman.

Mr. Smith: It is a bad advertisement for the Government.

Mr. CARPENTER: Nothing of the sort. In spite of the croakings of hon. members opposite about the present unfortunate position of the State, our assets are beyond all question. There is not a business man in this House who would not be glad to take this State as it stands to-day as a business proposition, with all its assets and liabilities, and say that he never wanted anything better.

Mr. Smith: They would not take on the Government as well.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member has an insane prejudice against the Gov-

ernment and that seems to obliterate every other condition from his mind. He is willing to give it a bad name so long as by doing that he can bring discredit on the Government. There is not a State in Australia that stands better than Western Australia does to-day.

Mr. Smith: Our stocks are the lowest.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am not speaking of the price of some of our stocks, I am speaking of the assets of the State, and they are as good as those of any other State. While the State has its business side, and whilst the Treasurer is handling that business side, there is still another. The Treasurer must have some consideration, not only for the pounds, shillings and pence of the State's transactions but he must have great consideration indeed for the masses of the people who are dependent upon the State's prosperity. Our friends opposite may talk as much as they like about retrenchment but if they were on this side they would not dare to put into operation a policy of retrenchment by which they would throw a large number of people out of work.

Mr. Allen: Why not?

Mr. CARPENTER: Because hon. members opposite would not have pluck enough. If they did attempt such a thing they would be insane. The member for West Perth (Mr. Allen) who looks at everything from the cash point of view might be insane enough to do such a thing, but I do not think his party as a whole would consider it for a moment. They must consider the general well-being of the people of the State and if it means carrying an overdraft for a few years it is far better to do that with assured prospects in view than to cut down with an insane desire to make the ledger balance. May I just refer back to the policy of railway building. I suppose the member for West Perth would not dispute the fact that we cannot expect agricultural railways to pay for the first few years, not even in normal times. Knowing that to be the case in normal times, we cannot be surprised if in times such as we have been passing through in recent years, when crops have been more

or less all failures, we find it difficult to make ends meet. Why then all this gibing at the Government because they have not shown a credit balance? It would have been an easy thing to do what was done in Victoria when the big boom burst and the reaction set in. In some circles even to-day they still boast of what Sir George Turner did in the way of wholesale retrenchment. The action of the Government in that State caused great suffering amongst the masses of the people and it drove them away from Victoria by the thousands.

Mr. Munsie: Western Australia solved the problem.

Mr. CARPENTER: Many came here, it is true, but I am speaking now of the action of putting into operation a policy of retrenchment for the sake of showing a credit balance. The Treasurer to-day, no matter whom he may be, has to consider not only the question of cash balance but he has to ask himself how any action he might take will affect the lives and interests and the well-being of hundreds and thousands of people whose happiness depends upon prosperity throughout the State. We have had a lot of pessimistic talk about the necessity for cutting down expenditure but we have not had any real and practical suggestions as to the direction in which the cutting down could be done. Everyone is willing with Mark Twain to "Sacrifice his wife's relations," but when we talk about any policy of retrenchment which may affect their constituents we will find them all against us. There is no fear whatever in regard to the future of this State. I have no dread of the deficit as it stands to-day. I believe that with normal seasons we should have been nearer a cash balance, although I question, remembering the large outlay on agricultural railways, whether we can hope to make them pay immediately. However, they are a good investment and the question of their paying handsomely is a matter of only a few years. Normal harvests in the next two or three years will solve the problem, and so I ask hon. members not to let their prejudices

against the Government carry them away in the belief that because there is a deficit we are on the rocks. We were never in a sounder financial position than we are in to-day. Every pound which has been spent on the railways is a good investment.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You should not spend much on railways.

Mr. CARPENTER: We have spent the bulk of our loan funds on railways.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Oh, no.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member was not in the Chamber when I referred to the question of railway construction and I have no intention of repeating what I said. The only suggestion which came from the leader of the Opposition was that we must open up our lands. I like that sort of talk but hon. members know well that the opening up of the country means the building of additional railways and to construct more railways means the obtaining of further loan money. It is somewhat inconsistent to my mind for the leader of the Opposition to first of all begin by gibing the Government on having spent so much loan money, knowing too that that money has been spent principally on railways, and then to finish up his speech by saying there is only one thing we can do and that is to open up our lands and settle the people on them. Without further loan money that cannot be done now.

The Minister for Lands: And the men are not here.

Mr. CARPENTER: I suppose there are some who would still go on the land if we gave them facilities. I am not going to shut down on land settlement. I am with those who say that when the present disastrous war is over the men who come back should have for their reward an area of land on which to settle. I think if we can finance a scheme of that sort, either by ourselves or in conjunction with the Commonwealth authorities, we shall be doing an act of justice to the men who have been fighting for us. Do not let us have hypocritical talk about the disastrous state of the finances when we know that our prospects are good, and that we are suffering a minimum of

discomfort to-day considering that the money market is closed to us, and that the whole of the European market has been disturbed on account of the war. The leader of the Opposition could not help repeating what he has said a good many times and that was that he deprecated any further expenditure upon State steamers. There has been so much said about this unfortunate subject that one almost hesitates to refer to it at all. The subject has been dealt with until the House must be tired of hearing it, but even at the risk of wearying hon. members, I may say a word or two about it. In spite of the unfortunate experience we have had with one State steamer, I still believe the people of the State favour the policy of a Government line of steamers. The fact still remains that the first Government to propose a line of State steamers was the Wilson Government but they had not the courage to launch out on that policy. They simply nibbled at it and said they proposed to do it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They bought a small ship and used it to bring manure down from some place.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am speaking of the general policy of giving the producer who lives in distant Nor'-West parts the same chance of getting his goods to market as we give the settlers in the agricultural districts. I do not know that anything can be said against the policy, and the pity is that it was not begun much earlier. The fact that we have had one steamer which was not suitable does not in any way discredit that policy. It would be a great mistake if the Government were to draw back from the step they have taken in providing the people of the Nor'-West with the chance of bringing down their produce and so relieving those settlers in the distant parts of the State of the incubus of the shipping combine under which they have laboured for so long.

Mr. Male: Absolute rubbish!

Mr. Munsie: Your electors do not think so.

Mr. Male: Yes, they do.

Mr. CARPENTER: I believe the Government will be carrying out the wish of the general public and will be consulting the best interests of the State if they proceed, in spite of all criticism, to push ahead with their policy of giving us steamships wherever those steamships can be made to pay.

Mr. Male: What about the "Eucla."

Mr. CARPENTER: I want to conclude by agreeing with one statement which fell from the lips of the leader of the Opposition. When he is right, I am glad to agree with him.

Mr. Munsie: He was right once then. It is unusual.

Mr. CARPENTER: Yes. In referring to the profit of £15,000 or £16,000 that the Government expect to make in connection with the water and sewerage works in the metropolitan area, I am bound to say the leader of the Opposition was on sound ground. I have more than once in this House expressed my disagreement with the policy of raising revenue from our trading concerns, thereby taxing those people who happen to use those services. I know that the present Government, like others before them, have been forced somewhat into the position of having to get money from every source possible.

Mr. Smith: And not particular either.

Mr. CARPENTER: And it has been forced on this House because we were subject to another place where members have the power to authorise or to help us to authorise any public work, but when the question of bearing the cost of such work or meeting the increased necessities of the State is put before them, and they are asked to sanction a reasonable scheme of taxation to meet the expenditure, they shut down upon us, and say—"Get your money from some other source." That has forced not only the present Government, but previous Governments, to get money from any and every source possible. But it is a bad policy, and one to which I have always objected, that we should make our public services a source of revenue to relieve us of taxation which should be

paid all round. If we can afford free education and many other things which we give our people, it must be understood the services have to be paid for, and it is not a fair thing to make the taxpayers or consumers in any one particular part of the State, whether gold-fields, coast, or elsewhere, pay more than is necessary for the services rendered to them, that we might indirectly take from them a measure of taxation, and so make up a loss upon something from which they get no advantage. I hope as soon as our finances improve the Government of the day will tackle this problem, and see if we cannot pay honestly by taxation for those things which must be paid for, and then charge only a sufficient margin for public services to allow them to render these services faithfully and make them pay interest, sinking fund and the cost of maintenance.

Mr. Smith: And if they do not, will you come over here?

Mr. CARPENTER: I suppose in due time I will get over there. It might be a long time, but it will not be the first time that I have sat in opposition. When that does not happen, I hope I shall be spared from ever indulging in the croaking, pessimistic utterances we have heard from some hon. members on that side of the House during this debate.

Mr. Smith: You will be spared because there will be no occasion to do so.

Mr. CARPENTER: I believe many of those utterances are not quite as sincere as we might expect them to be. They are simply used to throw discredit on political opponents.

Mr. Allen: You have been doing that from the very outset.

Mr. Male: Is the hon. member right in reflecting on members on this side of the House by saying they are insincere?

Mr. Allen: He has been doing that all the evening, and doing worse than that.

Mr. Bolton: It is not a reflection.

Mr. Male: It is not a reflection on me because I have not spoken, but I think it is an unfair reflection on members

who have spoken and should be withdrawn.

The Attorney General: Does the hon. member take it personally?

Mr. Male: I do, as regards members generally on this side.

Mr. CARPENTER: If the hon. member has not spoken my remarks cannot apply to him.

Mr. Allen: Your remarks have been insincere and you should be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. CARPENTER: I think members who have made these croaking and pessimistic utterances will, in their calmer thoughts, regret having given voice to them.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [S.21]: I would like to preface the few remarks I feel it incumbent on me to offer on this debate by saying that as far as politics are concerned, I am at opposite poles with hon. members on the Government side, but still our differences might easily be counted upon the fingers of one hand. Although I might be at opposite poles to members on the Government side with regard to politics I have always endeavoured to place before me since I have had the honour of being in Parliament this ideal, that Western Australia should come first and party next. Never perhaps in the history of the State has a Budget been introduced with brighter prospects from within, or a more anxious outlook from abroad. At the present time the position of Western Australia, so far as its outlook is concerned, is as bright as it ever was in the history of the State.

Mr. Allen: We all agree with that.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: And in discussing the Budget, no hon. member has referred to this fact. I remember in the olden days when my chief, Sir John Forrest, introduced his Budget speech, he always talked about the general prosperity of the country and the good rains we had had, and he even took credit to the Government in cases such as this, for the bountiful rains Providence had given us. Members, in discussing the Estimates, seem to have lost sight of the bright prospect before the State. Never before has

the outlook been brighter. Very often, in the past, we have had a fine season in the agricultural districts, while in the North we have been experiencing a drought, but to-day from Wyndham to Albany we have one of the finest seasons which has ever been experienced. The North-West, which was suffering under a drought, has had bountiful rains; the grass and herbage throughout that country is better than it has been perhaps in the history of the State. In the Eastern agricultural areas, which had been visited in the last 12 months with one of the worst droughts Western Australia has known, we have the finest season for agriculture which we could possibly wish. Although the farmers of this State have been hard hit and perhaps still have their backs against the wall, I am satisfied that when this rebuff came, they set their teeth and said they were going to carry through, and the farmers, I am confident, will carry through. I regret that the hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) should have raised the righteous wrath of the member for West Perth (Mr. Allen) in the remarks he made regarding the ladies of the Liberal League taking part in the reception to the returned soldiers.

Mr. Carpenter: I made no objection to that.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: That was purely and simply all that was done. Those ladies simply took up the cause because they were an organised body to a certain extent and were acquainted with each other, and I am confident there was no thought of politics in connection with the work they did. It was done in a spirit of kindness—

Mr. Allen: And patriotism.

Mr. Carpenter: Why not work through the Red Cross movement?

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: As an organised body they thought they were capable of carrying out this work better than perhaps unorganised persons. The Premier's speech was as usual a mass of figures which it was difficult to follow to a satisfactory conclusion. I have been accustomed all my life to doing things, and

have endeavoured, if possible, to show a good balance at the end of the year. This year, unfortunately, I have not been able to do so.

The Minister for Lands: You are not the only one.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The principal note of the Budget was the difficulty of obtaining money, and the fact was emphasised that the Estimates, even as presented, depended largely on obtaining funds in the future. This must naturally be the case. It is impossible under present conditions to estimate what will happen in the near future, and we can only live in hope, and have faith in being able to carry through the business relations of this State. In face of that, the remarkable thing is the Treasurer estimates that we shall receive £376,874 more revenue than we actually received last year. I hope the hon. gentleman will be right in his estimate, but I fear that under present conditions he will not be able to realise this increased amount. Still, I am not one who desires to take a pessimistic view of the position of this State, and I hope we shall be able to tide over the present trying time, and at the end of the financial year will be able to show an even better balance.

The Minister for Lands: I really think he has under-estimated the revenue.

The Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Out of 36 items embracing State revenue, a large number are purely trading concerns. I do not believe that these will give the results estimated.

Mr. Taylor: The railways are going to be the chief factor, according to the Budget speech.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I hope that with the fine season before us the railways will be able to do good business this year; I myself see nothing to prevent it. If we take these eight trading concerns, we find that the expenditure is estimated at £513,221 and the revenue at £515,300. Should these estimates be realised, the profit will be a little over £2,000, but if we are to allow for interest on capital, which is not taken into account, we shall be short of something like £20,000.

The Minister for Works: Those are only estimates of receipts and expenditure.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Nothing is being allowed for depreciation and nothing for interest on money.

The Minister for Works: Not in the Estimates.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Not in the Estimates as we have them placed before us. I do not think the country can look on this as a satisfactory position. The question of State enterprise is one on which I am at the opposite pole relatively to the Government. In my opinion it is against the interests of the State that the Government should engage in all these enterprises. I know perfectly well that I shall meet with the reply, 'We have the railways and other concerns which are run by the State.' But the railways are a monopoly, a State monopoly. I should be sorry if the State established monopolies in every line of business throughout Western Australia. I am opposed to State enterprise carried to that extent, because in my opinion the result is to sap the vitality of the people. It is the people that have to make Western Australia, and not the Government that have to make Western Australia. I myself think that the people should be given full scope for all their enterprise and all their energies. We want capital as well as people in this country; and capital, to my mind, should not be discouraged by the State's taking on enterprises which should be left to private individuals. For that reason I am opposed to the enterprises to which I have referred, and I think it would be much better in the interests of the State if all of them were left to private persons. We are told that we have a shipping combine—I know nothing about the shipping combine—and that therefore it is necessary for the Government to start steamers in order to break up the combine. I am always open to conviction. If hon. members or any one outside this House can satisfy me that there is a shipping combine either here or anywhere else in Australia that is vitally interfering with the best interests of this State, I would offer my services

to do everything possible to prevent it. No doubt it is a fine cry and sounds well to say. "There is the shipping combine: of course it is a most objectionable thing and we will endeavour to stop it in the interests of the primary producer." But I cannot find the shipping combine. Ever since I entered Parliament, nearly 25 years ago, I have heard of a meat ring. Up to the present time I have sought for this meat ring, and have not been able to find it.

Mr. Bolton: Not during the 25 years?

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: No. The meat ring must have been of vital importance to me as a grower of meat. At the time I speak of I was a squatter—now I am merely a cocky—and my bread and butter at that time depended upon the amount of meat and wool I produced. If there had been a meat ring against me, it would have been advantageous to me to know it; and I was always endeavouring to discover this meat ring. It is a peculiar thing that the meat ring bogey started here with the introduction of responsible Government. At the present time the meat ring appears to be dead, but we have other bogeys in the form of shipping combines and so forth which have been raised since to frighten the public of this State. We have another State enterprise in the Yandanooka estate farming and grazing proposition. I know the Minister for Agriculture takes a great interest in this enterprise, which I think is one of his pet hobbies at the present time. The revenue from this estate is estimated at £40,000 for the current year, and there is to be an expenditure of £25,371, the difference being £14,629. Here is an estate of something like 60,000 acres. I know it pretty well; I am speaking now of something that I do know of—a business I have been engaged in all my life. All I can say is that if the Government are going to make £14,629 out of the Yandanooka estate this year, they are very much cleverer than the rest of us. I have seen it stated that the profit from the wheat has been based on a return of 7s. per bushel. I hope the Minister for Agriculture has

not based this estimate on a return of 7s. per bushel.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I personally—and I am sure my friends on the cross benches are with me in this—only wish that the farmer could estimate his returns on a price of 7s. per bushel for wheat. I believe that even many hon. members opposite would be glad if the same thing occurred.

Mr. Willmott: It makes us smile to think of it.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: What we want in this Chamber is a distinct and open balance with regard to these State trading concerns, to show exactly how the profits are made out. When one comes to consider the amount that was paid for the Yandanooka property—I do not know how it was purchased, but probably it was paid for in bonds bearing 4 per cent. interest—

The Minister for Lands: That is so.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: In that case the interest would amount to something like £6,000 a year, and that amount has to be deducted from the estimated profit of £14,629, reducing it to about £8,000. If the Government can make a profit of £8,000 out of Yandanooka estate this year, all I can say is they will be doing a great deal better than the rest of us could do in the circumstances. I know full well that Yandanooka is a very fine property, but it is not all first class land. There is a good deal of second class land, as well as the first class land on the east side of the railway.

The Minister for Lands: More than that was made out of it by the original holders the year before it was bought.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Did the original holders satisfy the Government of that?

The Minister for Lands: The manager did.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I wonder the original holders sold. If I had a property of that sort, off which I could make all that money, I would not be so ready to part with it. My endeavour would be to keep it. As I have stated before in this House, what I object to is

that we are not furnished with the exact position as regards these concerns. I am not going to attack the Government and say that they are concealing things. The want of information appears to spring from departmental reasons. I object to these State trading concerns because they cannot be managed in the way an ordinary man manages his business. There is so much departmental tape and departmental ramification that one cannot get the returns as promptly as an ordinary individual would get them from his business. As I have already said, I do not think the present is a time when we should engage in party politics pure and simple any more than we can possibly help. When I said that, however, I added that it largely depended upon the attitude which the Government took up with regard to members of this Chamber. I also said that the responsibility remained with the Government, that the responsibility was not ours. If the Government would only take the Committee into their confidence, and if the Government would not enter into these large undertakings without information having been first supplied to the House when in session, I think it would be a great deal better for Ministers and a great deal better for the country at large. Lately we have had the Government entering into large expenditure in the purchase of a steamer whilst Parliament was sitting and without Parliament having any knowledge of the matter. I myself think that if the Assembly is to have control of the purse strings, members should know how money is going to be spent and when it is going to be spent. I will admit that there are times when Ministers should take upon their own shoulders the responsibility for expenditure. That may be so perhaps in a time of dire distress. Then Ministers might spend money and come to Parliament afterwards to ratify the expenditure. But the purchase of this steamer is not a case like the purchase of the Suez Canal shares by the late Lord Beaconsfield. The purchase of the steamer was an ordinary business transaction, although involving a con-

siderable expenditure for a State like Western Australia; and I think that Parliament should give authority for the expenditure of money in any direction such as that. These are the reasons why the Government find members on this side of the House so bitterly opposed to many of the transactions that take place from time to time. The leader of the Opposition was twitted by the last speaker with dealing in a way that he should not have done with the finances of the country. I must, however, remind the hon. member who objected that it is the duty of the leader of the Opposition to criticise the Administration of the day, and to endeavour to the best of his ability to place the country in possession of his views with regard to the state of the finances as it appears to him. For my part, I believe that that was done honestly and in good faith by the leader of the Opposition when delivering his speech on the Budget introduced by the Premier. It has been said that the policy of State enterprises adopted by the present Government has been endorsed by the people who returned them to power. I must admit that. The people sometimes lose their heads, and I think the people of this country lost their heads on the occasion when they gave the Government instructions to enter into these socialistic enterprises. When an election comes round, there are always one or two issues which are made to conceal all the many minor issues likely to be brought before the public. That is one of the tricks, if I may say so, in playing the game of party politics. When an election comes round, those who are leading a party look out for something that will overshadow everything else and blind the people to the many minor matters which collectively are perhaps of greater importance to the State than the large issue in which the people are induced to take a keener interest. At the last election, although the Government were returned with a majority, I am safe in saying that the people of this country did not entirely endorse the full policy of hon. members opposite from Alpha to Omega. A great

deal has been said about our sinking fund and the method of its investment. It has been suggested that the amount owing for this year should be invested in debentures, or other form of stock issued during the present financial year. The member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) has given his opinion that this would be illegal, but the member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs) rose in his place and pooh-poohed the opinion of my learned friend, the member for Canning. Personally I would prefer to take the opinion of the member for Canning as against that of the member for Subiaco on questions pertaining to law, and although it might be argued that it is not strictly necessary that our sinking fund should be invested in old stock, still no doubt the spirit of the Act dealing with the matter implies that it should be spent in old stock and not in new debentures. I would like the Premier to consult his financial advisers in London as to whether they think it would be wise for Western Australia to invest the sinking fund in new stock. I am quite certain that he will receive but one answer, namely, "No." To do that would make it appear to the world that we were in extremis financially, and that would certainly be detrimental to the interests of Western Australia. Again, the member for Subiaco informed the House that because we had a deficit last year, of necessity the sinking fund was being paid out of loan money. If a man has a deficit of £300 at the end of the year, he cannot say his liabilities have been paid by the money he borrowed from the bank. A certain amount has been paid, up to £300, but no more.

Mr. Taylor: The deficit is paid out of loan money.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Yes, but what I maintain is that the sinking fund is not paid out of loan money. Moreover, I consider it is contrary to the Act that it should be paid out of loan money.

Mr. Taylor: It is paid out of general revenue, but when the revenue does not meet the expenditure you must find it out of loan money.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: But you have paid this before you arrive at that posi-

tion. You have a revenue of, say, £5,000 and an expenditure of £5,500. The £5,000 has to be paid out of revenue; and the other £500 has to be borrowed. However, you do not borrow the money to pay the sinking fund, but to pay something else. I maintain it is contrary to the provisions of our Act to pay sinking fund out of loan. Section 10 of the Act reads—

Four years after the date of the issue of any inscribed stock or debentures, contributions to the sinking fund for the redemption thereof shall commence to accrue; and thereafter until the redemption of such inscribed stock or debentures, the Treasurer shall, in each half-year ending respectively on the thirty-first day of December and the thirtieth day of June, appropriate out of the general revenues and assets of the State a sum of at least five shillings per centum on the total nominal amount of all inscribed stock or debentures then in circulation.

That has to be taken out of the general revenue and assets of the State. I do not think that, by any stretch of the imagination, one could call loan money general revenue. I am certain it was intended in the Act that this sinking fund should be paid out of the ordinary revenue of the State, and it is paid out of that at the present time.

Mr. Taylor: As long as revenue lasts all moneys are paid out of revenue.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Yes, but this money has to be found out of revenue, and something else paid out of loan money.

Mr. Taylor: It is the intention of the Act, but it does not always work out.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: As I remarked, I would like the Government to consult their financial advisers at Home. I am certain they would be recommended to leave the matter of investment of our sinking fund as it stands. The Agent General's department has come in for a considerable amount of criticism during the debate. I feel some diffidence in expressing an opinion about this. But I must admit that, since I vacated that

office, the expenditure has gone up very extensively. For my part, I shall be pleased to help hon. members to come to a satisfactory and fair conclusion in regard to this matter.

Mr. Allen: What did the office cost during your term?

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I cannot say exactly, but I know the expenditure has gone up very considerably. An Agent General in London is thought more of than he is in Western Australia. In London the Agent General is looked upon as a representative of a State, as a man of some considerable importance, a man who is sent there to represent his country. He is honoured on that account, and it is due to the State that the office should be clothed with some dignity.

The Attorney General: It should command respect.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: It should be clothed with a proper dignity. It is necessary that it should first have a title. That may be considered nothing here, but it is something in the eyes of the people at the other end of the world. During my time, the South Australian Government decided to make their Agent General a general agent, and to call him that. He was there for about 12 months as a State agent, but after that he was back in his old position of Agent General. He had pointed out that it detracted from his position in London and led the British public to think that South Australia was perhaps not so important as some other Australian States. In those days people did not know as much about Australia as they do to-day. Even now it is wonderful the amount of ignorance in some quarters in regard to Australia. A large number of people in England do not even know that Australia is inhabited entirely by Britishers. They think it is a long way away, and there has not been in England that feeling which should obtain in regard to Australia. But at the time of the Boer war people began to realise that there was such a place as Australia, and to realise also what the country was capable of; and now, with Australia engaged in fighting the battles of the Empire in this present disastrous

war, Australia will come still more prominently before the people of Great Britain, who will realise more and more what Australia is, how thoroughly British and loyal it is, and how Australians are built up of the same precious blood as they are themselves. We are frequently asked why we on this side do not advance some constructive criticism. Hon. members know it is of no use asking members on this side for constructive criticism. Members on the Government side would never build with bricks made by the Opposition, no matter in what form those bricks were clothed, even though they were coated with silver or with gold. The incidence of our party politics prevents the Government of the day building with bricks which have been made by members of the Opposition. So when we are asked for constructive criticism, we are asked for something which I am certain Ministers would not follow out. Although I have not had the pleasure of seeing hon. members opposite sitting on this side of the House, still I was able to watch the party politics of the House from my peaceful occupation in the country, and to follow what took place in Parliament.

Mr. Taylor: Party feeling ran high then.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I thought to myself, "what is Parliament becoming?" I thought, "what violent people the members of this new party are."

Mr. Taylor: Wait till we get over there again.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I thought to myself, "what a terrible thing to be in office, and to be criticised by an Opposition such as that is; they never make bricks expecting the Government to use them." But I saw very often that they hurled bricks loaded with words against the Ministerial benches, and that it was endeavoured to make them burst like shells and destroy and remove hon. members from those benches. So, when hon. members opposite tackle members on this side with offering no constructive criticism, they know well that they are asking us to do something which I am

quite certain they would not be prepared to follow, even if we did it.

Mr. Foley: We had the warning from the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: We warned hon. members opposite not to get into pitfalls. We do not wish to see them do so. When we saw them going blindly along with the chance of tumbling into dire pitfalls, we endeavoured to clear the path for them.

The Attorney General: To give them a push and a kick.

Mr. Taylor: You are a sort of Opposition with a cow-catcher on.

Mr. Foley: Since the leader of the Opposition spoke, we have taken his advice and now we have a surplus for the month.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You require a magnifying glass to see it.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Hon. members, I think, would have been up in arms and perhaps would have indulged in an even more severe criticism under the present circumstances than the leader of the Opposition did on the occasion when he spoke a few nights ago.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And used more violent language.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I have no intention of delaying the House at this time! I should be glad to reach the items on the Estimates and to see Parliament close for the present as early as possible with decency and as soon as we can let the Government go. It is necessary, however, in the interests of the State that we should have, if we can possibly get it from the Government, certain information from them before Parliament rises. I hope the Government will give the House that information which we require and which the country needs so much at the present juncture.

The Attorney General: We give you all the information.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I think there ought to be less of these dealings which we hear about. I do not want to call them by the name of secret contracts but I think the Government have no right to enter upon the expenditure of huge sums

of money without coming before Parliament in order to get authority for such expenditure. That is what I object to. I think the Government ought not to enter upon this course if they desire to have friendly criticism instead of an adverse criticism from this side of the House. The Government have carried out their policy of State socialism. It is a part of their policy, no doubt, and no doubt they believe in it. I, in common with many other hon. members on this side of the House, disapprove of it. The time will come, I am certain, when the people in this country will say in no uncertain voice that they are opposed to social enterprises. I am of opinion that they have signally failed. The time has come for the Government of the day to hold their hands in this respect. If they do not do so it will soon be too late.

Mr. VERYARD (Leederville) [9.3]: The Premier in introducing the Estimates referred to the question of economy. It was satisfactory to find that the Premier has discovered that he needs to exercise economy. I hope that economy will be shown in a practical form in the ensuing year. In carrying out that economy the Premier also said that it must not be carried out so as to interfere with the efficiency of the civil servants. I think hon. members will agree with that policy. It should not be carried out in such a way as to affect the efficiency of the service of the country. At the same time I think it is a trouble for the Treasurer to find the money to pay the salaries, for very often these salaries are not fully earned. I am not accusing the civil servants or anyone else in the Government employ of being slackers. There are in many of the departments men who are not fully occupied and who are looking and waiting for work part of their time, and when the work does come along it frequently hangs very heavily on their hands and they do not earn their money. I cannot for a moment advise the Government to go in for a system of retrenchment just now. We have too many unemployed in our midst, and it would be better if the Government would try

and find employment for these people who are out of work. A glance at the Estimates for last year will show that they were not compiled in as careful a manner as they might have been. The actual receipts were £167,000 below the estimate. In looking over the list of over-estimates we find that there was a sum of £286,942 and the under-estimates total £119,000 odd, showing that something like a sum of £400,000 is wrong in the Estimates in that case. This proves that the Estimates have not had that consideration which they should have had. I think there is less excuse for these errors because of the fact that these Estimates were not introduced until very late in the year. In fact, I think nearly half the year had gone by when the Estimates were submitted to the House. There should not have been such disparity in the realisation of the Estimates as there appears to have been. The greatest loss for the year under consideration was the shortage of revenue in railway receipts, which represented an amount of £154,238. I think the Government should have been assured of the fact that the harvest would be a failure that year.

Mr. Foley: Who was to assure them of this?

Mr. VERYARD: Everyone knew it at the time the Estimates were under consideration.

Mr. Foley: Who should have assured the Government that we were not going to have a good harvest?

Mr. VERYARD: The fact was established by December last when the Estimates were under consideration. Everyone knew that the harvest was a failure. There should not have been an over-estimate or shortage of £154,000. With regard to works and industries, we find another under-estimate of £107,000 odd. Probably members are becoming accustomed to the fact that these industries are ever increasing in cost to the country. The Premier also stated, when speaking on the Budget some few weeks ago, that nearly all the Ministerial departments showed a decrease of expenditure provided for the coming year. In the de-

partment controlled by the Minister for Education we find, however, that there is an excess of something like £10,000. I congratulate the Minister for Education, and upon the fact that he has been able, notwithstanding the stringency of the finances of the State, to get an increase for his department this year. I feel that he will put the money to good use, and that it is needed.

Mr. Foley: How about your policy of charging the State school children 2s. and 1s. a week respectively?

Mr. VERYARD: It was not my policy.

Mr. Foley: You voted for it.

Mr. VERYARD: I did not.

Mr. Foley: You did.

Mr. VERYARD: I did not.

Mr. Foley: I have seen your vote in *Hansard*.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. VERYARD: I voted on a no-confidence motion against the Government moved by the then leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Foley: They made a party question of it and you voted for 2s. and 1s. respectively being charged, to the State school children. You were against free education.

Mr. VERYARD: I hope the Estimates have been prepared with more consideration this year than they were last year, and that the Colonial Treasurer will give us in some practical form the economies it is hoped to exercise during the coming year. The deputy leader of the Opposition has dwelt on the State trading concerns for some time. I do not intend to dwell upon them myself except to say that personally I do not believe in the Government interfering with private enterprises. I believe that private enterprises will provide all the requirements that are needed for this particular State. I think many hundreds of thousands of pounds have been expended on these enterprises which could have been spent in harbours and railways and other public utilities, and that the State would have benefited very much more than it has by this interference with the indus-

tries of the people of the State. The hon. member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) when speaking on the reduction of the salaries of civil servants, went on to say that members on the Government side of the House agreed to a reduction of their own salaries. I do not think the hon. member meant to infer that members on his side of the House were the only members of the House to agree to a reduction of their salaries. I think, however, the inference might be drawn outside that it was only agreed to by his side of the House.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I did not suggest that.

Mr. VERYARD: This meaning might have been conveyed by the remarks of the hon. member. I think members will recollect that a motion was supported by this side of the House for a reduction of £100 a year, about four times as much as the amount that we have subsequently decided to deprive ourselves of.

Mr. Taylor: Try again and see how you get on.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Members of all parties agreed to the request of the Government.

Mr. VERYARD: I have heard from one of the aborigines that the Aborigines Department had refused to distribute blankets as usual to our needy natives. Personally, I hope this is not true. If it is true, then I think it is a shame that these poor decrepit natives should be deprived of these comforts. With reference to the policy of the Commissioner of Railways, I think that so far as the men are concerned, it is a little mixed. I heard the other day of the case of a man working at the Midland Junction shops having been sacked.

Mr. Taylor: Because he was a Liberal?

Mr. VERYARD: I do not know that. I do not think he would be. He was employed at the works there, and, during the period when the men were working 44 hours a week and his income was accordingly reduced by the department, he desired to add a little more to his in-

come by working on Saturday afternoon or morning to make it up. This man has a wife and seven children to support, and I think he might be excused if he endeavoured to earn a little more outside the usual hours.

The Minister for Lands: Is not that the fellow who works as a scene shifter at all the shows which come here?

Mr. VERYARD: I do not know.

The Minister for Lands: I think you will find that he has been doing that.

Mr. VERYARD: I do not know anything about the man. I heard that he had a wife and seven children to support and that he was dismissed because he worked a little overtime on Saturdays.

Mr. Heitmann: It is a regulation asked for by the employees of the railways.

Mr. VERYARD: If the principle was adopted and was put into effect as outlined by the Labour party some years ago, that is the principle of one man one job, certainly the department would have done right in dismissing this man. But there is a clerk in the Railway Department who is earning £200 a year and whose wife is earning £400 a year in the city. It seems to me that one of these two should give up his or her position.

Mr. Smith: I do not see why a man should work when his wife is earning £400 a year.

Mr. VERYARD: That is a fact that I wish to draw attention to. There is another point in connection with the Railway Department I want to refer to. A friend of mine applied for a position as conductor on the tramways. He was told he was too old, and that they only employed young men. It is well known in the old country that young men have been dismissed so that they might enlist, and old men and women have been put on in their positions. While I would not ask that any young man should be dismissed from his employment here, I think when vacancies occur young men should not be engaged; they should be given the opportunity to enlist.

Mr. Taylor: What age was this man who was turned down?

Mr. VERYARD: About 45. The member for Leonora (Mr. Poley) when speaking on the Estimates, and when referring to the departmental work, said that supervision in the metropolitan area was indifferent, and that the supervisors had been pitchforked into their billets. I am not prepared to go to the same extent as the hon. member in saying that the supervisors are unfit for their work, but I do believe a good proportion are unfit for their positions. I know of one glaring case where work was prolonged, and then it was not carried out in a satisfactory manner. I am informed by contractors that work done by them is more strictly supervised than Government work. The contractors state that the object is to enable them to ask higher prices for their work. I hardly think it is fair that the department should decline to give estimates for the works they undertake. It seems to me that the only reason for refusing is that they are afraid they will not get value for the money which they pay to their workmen. A matter to which my attention was drawn recently was the charge made for excess water, and in regard to which I interviewed the department some time back. A charge was made for excess water, but the owner of the property was entitled to a proportion of it. The explanation given to him was that the department took the opportunity of reading the meters ten days before the end of December, and ten days after. In the case under review, the meter was read ten days before the end of December, and the consumer had a considerable balance due to his credit. But when the bill came in in the following year he found that he was charged for the use of all that water which he was actually entitled to use without having to pay excess. The charge for excess, however, was made and he got no rebate whatever. He should have been credited with the water which was still his due, but that was not done. I hope the Minister will see that the affairs of the department are carried on on more businesslike lines. I have some sympathy with the member for Leonora in his desire to permit prisoners to join

the expeditionary forces. There are a number of short-sentenced men who, show that it is their desire to reform, and many of them would prove themselves good soldiers if they were allowed the privilege to enlist. During last session I asked the Premier if he was aware of the overcrowded state of the Hospital for the Insane at Claremont, and as to whether it was his intention to provide further accommodation. The Premier stated that he was aware that the institution was overcrowded and that the question of providing further accommodation was under consideration. But I do not see that any sum has been placed on the Estimates this year. The institution is still overcrowded. In conclusion I desire briefly to enter my protest against the continuance of the carrying out of secret contracts. I think the House has a right to be consulted in matters of this description, and I hope in future the Government will give members an opportunity of discussing these matters.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [9.22]: I compliment the deputy leader of the Opposition on his optimistic utterances with regard to the State generally. I agree with him that if we have a bountiful season it will mean increased railway freights, and employment will be found for a great number of men at the wharves and everywhere else, while it will spell prosperity for the State generally.* With regard to the outlook on the Murchison, from Mullewa right up to the far North-West, everything in the garden looks lovely. Squatters are now bringing a lot of fat stock down from the North-West and they are increasing their herds. I am referring to this so as to be able to mention that a squatter in our district, Mr. Meehan, engaged a special train on the 27th of last month in order to bring 250 head of stock down. When he got to Mullewa the train had to be stopped and the cattle taken out, because 60 of them were down and 30 of them were dead. The owner of the stock made a great complaint regarding the stock on the journey down, and I think it is up to the Government to assist this gentleman, who has done so much pioneering work, to

get his stock to market without so much injury being done to them. Our train service from Meekatharra is very unsatisfactory. The train is a mixed one, in fact it is practically a stock train. There has not been an occasion lately when this train has not carried stock. I think the Government should separate the passenger from the stock trains, and also pay some attention to the comforts of the passengers, who have to travel on that line. The promise which was made before the Wongan Hills line was completed has not been carried out in regard to comforts. One leaves here at 3.35 p.m. on Monday, and it takes 34 hours to complete the journey to the Murchison, and it is not possible to get refreshments until one leaves Yalgoo, while on coming down from Meekatharra, it is not possible to get anything from eleven o'clock at night until the train arrives at Buntine except a cup of tea. The trains, too, are invariably crowded. Every train on which I have travelled lately has been quite full. With regard to the general Estimates, I am in accord with the suggestions which have been made in the direction of effecting economy. So far as the Agent General's office is concerned, it is nearly time that this office was amalgamated with that of the High Commissioner. Our Agent General's office is costing us too much at the present time, especially as immigration is practically suspended. Another matter referred to by some hon. members was with regard to the office of the Governor. I am one of those who thought that Federation would mean the abolition of the office of Governor. There is no reason at all why the duties attached to the office should not be performed by the Chief Justice. Another matter on which I think economies could be effected is in regard to the Savings Bank. The State Savings Bank, I think, could well be amalgamated with the Savings Bank of the Commonwealth, on lines such as those suggested by the Prime Minister at a Premiers' conference. The State in this way would effect a considerable economy. At the present time we see State and Commonwealth banks being conducted side by side. I

am confident that if the State does not take action in regard to this the people will act for themselves. While the depositors in the Commonwealth Savings Bank are on the increase those in the State Savings Bank are on the decrease. Another matter is the proclamation issued by the Commonwealth to the effect that the Commonwealth intends to take charge of all base metals, wolfram, scheelite, and molybdenite. The Commonwealth Government have entered into an agreement with the Imperial Government for a period of 12 months to acquire for the Imperial Government all wolfram, scheelite, and molybdenite produced in Australia. For the purpose of the arrangement the Government have appointed Messrs. Dalgety & Co. as their agents. Agencies are to be established at Wolfram Camp, Banford, Cairns, Townsville, Port Darwin, Melbourne, and Sydney. What I have to complain of is that no reference is made to Western Australia. Why there should not be an agency at Fremantle so as to give the prospector an opportunity of disposing of his ore there instead of having to pay freight to Sydney or Melbourne? It is an absolute injustice to Western Australia. Again, why should this matter be put in the hands of Dalgety & Co., why not have it done through the Mines Department? The department could do similar to what they are doing in regard to copper ore. They will take charge of copper ore, advance on it, and send it away for the prospector free of commission. In this instance, the miner will pay Dalgety & Co. commission and will also pay commission to the seller. Again, I think the prospector should be assisted to bridge the gap between the making of his find and the time when the new field is sufficiently developed to warrant the erection of a crushing mill. I have talked this matter over with the State mining engineer, Mr. Montgomery, and I agree with him that whenever a new field springs up the State should choose a battery site and get the prospector to cart his stone close to that site. Then the Government could appoint a general sampler and assayer. Suppose the stuff

were worth 15 pennyweights, equal to £3; the Government could advance up to 30s. That would give the prospector the necessary assistance while the field was developing to a producing stage. Many prospectors go to a new field and are successful in finding a reef, but have no chance of hanging out until the field is sufficiently developed to warrant the erection of a mill. If the Government could come in and assist the prospector by advancing on the ore until a mill was erected it would be of immense assistance to the industry. Even if the only mill erected was a private one, the Government could make arrangements with the owner to treat the stone. It would mean that the prospector could go out much longer distances. At present the chief trouble with the prospector is the question of how he is going to get anything treated, even if he finds something worth having. At the Phillips River the Government have given assistance to the prospector and have advanced a considerable sum against the copper. Now I understand they are advancing only on development work. In the gold-mining industry the Government could only advance on development work. When there were 2,000 or 3,000 or 4,000 tons at grass the Government could erect a mill for the treatment of the stuff, and the prospector could repay the money advanced, and pay also for the treatment. The Government would have nothing to lose, and it would be of great assistance to the prospector. It would probably be the means of opening up new fields which would absorb a large number of unemployed. When the war is over we will require some such outlet for the unemployed. In conclusion I hope these matters will commend themselves to the Minister for Mines. They are deserving of every consideration. A good deal of wolfram is to be found outside of Cue, and a good deal of scheelite and molybdenite in the Yalgoo district. I think the State should step in and see if we cannot save these commission fees to be paid to Dalgety & Co., and also see that the prospector can get rid of his ore at Fremantle instead of having to send it to Sydney or Melbourne.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [9.38]: The criticism on the Budget delivered by the Treasurer has been somewhat different from that to which we have been accustomed. On this occasion members have seized the opportunity of dealing with the various departments. This is usually done on the discussion of these departments. I trust that on this occasion members will realise that we have had the discussion on the departments and will not subject us to the serious delay which must occur if we are to have a repetition of the speeches on the various departments. The general expression of opinion of hon. members is in accordance with the desires of the Government as expressed by the Treasurer, namely that we must practice economy. It is generally recognised in this time of stress that we must look around and save all we possibly can. But it is so very difficult for members to arrive at any definite understanding on any particular item. It is almost impossible to get unanimity in regard to where economies should start. As a matter of fact the Government have already practised economies in regard to administration in various ways, but we have found when this is done that we have select committees in another place investigating the justification for the economy, and in a number of cases the saving we made by the retrenchment of a particular officer has been discounted by the cost of the consequent select committee; so the Government are struggling to effect economies while another place is building up the cost of administration. Only the other night, in this Chamber, speaking of economies effected in the Lands Department the member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) said it was perfectly obvious that anyone would have effected those economies which I have effected during the last month or two; yet we had a motion by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), supported by various members of the Opposition, condemning that action. In other words we have members preaching economy, and immediately the Government give a lead in that regard members are ready to condemn them for having done so. But the most interest-

ing speech I have listened to to-night was undoubtedly the pessimistic wail we had from the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith). It was a most interesting speech, inasmuch as he kept contradicting himself as he proceeded. He started off by condemning any suggestion of wholesale economy in the way of retrenchment. He said evidently we were going to have a black Wednesday, or something of that description, and he deprecated that in the strongest terms of which he was capable. Then, a little while afterwards, he was holding forth on the reckless expenditure of the Government, saying that we were expending too much and should not go on with that expenditure. In the one breath he was declaring against economies because they were likely to bring about a state of affairs not in the best interests of the community, and in the next breath he said "Do not go on spending." It is impossible to please an hon. member who takes up that attitude. Then, touching upon the trading concerns, he said, "Scrap all those showing a loss", and he went on to review general revenue and said, "Where you are making a profit, reduce it." In other words, when making a loss we are to cut it, and when making a profit we are to reduce it. I would like to know where we would land if we were to follow the policy the hon. member advocates. It would bring ruin to any State. However, it is impossible to please an hon. member who advocates such a policy. His speech was so contradictory that one could see he was not serious. As already pointed out by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) the hon. member was evidently talking for talking sake, and words were leading him anywhere, while his figures were proving nothing. Let us have a look at the economies suggested. It is most remarkable that all members have failed to look close here at home.

Mr. Thomas: Do not forget the suggested economy of cutting off the telephone.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was remarking that hon. members failed to get close home when they were trying to find means by which economy should

be effected. I have not heard one hon. member refer to the increased cost that has to be found in regard to the running of Parliament House itself. It is a remarkable thing that no reference has been made to it. I suggest respectfully that the House should just request the member for York (Mr. Griffiths), who is a whale for figures it seems, to investigate this matter and see whether it is not a fact that we have undue expenditure in regard to the running of Parliament, as compared with the cost of Parliament in previous years. I would like to say that if hon. members want to get accuracy and fairness in regard to the matter I would rather that the request was made to the hon. member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) to take that job on. We find absolute unanimity amongst speakers in that they request economies in connection with concerns of which they have practically no knowledge. They fail, however, to see that which is right before their doors, and talk glibly as to the economies possible in connection with the Agent General's office, of which they have no local knowledge. But things on which they might gain some local knowledge they know nothing about, and in cases where they have an opportunity of acquiring knowledge at their very door, they fail to see the economies that might be effected. An attack has been made upon the Agent General's office. It is remarkable that members on the other side of the House, and members of various Parliaments who have visited the old country, have come back with glowing accounts of the work which has been done in the office of the Agent General. They have all said "Do not reduce expenditure, but increase it, so that the good work being done by Sir Newton Moore may be continued, for it is work of which the State should have more." The statement has been made by members on both sides of the Chamber that the Government should act more liberally in regard to the amount made available for the Agent General's office. When we find, as we have found in this debate, that an attack is made

on that very office, which members know least about, it is a remarkable thing. I want now to deal with another subject, and try to take some of the main points made by the leader of the Opposition. His speech was largely a repetition of what we have had from year to year from that hon. member. As a matter of fact, as one hon. member has said, we have had it ten times, three times on the Address-in-reply and three times in regard to the Budget address.

Mr. Smith: You cannot have too much of a good thing.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It has this one redeeming feature, that while it becomes wearisome to members of this House, it is of the greatest assistance to members of the Press, the reporters who have to report him. All they have to do is to turn up his previous speech, make one or two slight alterations, and then it is ready for re-hashing. Let us take some of the criticisms which we have had from him in regard to our State trading concerns, and other matters. He said we had spent about three millions more money in 1915 than had been spent when he was in office in 1911.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I see you cut that down to a million the other night.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will deal with that. The leader of the Opposition made up the item thus—£1,972,000 from revenue, and £1,000,000 from loan, making roughly in round figures the three millions which he quoted. It does not necessarily follow that an increased expenditure is evidence of extravagance. Before one can arrive at any definite decision as to whether increased expenditure is waste or not, one must analyse that expenditure to see where the money has gone. If the expenditure has brought in more revenue, then the expenditure is wise. Particularly is this so if one's expenditure is in the direction of works of a reproductive nature. Let us take the first item quoted by the leader of the Opposition, namely, £1,972,000. Let us see how these figures are made up. In the first place, we find that on railways and tramways we spent in 1914 the sum of

£347,934, which is an excess on the 1911 expenditure. It must be remembered that on a item such as railways and tramways—

Mr. Smith: You did not have tramways in 1911.

The Minister for Mines: That is for the critics to take into account.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: From the increased assets we are increasing our revenue, and that is why I want to put it on record, so that hon. members may know how the increased expenditure has been made up.

Mr. Taylor: We always had trams.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There were always a few trams in the North-West. The increases on the figures I have quoted, over £300,000, are made up largely from railway receipts. Hon. members must remember that we have extended the railway system to an enormous degree, consequently, while our expenditure has increased on these items, our revenue has also increased. Consequently, when we are quoting figures, as the hon. member did, we want to ascertain where the expenditure is going, and £300,000 odd has gone in railways and tramways. On State steamers our expenditure was £109,117, on implement works it was £142,299; on brickworks it was £2,754; on quarries £11,388; on ferries £4,574, and on State dairies £3,548. These are State trading concerns which show an increase in expenditure on the year 1911. In water supply and sewerage there has been an increase, indeed an enormous expenditure of £191,800. It must be remembered that in 1911 little or nothing was done in regard to the sewerage system in the metropolitan area, whereas to-day, generally speaking, the Perth and Fremantle sewerage system is drawing to completion. This has been effected during the term of office of the present Government, and could not have been done without increasing the expenditure. On the other hand, we have increased the revenue. On the State sawmills there has been an expenditure of £411,993; on the meat stalls £30,449; on fish supplies £6,255, and on the Yandanooka estate

£29,516. These are what may be called business or trading concerns, or payment for services rendered, and show an increased expenditure of £1,291,627. These are the figures of the business concerns. It is very interesting to find how the expenditure has increased on the ordinary functions of Government. Hon. members will find by a perusal of the Estimates, that the following figures disclose exactly where that increase has taken place.

Mr. Taylor: You are taking the one year.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am taking the year 1915 as against that for 1911. Education has increased by no less a sum than £110,123. We have an increase in the salaries of school teachers, it must be borne in mind. When the leader of the Opposition was in charge he was paying something like a minimum of £80 per annum, which is a small salary to ask anyone to live on in this fair country of ours. This minimum has now been increased to £110 per annum, so we have an increased expenditure, which I venture to assert no one but the leader of the Opposition could take exception to. Even his followers, the Liberals as they are called, would never condemn an increase of that description. In regard to the police, there has been an increase of £15,194, which is largely due again to the increase in salaries and to the extension of police protection owing to the general development of the State. In the Charities Department, there has been an increase of £48,102. The charity increase has been large. It must be remembered that the hon. gentlemen who were in office were paying widows who happened to have the misfortune of having families to rear, half-a-crown per head, whereas to-day we are paying for each child 7s. per head, and we are not ashamed of it. We say it is a legitimate form of expenditure, and we are proud of the fact that the State is paying so much to those who have families to rear. The people of the State will endorse, and they cannot help doing so, a policy of that description. On the public health, our increase has been £23,385. Again,

this is due to our having given greater facilities and greater protection to our people. On hospitals, there has also been an increase, and there has been a general increase too in the assistance given to the public from the health point of view. This has been increased enormously during the term of office of the present Government. There has been an increased expenditure in connection with the Hospital for the Insane, etc., of £17,134. This is due to a very large extent to the increase in salaries. The salaries were altogether too low. There has also been the introduction of the eight hours' system. On the University the sum of £15,500 has been spent. The hon. member endorsed this progress in our educational system, but he did not meet the payments. That was a responsibility which the present Government had to take over, and we have been providing that sum of money since we have been in power. Last year we spent £13,500 under that head as compared with nothing for the year 1911. On the land improvement fund £25,000 was spent. That was an expenditure which the hon. member did not have to meet. The Bill had not passed to provide for land improvement, and I dealt with the Land Act Amendment Bill the other night. Pensions, including judges', have increased by £4,745. Hon. members know that we have got more judges to pension than we had in 1911. The tramways purchase, included in which is an amount which is paid back to the municipalities under the three per cent. allowance, shows an increase of £3,411. That was taken over by the Government when they bought the trams and was an expenditure which the hon. gentleman did not have to bear. The Parliamentary increase represented a sum of £5,467. The hon. member had passed the Bill for the increase, but it did not come into operation until after the election of 1911. Consequently, we had to contribute more under that head than had been contributed previously. The interest and sinking fund, owing to the increased loan expenditure and railway construction and the State enterprises, etc., increased by £500,416. These

items alone, taking the increased expenditure on trading or business concerns, and other ordinary functions of Government, I have referred to, account for over £2,058,185. One can add to that that we had to provide a large increase owing to the reclassification of the public service. The reclassification had been coming on in 1911, but the money had to be found by this Government, but under that head the expenditure has been largely increased. The hon. member quoted figures to the amount of £1,972,000 whereas my figures, when the reclassification of the public service is included, run into considerably over £2,058,000. That indicates that the increased expenditure is due to the expansion of a lot of the functions of the State, and also due to increased wages and salaries paid to those who were underpaid before the Government took office. In regard to the increased payments to the civil service and to the wages men, that was the cry at the last general elections. We stated definitely that we were going to increase the minimum wage, and that school teachers' salaries were going to be increased and that we were favourable to increases for the civil service. Our policy was endorsed by the people and we simply carried it into effect. I have dealt with the revenue expenditure. The hon. gentleman stated that in addition we spent a million more from loan funds in 1915 than he did in 1911. Our expenditure is given as follows:—On water supplies in agricultural districts, we spent £21,962 more than the hon. gentleman spent. Everybody knows well why we spent that amount; everybody knows that the country was crying out for an improved water supply, and that from one end of the agricultural belt to the other this Government was eulogised for the way in which the question was tackled. The country was in a deplorable condition in 1911 owing to the want of an adequate water supply, and this Government in spending money on necessary works did so expeditiously. The position to-day is that the numerous dams and wells are all full and we can look forward to having a good supply of water for years to come.

The expenditure has been amply repaid by the water conservation which has taken place during this winter. The increased amount spent by way of Agricultural Bank advances runs into £271,611 and assistance to settlers runs into £602,110. In other words out of the one million increase which we expended in 1915 those three items in the interests of the agricultural industry total £895,683.

Mr. Willmott: Does that include timber and mining?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. Let us now take some of the other increases. On Metropolitan water supply and sewerage we spent £68,081. I have already stated that we tackled water supply and sewerage in a definite manner, and it is now practically completed, but we were not able to do that without spending money, and we have now a good asset to show for it, and as has been pointed out the system is on a paying basis to-day. In connection with the Ravensthorpe smelters the advances on ore amounted to £60,000. Hon. members will not object to that advance made against ore which we have as an asset. It is a good business proposition and was entered into by my colleague the Minister for Mines. The expenditure on workers' homes is new and it ran into £97,500. I have heard some criticism in regard to the policy of the erection of workers' homes, but as the policy was endorsed by the people at the last elections it is no use taking us to task for doing that which, we claim we had a mandate to do.

Mr. Willmott: You have been a bit too lavish, that is the only thing.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member, like many others, seems to imagine that a working man has no right to have a comfortable and decent cottage.

Mr. Willmott: There is a difference between comfort and decency and a palatial residence.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I would appeal to the leader of the Country party not to take any notice of what is said by the man in the street but to

go to West Subiaco and to Cottesloe Beach and see for himself whether the cottages are more than a worker in this country is justified in expecting. Again, if a man is able to pay, what right have we to take exception to the class of house which he builds. There are a few who have got into arrears owing to their being thrown out of employment, but when the details are made known hon. members will be surprised at the number who have kept up their payments. There is an item of £55,000 for the purchase of plant. That was a suspense account during the term of office of the leader of the Opposition and consequently was not shown in the expenditure. We brought it directly under loan expenditure, abolished the suspense account and charged the use of the plant to any particular work that was going on. The result is an increased expenditure of £55,000. The assistance thus given to the agricultural industry runs into a total of £1,176,264 in addition to the amount expended by the leader of the Opposition when he was in charge of the treasury. If we deduct those special and new items, that is, the new items owing to the difference in the policy of the two administrations, it will be found that we actually reduced the expenditure by £176,000 as compared with 1911. When all this criticism is levelled against the expenditure of the Government, it is only fair to ask hon. members opposite to put their fingers on those items they object to. I would like to ask whether there is any opposition to the assistance we have rendered to the agricultural industry. I venture the opinion that from all sides there will be general approval of the Government's policy in regard to that great industry. There cannot be any objection to the assistance given to the State smelters at Ravenshorpe where we supported an industry that was lagging for want of encouragement, and where a large number of men are now employed, and where the Government are getting a good return for the money invested. In regard to the workers' homes there cannot be any objection to them. The leader of the Opposition compared the four years ended

in 1911 with the four years ended in 1915. Again, I want to show how the expenditure has increased, and leave it to hon. members to judge as to whether the increased expenditure has been wise or otherwise. Let us analyse the expenditure. The hon. gentleman stated that from revenue we had expended six millions more in four years than he had expended in the previous four years. Hon. members can judge for themselves as to the wisdom of the expenditure. On railways and tramways we spent £1,752,069 more than the hon. member did. That is purely due to expansion of business. On water supply the increase was £574,300, on State implement works £226,871, on brick works £2,750, on quarries £20,202, on ferries £36,403, on the dairy farm £5,935, on sawmills £497,414, on meat stalls £61,901, on fish supply £9,980, on Yandanooka estate £60,403, on State hotels £36,994, on State steamers £293,277, on refrigerating works etc. £42,516. There we have an increase on these business concerns in four years of £3,401,917. They are purely business concerns. Let us review the general expenditure. On Medical and Health our increase was £51,739, on Education we spent £393,645 more than the hon. gentleman did in the four previous years, on Police £37,429, and on Charities £97,850.

Mr. Heitmann: Charities are not closely watched.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They are being closely watched at the present time, but we would be glad, if hon. members knowing of impositions, informed us of the circumstances.

Mr. Heitmann: They should make closer inquiries.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is done and officers are appointed to see that the State's interests are guarded, while a measure of consideration is extended to those in distress. On Lunacy we spent £57,319, on the University £46,589, on the Land Improvement fund £55,450, on Pensions (including judges) £13,130, on Tramways Purchase Act £6,861, on Parliamentary £42,523, and Public works and buildings £307,634. That is largely due to the agricultural

expansion. Those public buildings are court houses and so forth, erected in various parts of the agricultural districts. The interest and sinking fund shows an increase of £1,331,280. The total of these items I have referred to is £2,359,296, or a total, with the general trading or business concerns, plus the ordinary functions of Government to which I have referred, also in the comparison of the single year, taken again in the four years, of £5,761,213, or in round figures they balance the six millions referred to by the hon. gentleman. I would ask hon. members to review those figures and sit down and see what items they would reduce, so that they may point out to the Government where economies can be effected.

Mr. Heitmann: All the same, on your showing it is a hopeless proposition to attempt to square the finances in the near future.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member is taking a pessimistic view. I am convinced the Treasurer has underestimated the amount of revenue he will receive this year. I do not think we fully appreciate the bountiful harvest we are to get. I am rather proud of the fact that we will bring right home to the people of the State exactly what the agricultural industry means to the State. I do not think hon. members have grown as fast as the industry has grown. I would be the last not to fully appreciate the value the State has obtained from the mining industry. It made the agricultural industry what it is to-day, because it enabled Parliament, with the money from the mining industry, to assist the agricultural industry to the extent we have done. But we have to bear in mind that while the mining industry is buoyant to-day, in consequence largely of the policy of the present Government, the fact remains that the big industry to-day is undoubtedly the agricultural industry. The result of this year's harvest will bring that home to the people, who will appreciate the fact that, while the Government have put an enormous amount

of money into that industry, the money was wisely invested.

Mr. James Gardiner: Many men who made their money on the mines have gone into agriculture.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. Heitmann: You should have a fair idea of what we are going to receive from the harvest.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It must be remembered that when the revenue figures were prepared we were not in possession of all the information we have to-day. Personally, I did not take such an optimistic view then as I have done since making a couple or three trips through the country. There were at that time some rather doubtful expressions of opinion in regard to the possibilities of the harvest, and the Government were inclined to take a limited view of what we were to expect; but the position has changed altogether, and I am satisfied to-day that the harvest will be far greater than I anticipated when we were discussing the revenue we were likely to receive as the result of the harvest. I have given hon. members the figures making up the six millions increase during our four years. Then the hon. gentleman went on to say that in addition we had spent £6,800,000 from loan funds. We have to analyse those figures and find out where the excess went to. We find that on Agricultural Bank advances we spent more than hon. members opposite by £1,038,058. It was an enormous amount of money to put into the industry, but it has been absolutely justified by this year's results.

Mr. James Gardiner: That was advanced to the bank from loan funds?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, I am dealing with loan funds. Up to 1911 I do not think they had advanced to the bank from loan funds, because they were drawing principally from the Savings Bank. The assistance to settlers runs into £602,110, and development of agriculture amounts to £323,300. That is, of course, development outside the Agricultural Bank; for instance, the de-

velopment of the South-West all comes out of this vote, and during the years, as compared with the previous four years, we have spent £323,300. On water supplies in agricultural districts £126,060 has been spent. So out of the £6,800,000, a total of £4,272,528 has gone into the agricultural industry. We frequently hear people stating that the present Government have done nothing in regard to agricultural railway construction. They seem to have a disregard for the fact that these untruths are being recorded against them. I trust they will not be taken to task for the number of untruths they tell to the extent we were led to expect when we were at our mothers' knees, because I would not like to see hon. members burnt up for the political lies they have told in regard to agricultural railway construction. For the amount expended by our friends opposite on agricultural railways we have expended £2,183,000 more than they spent in the four years previous to our taking office. In other words, in the development of agriculture, in assistance to the agricultural industry, and in the building of agricultural railways, out of this £6,800,000 no less an amount than £4,272,528 has gone into that great industry. Consequently, when hon. members opposite are criticising they should realise where the money went. I think that, instead of being condemned for it, we should be eulogised for the broad view we have taken in regard to that great industry.

The Minister for Mines: Now are we the enemies of the farmers, as the *Daily News* say we are?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: However, that makes only four million odd and we have to account for £6,800,000. Again, we find that in water supply and sewerage we spent £516,386 more than our friends opposite. On tramways and power houses we have spent £755,834, on workers' homes £525,500, and on the development of goldfields, over and above what our friends spent we have spent £121,936. The trading concerns, taking the various works, the steamers, milk sup-

plies, sawmills, ferries, brickyards, hotels, quarries and the like, on these we have spent £467,402, or less than £500,000; plant and stock £55,000, public works and buildings £195,933; or a total of £6,910,519. The figures quoted by the leader of the Opposition were £6,800,000. So we have items accounting for £6,910,519, and four million odd went into the agricultural industry. It is remarkable that the only item attacked in regard to the increased expenditure of £6,900,000 is that covering the trading concerns, and it shows the gross exaggeration the expenditure has been subjected to. We have only to take the member for Perth, representing the principal constituency in the State. He said there were 14 millions and mostly all of it had gone into the trading concerns. As a matter of fact the item does not run into £500,000. Hon. members have got it at the back of their heads that we have spent millions on these trading concerns, whereas the total is less than £500,000. Of the £6,500,000 over and above what they spent they can single out only £500,000 and they reckon the Government ought to be condemned on that score.

Mr. Heitmann: They include the tramways.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The tramway purchase was part of the Government policy, and was endorsed by Parliament.

Mr. Heitmann: But you are not including that in the £500,000.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, nor the railways. I am taking the trading concerns usually referred to as such.

Mr. Heitmann: Did not the sawmills cost something like £500,000?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. I was then giving you the revenue expenditure on it. The total on the whole of these items amounts to £467,402. The only items for which we have been taken to task, namely, these trading concerns, represent a difference in policy between those in opposition and members on this side. We are satisfied that that policy is the sanest for the benefit of the people. There is a difference of opinion on that.

Hon. members opposite take the greater view of the claims of private enterprise and vested interests. That is where we differ. Our first consideration is that we require to give the people facilities for competing against combinations and honourable understandings, without those restrictions that were in existence previous to our policy being brought into operation. Everyone of the functions we entered into was entered into because of some little combination or honourable understanding that prevented the people getting a fair return for their money. Take our sawmills. Has not everybody heard of the timber combine and the way the combine can operate and inflate the prices of timber far beyond justification? Consequently where it is recognised that a combine exists it is the State's duty to step in and protect the people. When we went in for State sawmills we did so knowing full well that we were going to compete against the combination and that the result of our competition would be to get a better return. We knew that we would have to fight, but we were satisfied that we must eventually prevail, and that the people of this State would reap the benefit.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Has it given a single stick of timber cheaper to the people of this State?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Undoubtedly.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nothing of the sort.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is not the slightest doubt that it has. We could give many illustrations where some small timber yards could not get jarrah at all until they got it from the State sawmills. They would have been compelled to close up if we had not come to their rescue. That is one of the wild statements that the hon. member makes.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are you sending it away?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are sending it all over the world, and if it were not for the hon. member's organisation we would be sending more away.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I have no organisation.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are sending timber to various parts of the world, and we are putting it on the market here and keeping the market steady, which would not be the case but for our competition.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nothing of the sort; you are not putting it on the market here.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Undoubtedly the brick industry was subject to a combination, and we were paying an undue price for bricks. When we started our workers' homes we called tenders for the supply of a million bricks in order to get in a large quantity so that we could supply bricks for people building under the scheme at a reasonable price, but we failed. Even by calling for such a large order, we could not get anything like a fair deal from the combination that undoubtedly existed.

Mr. Wansbrough: Are you getting your bricks any cheaper to-day?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Undoubtedly bricks are down in value by £1 a thousand, if not more, and the combination have reduced their prices since the State brickworks entered the market.

The Minister for Mines: There is no argument about that. There are the figures.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are satisfied to allow them to continue. As long as our State operations are bringing down the private concerns to a reasonable limit, we are gaining our object. We are not looking to run our own works at a big profit; we want to give the return to the people. If the hon. member makes inquiries from any of the contractors in Perth, he will find a huge difference in the price of bricks compared with what it was 12 months ago, and what is more, it is now possible to get a brick of better quality than before. Previously they said, "There are the bricks; take them. If you do not like them, go without." To-day they have to put in a good article, or the State would get the business. We know this applies also in connection with

ferries. Previous to the Government taking them over, there were two companies operating across the river and, because of the competition between them, the fares charged were reasonable, but just before the Christmas holidays of 1911, the bigger company bought the other out and immediately up went the fares. Consequently, the people of South Perth appealed to the Government to protect them, and we said that unless a fair thing was done, we would municipalise or nationalise the ferry service, and as a result of the negotiations we nationalised the service. Take the milk supply, or any of the functions we have entered into, there was absolute justification from the people's point of view for so doing.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Will you explain where you are losing the money on the venture?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not prepared to admit that we are losing money. It is true that trade has fallen off, which is due to the fact that people are going largely to the Blackboy Hill camp instead of to the Zoo. Unfortunately we have that competition, but it is only for a time. Because of the falling-off in the trade, however, our receipts have declined, and for the present month we shall show a loss. When the Christmas trade comes along, no doubt the receipts will increase.

The Minister for Mines: What we are losing on the ferries we are getting on the railways.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is another interesting return I have had prepared in order to find out, apart from our trading concerns, how our revenue receipts compare with those of 1911. The hon. member always refers to the fact that we have had a large increase of revenue, and that although we have that increase of revenue we still show a deficit. Without going into the details of it or explaining it at all, he draws the deduction that because of the increased revenue there must not be increased expenditure, and we ought to wipe out the deficiency and make a profit on the operations of the State functions. As a matter

of fact, if we take out the trading concerns already referred to, from which we get a certain amount of revenue, and take the revenue to-day as compared with 1911, we find that there is a decrease in the actual receipts.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, service for service.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. On the land tax, income tax, dividend duty, totalisator, stamp duty, probate duty, licenses, land revenue, mining revenue, State batteries, harbour dues, Royal Mint, other public works and services, reimbursements in aid, fees of public offices, miscellaneous and liquors, the hon. member when in office received £1,265,389, and we received £1,236,864. I have excluded the interest we received from the Agricultural Bank, because the hon. member did not put that into his revenue, as he did not receive any and did not expend from loan funds, which were taken from the Savings Bank in his time, and I have deducted the income from the workers' homes—

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is loan funds all the same.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That shows what the hon. gentleman knows about the Treasury. He wants to show that because he got the money from the Savings Bank he got the interest. If he did not get it from general loan fund, he had to find the interest for it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: If you would not twist and tie yourself up so much it would be better.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member is doing the twisting. He displayed his ignorance by saying the interest would be the same whether we got the money from loan funds or from the Savings Bank. The fact is that we received £28,525 less from general revenue than the hon. gentleman received.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are forgetting the railways—a very big item.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is true that on all our railways and from trading concerns we have increased revenue. But surely the hon. gentleman would not say that after expending the enormous sum of two millions odd on in-

creased railway construction, as compared with what he did, we should receive no more revenue. It would be a beautiful state of affairs if, after going on with railway construction as we have done, we did not increase our revenue. I do not know where we should land if such were the case. The increased railway construction, the taking over of the tramways, and our trading concerns have increased our revenue, but taking the items outside trading concerns, we have received less than the hon. gentleman did. Evidently he knew it, judging by the way he is squirming because I am bringing it under the notice of the House.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I am not squirming. You are using a few figures to suit your own case.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is another item to which the hon. member forgot to draw attention. He did not show the different methods of the present Government compared with his time, which accounts for an increase in revenue and a proportionate increase in expenditure. In the hon. gentleman's time in connection with water supplies, he brought to credit only the surplus over expenditure, that is, he took the revenue and the expenditure and the surplus was brought to account in consolidated revenue. When we amalgamated all the water supplies, we brought to revenue the whole of the revenue and took into account the whole of the expenditure, and while that has necessarily inflated the amount of revenue received it has also increased the expenditure and it has not increased the profit—though the profit has increased—to the extent that the hon. gentleman would lead us to believe. In 1910-11 they brought the net receipts on account to £156,931 and the gross receipts for 1914-15 to £404,501. There alone in round figures we have got close on £300,000 increase in revenue. It is only a book entry; it is not actual cash received in excess.

Mr. James Gardiner: What was your nett?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot say. The nett this year would

not be a great deal; we were not receiving much.

Mr. James Gardiner: After taking your gross revenue and debiting yourself with your revenue, what was your nett as against £156,000?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member could get that from the Estimates. I cannot say exactly what it would be. Here is another interesting fact. Taking the business and trading concerns, including the railways and tramways, the total increased expenditure as compared with 1910-11 is £1,291,627. Now the revenue for the same period from the same functions ran into £1,100,753, or a greater expenditure of £190,874. That has been referred to to-night by, I think, the hon. member for North Perth (Mr. Smith). He said that we ought to show on our cash accounts the amount of stock we had in hand. We could not possibly do that in the Treasury. We could not bring our cash receipts and make monthly statements of cash receipts and cash expenditure. The hon. member should not ask, in connection with our trading concerns and railways, that we should have a balance sheet prepared each month. The Minister for Mines has just pointed out that in the Eastern States they do not even give a monthly cash statement, but a quarterly cash statement. The cost of preparing such a statement would be very high indeed. The member for North Perth suggests that we must have an army of clerks to prepare a monthly balance sheet in regard to our trading concerns. It is not done in any business, and I venture to say it is not done in his own. It cannot be done, because the expense would be too great. Another point I wish to make in regard to the actual cash position is that the £190,000 is more than covered by the stock in hand. If we take the whole of the trading concerns and take the cash expenditure and the cash receipts, and take the stock in hand, we will find that our trading concerns are on a paying basis. One might be a loss and another a gain, but taking them by and large, or taking them as a whole, the concerns are on a sound basis.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That includes depreciation and everything else?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is allowing for depreciation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Premier said that you had £184,000 worth of stock, and you said you have a deficiency of £190,000.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The £190,000, roughly, represent the stock. I do not know what figures the Premier gave, but these are the figures disclosed by the Treasury for me.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How much have you lost on the Implement Works?

The Minister for Works: I will tell you when I get an auditor.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have dealt with these figures because they were the main points made by the leader of the Opposition. I want now briefly to refer to criticisms which have been made on the remarks of the Premier in regard to the sinking fund. The hon. member for North Perth to night made some of the most remarkable statements in connection with it that I have yet heard. It seems to me that those statements have gathered as they have gone. The hon. member said that the Premier was going to do away with the sinking fund altogether. That is only an exaggeration of the position. It might be worthy of the *Sunday Times*, but I trust the hon. member will not make statements of that kind in the Chamber of this House. Let him write them for his paper, but let him not deliver them here where they appear in *Hansard*, which is supposed to be a respectable and reliable publication. There has been a great deal of talk in regard to the Premier's statement and a great deal of misapprehension. The Colonial Treasurer realises, as everyone must realise who is not blinded by partisanship and party bias, that we have at the present time a very difficult period in our finances. This difficulty is not limited to Western Australia. We are getting better results than are being obtained in the Eastern States. We are getting through very remarkably as a whole, when we realise all our difficulties, as compared with how they are getting through in the

Eastern States, and in Victoria particularly. We hear a considerable amount about our deficiency in Western Australia. As a matter of fact, taking a given period, the deficiency in Victoria under a Liberal Administration has been greater than it has been in Western Australia under a Labour Administration.

The Minister for Mines: But these details are never published in this State.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. Then, again, if we take Victoria we will find the people in that State, the workers, are in a deplorable condition. The conditions under which the workers are to be found in Victoria are a reflection on any Government. We, in this State, have come to the rescue of our workers. We have supplied them with homes, and we have never allowed any man to doss out in the street or to go hungry, if we knew of him. This cannot be said of Victoria, in particular. The consideration extended to those in country districts in Western Australia has been greater than in any other part of the Commonwealth. We are proud of it. Despite our difficulties, we have got through better than any other State of the Commonwealth, where such consideration has not been extended. Instead of being condemned the Government should be eulogised for taking into consideration the requirements of the people during the stressful time that we are now going through. If there is a deficiency, what is a deficiency compared with the comfort and health of the people in these hard times?

Mr. Wansbrough: You have kept a good many workers out of the country.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think so. I know a good deal about the country myself. Until recently there has not been any great demand for workers. It is true we are getting requests for them now, and immediately there is a reasonable chance of men getting employment the home, if members like to call it so, will be closed down. It is closed down practically to-day. The workers have an opportunity now of getting employment in the agricultural districts. As far as the Government are concerned, we will assist agriculturists to obtain any la-

bour they may require to get in their harvest. If there is any difficulty in obtaining such labour I shall be pleased to hear from those interested in the districts concerned so that we may see what can be done to meet their requirements in this respect. We are going through a time of financial stress. The Colonial Treasurer tried to explain to Parliament that there was grave danger as to whether we would not be able to get more money from the London market or from the Australian market. He pointed out that we had sufficient money to keep the State going until October or November next. After that time, unless we got money, either through the Old Country or from Australia, we would be in a bad way indeed. He came along to Parliament and said there was one way that we could raise a little money on the London market, and he suggested that instead of taking the £260,000 that we had set aside this financial year for the sinking fund and purchasing existing stocks, we should invest in new stocks. There is justification for an attitude of that description, provided the money was not forthcoming from other channels. What does it mean to-day under existing conditions? People hold Western Australian stocks. We from our general revenue provide a sum of £260,000 for sinking fund. That sum of £260,000 goes to relieve the person who holds our stocks. In other words, we buy our stocks from him. We buy our stocks and give him our cash. What does he do with the cash? He immediately invests in other stocks, possibly; not in ours. If he re-invested the money in our stocks, there would be nothing to complain of. However, he invests it in other stocks; and that means, in other words, that we are supplying from this State money to enable people to invest in the stocks of other States.

Mr. Smith: They are not investing it in other stocks now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: To invest in our own stock now, we have to buy it from someone. That someone invests our money in other stocks. Instead of giving our money to a man for the

stocks he holds to-day in order that he may invest the money somewhere else, we may say, "We are not going to do that now; you hold our stock and stick to it, and with our money we are going to take up temporary stock such as Treasury Bills in order to carry us along through these times."

Mr. Taylor: In other words, you are going to be subscribers to your own loan.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Just so. Nobody would defend that as a permanent arrangement, but the Premier did not suggest it as a permanent arrangement. He said it was an arrangement purely of a temporary character, to tide us over if the worst came to the worst. He did not know at the time how things would go at the Premiers' conference, and we do not know the result of that conference even to-day. The Premier said, "Here is a method by which we can get £260,000;" but he added that it would not go into a permanent loan. He said that it would go into Treasury Bills of limited currency, and that when the money market turned and we were able to float a loan we would cancel the Treasury Bills and the money would be made available to go through the ordinary channels just as it did in the good times of the past.

Mr. Smith: But if the money market does not turn?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Then we have the £260,000 to help us out of the hole. There was no need for the Premier to do any more. On the one hand, hon. members opposite ask, "Why do not the Government take the House into their confidence?" and when we do state here what we intend, it is distorted and misrepresented to the extent which characterised the remarks of the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) to-night. The Premier comes to this Committee and says exactly what he thinks is a reasonable course, and asks Parliament to discuss that course, and the result is that we get all this gross misrepresentation from the other side. The Premier was purely making a suggestion, and in my opinion a legitimate suggestion, and one which, I take it, will

be seriously considered by Parliament if the worst comes to the worst. It is a legitimate thing that we should with our own money try to develop our own State, instead of supplying that money to develop possibly other portions of the Empire. The leader of the Opposition moved a definite resolution in that respect, and it has, as I have stated, been endorsed by the Premier. The Premier said that before anything definite was done in regard to the matter, Parliament would have an opportunity of discussing it. For my part I think that when the discussion takes place, hon. members will realise that, after all, there is a lot of point in the suggestion; that the suggestion is one which might be adopted in fairness to the State and at the same time without in any way whatever interfering with the security of our stock holders. The proposal is not to invest the money in a permanent loan, but simply to take up Treasury Bills of limited currency. The member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) stated that we were going to use the money to increase our indebtedness. That is not so. Suppose we floated a loan of one million pounds, and over and above that proceeded to put the £260,000 into Treasury Bills. That would be increasing our indebtedness. But when the £260,000 forms part of an ordinary loan, the effect is not to increase the State's indebtedness any more than an ordinary loan increases it.

Mr. Taylor: But it does not decrease the indebtedness.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. Taylor: That is the principle of the sinking fund.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The sinking fund as an investment in Treasury Bills does undoubtedly to that extent reduce the national debt.

Mr. Willmott: You are simply robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Treasury Bill during its existence is an asset held by the Trustees, and the value of the Treasury Bill is credited to the sinking fund. The trustees get their interest on the Treasury Bill just the same as they get their interest on the sinking

fund. Consequently, it cannot be argued that to invest this sinking fund in Treasury Bills is to increase our debt any more than an ordinary flotation increases it. If we were to try to get the amount of the sinking fund in addition to what we were floating, then we should be increasing our indebtedness.

Mr. James Gardiner: You are taking away by that process the idea of any redemption.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That would be so if the sinking fund were not invested in Treasury Bills; but when there are Treasury Bills of a limited currency and those bills are cancelled, there is the redemption.

Mr. James Gardiner: That would be so if you had Treasury Bills, and if they were met at maturity; but do you think any Treasurer would meet them at maturity?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Unless the Treasurer gave a definite undertaking to the sinking fund trustees, they would not be likely to agree to it. I wish to show still further the absolute unfairness of the criticism and the manner in which the Premier's proposal has been distorted and misrepresented. As a matter of fact, the Opposition have grasped at the Premier's suggestion like a drowning man clutches at a straw. They thought to themselves, "This is something we can hang on to;" and they exaggerated and distorted the suggestion enormously. Let us take the attitude of the Premier. In the first place he was of the opinion—and I think he was sound in this respect—that when we purchased our stock we should be allowed to cancel that stock and not pay interest on it. He proposed that to the trustees. They said, "No, we cannot view that with favour;" and the matter dropped. The Premier simply proposed it. Next, he comes to Parliament and says, "I am thinking of submitting this proposal to the trustees." Would anyone imagine that the Premier proposed to go to the trustees and tell them they must do it? If he was going to adopt an attitude of that kind, why did he not adopt it in connec-

tion with the cancellation of the stock and the saving of interest? He simply asked the trustees to take the matter into consideration.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They have no power to agree to it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The trustees did not agree to it, and that finished the matter. Suppose we submit this proposal to the trustees and they reply, "We cannot view it with favour." That will finish the present suggestion. There is no Treasurer in the world who would try to cram down the throats of the trustees something they would not agree to. Indeed, does anyone think that the two gentlemen whom we have as trustees of the sinking fund would be dictated to by a Treasurer? They would simply refuse to do what was asked, and if it were insisted on they would resign. No Treasurer would suggest such a course as forcing the trustees. The Premier certainly never had such a thing in his mind. He simply said to this Committee, "This is the means by which we can relieve our distress, and I suggest it to Parliament. If Parliament approves, I will submit it to the trustees and see whether it meets with their approval.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No. The Premier said, "It is my intention to approach the trustees and ask them to do this." He did not say that he wished to consult Parliament. He is not in the habit of consulting Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the reasonable, fair, non-party spirit of the leader of the Opposition, about which we have heard so much at the beginning of the session. The Premier in bringing the subject before Parliament undoubtedly was consulting Parliament. If he did not wish to consult Parliament on the matter, why on earth did he introduce it into his Budget speech? He mentioned it, and made it definitely clear.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Premier said that he was going to do so and so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Premier gave the Committee an opportunity of expressing its opinion. If he

was going to do as the leader of the Opposition would have us believe, cram this proposal down the throats of the trustees, he would have taken the same course in regard to the interest question. But he simply asked the trustees whether they would agree. On their replying in the negative, that settled the question. Similarly, a negative from the trustees would settle this proposal. It is distinctly unfair to read into the Treasurer's remarks something that he never said and something that he had no desire to convey to hon. members.

Mr. Taylor: He approached the trustees.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why do you not approach the trustees?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The position is that it is before Parliament at the present time. The matter is still under debate and the Treasurer will have an opportunity of expressing his view and members will also have an opportunity of doing so.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He will find it difficult if he has not any stronger arguments than those which you have put forward.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not lay myself out to convince the hon. gentleman because his views are so totally opposed to my own. All I can do is to place a reasonable view of the position before the Chamber and let the Chamber judge, and afterwards the public can judge for themselves. I did propose to deal with the question of the purchase of the steamer "Kangaroo" and the misrepresentations which have been made in regard to it, but that question will come up again on the Loan Estimates and the Loan Bill and we will have an opportunity then of referring to it. We heard a great deal of criticism in regard to the Government policy and, as has been ably pointed out by the member for Fremantle, most of that criticism has been of the stinking fish order. We have heard members expressing loyalty and patriotism, but that loyalty and patriotism has been extended to the Empire and not to the State of Western Australia. When they

have been referring to their own State they have tried to do all the harm they possibly could. I want hon. members to take to heart what the deputy leader of the Opposition said, that our State was going through troublesome times, but that it was now undoubtedly getting out of them. The expenditure which has been incurred in connection with the agricultural industry and the response we have had from Providence in the shape of bounteous rains will enable us to put the State on the footing we desire to see it on. After the little things which have been referred to and which are all of the stinking fish order, and which might be eliminated from the debate, what do we get down to? Just that the sum of £500,000 has been expended on State trading concerns. That is the difference in the policies of the parties, but as I have already said, the people of the country have endorsed our policy. We told them what it was, we were returned and we have carried it out. The people look to us to do our duty and carry out that policy. Although we have been subjected to all sorts of criticism in regard to our policy connected with the trading concerns, the fact remains that all those concerns are making good and the people are benefiting as a result. Take the State butcher shops. What effect have they had on the cost of living?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Not the slightest.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The price of meat is cheaper in Western Australia than it is in any other part of the Commonwealth. The meat supply in Queensland is largely in the grip of the meat combine, Swifts and Armours, and it is questionable whether the people there are getting a fair deal, as they are in Western Australia, because we broke up once and for ever the meat ring which was a disgrace to the State. Since the first year in which I entered politics there has always been a heated discussion on the Budget in connection with the meat ring, but it was never successfully tackled until the Scaddan Government came into office. The ring now is as dead as Julius Cæsar, or it is as dead as my friend the

leader of the Opposition is politically. There are other items which I intended to refer to but as they will come up for discussion when the various departmental votes are reached, they might be left until then. I trust now that hon. members will get on to the items and that they will realise that we have spent a great deal of time on the Budget debate, longer in fact than has been the case for many years past.

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

Item, Allowance to the Governor in lieu of staff, £226:

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I should like to have some information with regard to the question of the abolition of the office of Governor. This may be recognised as a hardy annual but when the matter came up first it was understood that no action could be taken unless a majority of the States interested themselves in it, and without moving for a reduction of the item, I would ask the Acting Premier whether there have been any developments recently.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The position this year is the same as it was last year. Hon. members know that the Government, early in its career, took steps to represent to the Home authorities its views in regard to the abolition of the office of Governor.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What was the view that you put before the Home Department?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The view that the position should be held by one of our own citizens. Representations were made more than two years ago and the position was then fully explained to the House. It has been fully explained to the House long ago. The then hon. member for Swan raised the question on the Estimates two years ago.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But no statement was made in regard to representations.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Home authorities declined to meet the wishes of the Government until such time as a majority of the States desired the alteration. That was the reply to the

Price Government in South Australia five years ago, and the position has not since been altered.

Mr. SMITH: I understand that the term of office of the present occupant of the position has been renewed. If that is so it is useless to debate the vote. There is a strong feeling against imported Governors, and even if the Imperial Government will not agree to the proposed change of system, I think we might further the project by so reducing the salary as to materially lessen the attractiveness of the position.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I hold that the occupant of the office should be an importation.

Mr. Smith: What about the Canadian States.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: They are not States but provinces. They bear no resemblance to the Sovereign States of Australia.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Would not the State still be sovereign if Sir John Forrest were Governor here?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No, the State Governor must be the direct representative of the Crown. Sir John Forrest would make an excellent Governor for any dependency of the Empire outside of Australia, but we cannot deny that he has taken an active part in Australian politics. It will be a sorry day when we lessen the status of our State Governors.

The Minister for Mines: We would not lessen it by appointing Australian citizens.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Yes, we would. It would be the first step towards unification and would reduce the status of the States to that of a Canadian province.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I remember the vote being reduced on one occasion on a snap vote. I believe I voted with the Government. But I have no recollection of any statement having been made to the House as to representations to the Home authorities. I should like to know the exact wording of the representations.

The Minister for Lands: It has been published.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am not prepared to take the Minister's statement. I should like to peruse the representation. I do not agree that the appointment of an Australian citizen would alter the status of the position. The Home authorities have power to appoint anybody, even a member of this House, and there would be just the same connecting link between the Imperial Crown and the State as there is to-day. That link is supplied by the appointment of an individual as a direct representative of the King, and the political views of the individual do not enter into the question at all. The present occupant of the office no doubt has his political views, but he does not obtrude them as his office precludes him from taking any side. If we are going in for economy, we must abolish the office. If the representation was to have a citizen of Western Australia appointed, there would be no economy, because the occupant would have to be paid under the statute, and the expenses of the office would be the same. Was the representation in the direction of abolishing the office?

The Attorney General: No, appointing a citizen of Western Australia.

Mr. O'Loghlen: He would do it for the honour.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know that that was the object at the time. I believe in the King being directly represented, and I do not see why an Australian should not have the appointment if his services warranted his selection. We would do as well under an Australian, but what that has to do with the vote I fail to see. However, the expenditure would be necessary all the same.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Executive Council*, £45—agreed to.

Vote—*Legislative Council*, £969:

Item—Contingencies, £190:

Mr. HEITMANN: I protest against every increase dealing with Parliament House. It is extraordinary that where the whole of a vote has not been spent, the full amount has again been provided. If the expenditure was sufficient for last

year, an amount equivalent to the actual expenditure only should be provided this year. The increase is an invitation to the committee to expend more than was spent last year.

The Minister for Mines: There has been a rush on select committees.

Mr. HEITMANN: It would be advisable to give the committee to understand that if £200 is provided and only £150 is spent, the estimate should be cut down next year.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I move—

That progress be reported and leave asked to sit again.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	22

Majority against .. 7

AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Smith
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Jas. Gardner	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Gilchrist
Mr. Plesse	(Teller)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Johnston
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Foley	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Green	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Hudson	(Teller).
Mr. Johnson	

Motion thus negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Legislative Assembly, £1,895:*

Item—Clerk Assistant, £300:

Mr. HEITMANN: This officer receives an extra £50 as sub-librarian and £100 as secretary to the Joint House Committee. It would be better to have this officer's salary stated in one sum. The total received by him is greater than is paid to some of the under secretaries who

control quite a large number of men and do considerable work. I think some of the positions in connection with Parliament carry more salary than they should. I do not think there is a better or more conscientious officer in either House than the officer in question, but I think the position is valued too highly. I am not prepared to move for a reduction of the item, but I want to draw the attention of the Ministry to it.

The Minister for Works: The Ministry have nothing to do with it.

Mr. HEITMANN: I am going to move that it should be an instruction to the Committee controlling the department that in these matters some little economy should be exercised. On every section dealing with the Joint Houses of Parliament there is an increase, and these are increases which are not justified. I have even seen furniture ordered which is unnecessary. It seems to me that those responsible are giving the matter very little attention.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Joint House Committee, £4,322:*

Item—Incidental, including telephone rent, firewood, water, renewals, and other expenditure authorised by the House Committee, but exclusive of repairs to the building, £1,500.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Who is responsible for the increase this year in this particular item, or is this also under Mr. Speaker?

Mr. TAYLOR: In the absence of Mr. Speaker, I have been asked to explain the Estimates which are now under discussion. It is impossible to tell what expenditure will really be incurred under this head. We submitted such estimates to the Treasurer in order that we would not be called upon to exceed our vote. If there is no necessity to exceed the allowance-members can rely upon the Committee not to spend all the money. The Committee were only desirous of using as much money as is necessary to carry on with.

Mr. O'Loghlen: What extra expenditure do you anticipate?

Mr. TAYLOR: It is the same vote as last year. We may have had certain supplies two years ago which we are not called upon to replenish to the extent that we are called upon to do this year. The Committee desire to meet the requirements of both Houses of Parliament and of members also. If the vote is not needed then all the money will not be spent.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In addition to the points raised by the hon. member for Mt. Margaret, I may say that I am informed that a large consignment of crockery and glassware was ordered some 10 months ago which has just come to hand. This largely accounts for the increase over last year. In preparing these Estimates the Committee apparently anticipated a longer session than we are now likely to have, and, therefore, made provision for this contingency.

Mr. FOLEY: I should like to know whether any of the money included in this item has been expended in connection with the late caterer leaving this Institution. I believe in times gone by a great amount of money was owed to the caterer by members, and that the House voted a sum of money to recoup the caterer.

Mr. Taylor: You are quite wrong.

Mr. FOLEY: It was so.

Mr. Taylor: That had to do with his father.

Mr. FOLEY: When this caterer left I believe a large sum of money was owing to him. Did any of this item go towards reducing this liability?

Mr. TAYLOR: Not one penny piece of this money went to repay the caterer for his losses. The late caterer, Mr. Kitchener, appealed to the Committee some three or four years ago in connection with the money that was owed to him. We pointed out to him that we as a Committee were not responsible in any way for the debts incurred by members. We suggested that to overcome this difficulty he should institute a system of purely cash transactions, and that we were not in a position to vote him any

money on this account. He foolishly did not adopt the suggestion.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That is a matter which took place some years ago.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am coming to this year. Mr. Kitchener wrote again to the Committee last year and asked us to make good the money that was owing to him, an amount of something like £600.

The Minister for Mines: On a point of order! I submit that the hon. member is entirely out of order in dealing with this matter.

Mr. Taylor: The hon. member wanted to know.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is absolutely no item under this division which provides for the matter under discussion. I think the hon. member is entirely out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with matters which are many years old. The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I do not think we are going to encourage economy by passing a vote larger than is necessary for the needs of the situation. If on the other hand we want to encourage extravagance that is the way to do it. When we come to other votes where I have seen this sort of thing occur I shall probably move that it should be reduced.

Mr. ALLEN: I notice there is no estimated revenue under this head. How is it there is no revenue? I understand that the catering arrangements now form another of the State enterprises. There must be some revenue coming from this particular department.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is true there has been a change in the management of the refreshment rooms attached to both Houses. Since the late caterer left the whole business has been brought under the Committee, as is the case in Parliaments in the Eastern States. We have appointed a controller at a salary of £250, and we have obtained from the Treasury an advance of £250, which has been placed in the bank to our credit. The controller, under the direction of the House Committee, does the buying and supplies refreshments. We have had the new system in operation only three

months, and, apart from the experience of other States, we do not know how the system will work.

The Minister for Lands: Where is the revenue brought to credit?

Mr. TAYLOR: I have no information as to that. We pay into the bank. At the end of the year we shall know how we stand. Had I been aware that hon. members intended to bring the matter up I would have had available the two monthly balance sheets which have been submitted to the House committee.

Mr. Allen: Are you making a profit or a loss so far?

Mr. TAYLOR: Until I came here this afternoon I did not know that Mr. Speaker would be absent and that he wished me to lay the position before the Committee. The only way to show a profit on the refreshment room would be for Parliament to sit 10 or 11 months in the year. A staff has to be kept on, whether members are here or not; and that does not apply to private establishments. In reply to the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner), we have accounts coming in, but of course cannot meet them until they arrive. All linen and crockery are indented from the Old Country. Until the goods come forward, we are not called upon to pay for them; but so soon as they arrive, we have to meet the liability. A considerable order, sent Home seven or eight months ago, will have to be paid for this year. I may say that nothing has been indented for about three years, but breakages of crockery are necessarily somewhat heavy in an establishment catering for 80 persons. The Committee have economised in the saving of light alone to the extent of about £400.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The estimate this year is identical with that of previous years. In the past Mr. Kitchenier was caterer, and he paid for food, drinks, etc., and the receipts recouped him. Now the committee have taken over the refreshment room. In order to take over the stock on hand they got an advance of £235 from the Treasury which has to be paid back in two years. An account has been opened in the Common-

wealth Bank and the receipts are paid into that account. The wages of the attendants have always been paid by Parliament.

Mr. ALLEN: Do the committee anticipate getting value for the expenditure of £4,322 and how much revenue are we going to get out of it? Are we going to make a profit or are we going to make the accounts balance? If we are going to economise now is the time to do so.

Mr. TAYLOR: The only additional expense is the payment of £50 to the Controller above the amount which was paid to the former caterer. The committee are now responsible for the supply of stock. We will issue a balance sheet at the end of the year.

Mr. SMITH: I think the money spent in glassware is unnecessarily high. We might well do with an inferior quality. Glasses like the one I have here cost about 5s. each.

Mr. Taylor: They were bought two or three years ago.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The member for Mt. Margaret does not appear to have the knowledge of the vote that he ought to have and he has failed to convince me that he will be able to meet his liabilities. The hon. member says that because this vote has been drawn up by the House committee the Government are not responsible. Of course the Government have everything to do with it. The Treasurer must approve of the proposed expenditure. The member for Mt. Margaret suggests that it does not matter what the vote is, so long as they exercise economy. We should endeavour to have the Estimates as nearly accurate as possible. There is, I think, more here than is absolutely necessary, and we are justified in pointing out that the amount might be reduced.

12 o'clock midnight.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): It has been laid down by the House committee that the House committee are in control of their vote, and that view has been accepted by the House. The Speaker is responsible for the items.

Mr. HEITMANN: At the same time the Government, through the Treasurer, have control of the expenditure. A little time ago the officers of the Legislative Council refused to agree to the general deduction, but the Treasurer reduced their salaries just the same.

The Minister for Lands: Not without their consent. He could not.

Mr. HEITMANN: Well I think Parliament should have some say. I move—

That the item be reduced by £279.

Mr. TAYLOR: When in Opposition, as a member of the House committee I had to defend these items. The leader of the Opposition was then Treasurer, and he had no more to do with this vote than has the present Treasurer. The House committee are alone responsible for their vote—and I say that with the experience of nine or ten years' service on that committee.

Mr. Heitmann: What percentage are you making on the bar?

Mr. TAYLOR: Only 30 per cent. or 40 per cent. When the leader of the Opposition was Treasurer he knew no more about this vote than he does to-night. Under the new system we have a controller, and the committee are responsible for the purchase of all necessary refreshments. Previously that responsibility rested with the caterer. The only increase is one of £50, so it is idle for members to talk of cutting the amount down. Last year we saved £560 on the expenditure of the previous year. Orders are coming forward which must be met, and if the estimate is cut down we shall have to ask for an excess vote. The House committee have been appointed to control this matter, and will not be dictated to by the Government. I was not agreeable to the new arrangement, but a majority favoured it, and it is now my duty to help to make it a success. The committee do not desire to go in for unnecessary expenditure. We have economised in every particular, and the hon. member wishes us to further economise in a way which is impossible.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The estimates have been framed on a session

of six months duration, and something unforeseen must happen for it to extend over that term. From inquiries I have made, I believe we can safely agree to the amendment.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member for Mt. Margaret has taken half an hour to endeavour to convince us that we have nothing whatever to do with this vote, and the Minister in a few words has shown that we have all to do with it. These are the Treasurer's estimates.

The Minister for Lands: No they are not.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There are statutory obligations we cannot interfere with, but the rest are the Treasurer's estimates.

Mr. Taylor: The Treasurer cannot expend that money.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Quite so, but it is a vote that the Treasurer can supervise.

Mr. Taylor: Why did not you supervise it when you were Treasurer?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I suggested reductions and the committee fell in with my suggestions. I agree that the amount can be reduced somewhat, but who is going to pay the piper if there is a loss in running the refreshment rooms?

Mr. Taylor: There cannot be a loss.

Mr. Allen: Why not? Kitchener made a loss.

Mr. Taylor: We have all cash customers.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If they take drinks which are too long there will be a loss. Probably the committee will make a loss first and raise the prices afterwards. The Government would have to make good any loss. The committee are not personally responsible. I doubt whether there is any legal power to permit the committee to juggle with the bank account, collect moneys, pay them in, or expend money.

Mr. Taylor: We have satisfied the auditor on that point, as we have been operating for three months and have not heard anything to the contrary.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must deal with the vote. All the argument about the banking account is outside the Estimates.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I support the reduction because I understand there is only £200 extra expenditure to be met this year for crockery and glassware. It is essential to keep the votes down as low as possible if we are to achieve the main object of keeping the deficit down.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I approve of the suggestion of the member for Geraldton as far as it goes, but he does not establish the principle at all. I would point out that there would still be an increase in the expenditure of £100. I cannot understand why there should be any increase in the vote at all.

The Minister for Lands: There is £200 worth of crockery to be included.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Surely there is a big margin between the sale prices and the purchase prices of the food and drink. There appear to be some moneys which are not submitted to Parliament at all.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine himself to the question of whether the item shall be reduced or not.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The committee appear to be receiving certain moneys which have not been brought before us. Instead of the item being increased by £400 it should be decreased by a considerable amount. The money should be accounted for.

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

Ayes	..	..	30
Noes	..	..	2

Majority for .. 28

AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Johnston
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Smith
Mr. Foley	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Gilchrist	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Green	Mr. Walker
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Harrison	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Hickmott	
Mr. Hudson	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Mullany	Mr. Taylor (Teller.)
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Amendment thus passed.

Vote (as reduced to £4,043) put and passed.

Vote — *Joint Printing Committee*, £5,711:

Mr. HEITMANN: I will move for a reduction of this vote also. It must have been known to the Printing Committee, when framing their estimates, that a very short session was anticipated; and in spite of that a number of items show increases over last year. As regards "Typists occasionally employed," when there is a long session—

Mr. Bolton: And when there are select committees and Royal Commissions.

The Minister for Works: Select committees are sitting all day, from 10 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. HEITMANN: There can be no necessity for the increases in "Printing and distribution of *Hansard*," "Parliamentary and general printing," and "Incidental." Allowing for economies made by the Printing Committee, I move an amendment—

That the vote be reduced by £642.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: While I would not go so far as the member for Geraldton (Mr. Heitmann), I would support a reasonable reduction. It seems that a larger expenditure than last year's is anticipated, more especially in "Printing and distribution of *Hansard*."

The Minister for Mines: The amount is dependent partly on the length of the session.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The session will not be so long as the two during last year, and this vote could be reduced by, at any rate, £500. On the previous Estimates "Parliamentary and general printing" stood at £400, and the actual expenditure was £410. Why is £600 asked for the same item on these Estimates?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have spoken with a gentleman who knows a good deal about the work of the Printing Committee, and he assures me that owing to the large number of select committees

appointed this session printing will be a heavy item, for which, it is anticipated, £600 will be required.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How was it known at the time the Estimates were framed that select committees would be heavy?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Estimates have been framed on the assumption of a six-months session with an average number of select committees. However, on "Printing and distribution of *Hansard*" it is estimated that the increase of £282 will not be required, and the same remark applies to the increases of £117 and £40 in "Incidental" and "Typists occasionally employed," respectively. That would make a total reduction of £439, to which I ask the member for Geraldton to agree, in place of his amendment.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: If we are going to stay here, let us do some work. Our own sense ought to explain this vote to us. We know there have been a number of long select committees. The Minister's explanation is reasonable.

Mr. HEITMANN: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. HEITMANN: I now move an amendment—

That the vote be reduced by £150.

Amendment passed.

Vote (as reduced to £5,261) put and passed.

Votes—*Joint Library Committee, £397; Premier's Office, £1,453*—agreed to.

Mr. ROBINSON: Those who are seeking to assist the Government to economise cannot do their best at this late hour. I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	21
				—
Majority against	..			9
				—

AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Smith
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Willnott
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Gilchrist
Mr. Harrison	(Teller)
Mr. Lefroy	

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Johnston
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Leighen
Mr. Foley	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Green	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Johnson	(Teller)

Motion thus negatived.

[*Mr. Carpenter took the Chair.*]

Vote—*Treasury, £11,137; Item, Clerks £3,812.*

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This item provides for 22 clerks as against 20 last year and there is an increase in the expenditure of £524. Will the Minister explain why the increase is needed at the present juncture?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Treasury has taken over the paying which was previously done by various departments. A corresponding reduction will be found in the Lands and Agriculture Estimates.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Audit, £9,006:*

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I am not satisfied with the method adopted with regard to the trading concerns, and some of the responsibility rests with the Auditor General. We have the right to expect not that the Auditor General shall say to the other officers "You have your own form of bookkeeping and I will tell you in six or eight or even ten months hence whether it is the correct form." This House has the right to expect that when new departures are being made in accountancy that the Auditor General shall express his views at the time so that all trouble may be saved. There is an instance in connection with the Industries

Assistance Board where the accounts had to be started practically *de novo*. The Auditor General has all the power necessary under the Act, but we want something more than the man who sticks to the lines of the Act. He is the servant of the two Houses and we have the right to expect wherever a new department has been started, the Auditor General shall be consulted, and shall give his advice as to what accounts are necessary and see that these accounts are in proper order from the word "Go." In this way all trouble over balance sheets will be obviated. The trading concerns want something like continuous order.

Vote put and passed.

Vote — *Compassionate allowances, £1,081:*

Mr. HARRISON: Has any special effort been made in regard to helping returned soldiers who are no longer able to follow their former avocations?

The Minister for Lands: That is a Commonwealth responsibility.

Mr. HARRISON: I know, but there are instances in which the Commonwealth takes a long time to move.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The State Government cannot take the responsibility which belongs to the Commonwealth, but as a State we will never see returned soldiers in need. There are funds from which these men can get assistance and over and above that we, as a State, will endeavour to do all we can to see them settled in profitable employment. We would be undertaking more than we could carry, and would be relieving the Commonwealth Government of their just responsibilities.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Government Motor Car Service, £2,755:*

Mr. HEITMANN: I desire to call attention to the growth of this service. I am not objecting to the service as a service, but I remember that three or four years ago very little was spent on motor cars. Now any clerk who happens to be in close touch with the department can get a motor car, at all events much easier than can a member of Parliament. The Government garage is costing too

much. Moreover the taxpayer should not be called upon to provide motor cars for the private use of Ministers. A Minister on a good salary should not ask the taxpayers to pay for motor cars for his private use.

The Minister for Lands: Who does it?

Mr. HEITMANN: The Premier does it continually. I see no reason why the Premier should not make use of a tram-car or a railway train. It is altogether extravagant that the Premier, if he wants to get his hair cut, should call a State motor car to take him down town. For a member of Parliament to get a car to take him home from the House late at night is made a matter of favour. Again, there is the insolence of certain of the chauffeurs in the Government service. One of them seems to think he is running the State.

Item, General expenses, etc. (including hire of cars) £1,960:

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: We would be well advised to reduce this. I move—

That the item be reduced by £500.

Mr. ROBINSON: Why have not all the motor cars been brought under the one heading? Why are half a dozen here and a number of others buried under incidentals and various expenses throughout the Estimates?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I trust the item will not be reduced. We have certain cars in the garage and we plan to keep those cars fully occupied in the service of the State. I can assure hon. members that the cars are but seldom used in private service.

Mr. Thomas: Is not that where the overtime comes in?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, that is when the cars are used for journeying into the country districts. Little or no private use is made of the cars. True, the Premier uses them for travelling about.

Mr. James Gardiner: Do you not think there is needless extravagance in using them?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. The Premier uses a car for going home to luncheon, but very often he is at his

office till half-past one o'clock and then rushes home in the car and back again. Ministers come up to Parliament House to lunch and use a car to get back to their offices. If a Minister walks, people he meets on the street want to discuss questions of State with him, and the only way of dodging them is to take a car. If members reduce the item, one of the chauffeurs will have to go, and the result will be that one of the cars will be standing idle while some department or another has to hire a car. If we reduce the item, a car will be idle and owing the chauffeur being put off, officers of the department will have to hire cars.

1 o'clock a.m.

Mr. James Gardiner: I did not touch the overtime.

Mr. Heitmann: It is not right to have a motor car on a sports ground for four or five hours for which the taxpayers have to pay.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is questionable whether the Premier should not have it. In every other State the Premier has a car, and previous Premiers here had one.

Mr. Heitmann: There has never been such extravagance riding about in the history of the State.

Mr. Robinson: The previous Government possessed only two cars.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but one was the Premier's car, and he used it to the same extent as the car is used to-day.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do not you think the Commissioner of Police could go out for his meals without a car.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is a different question. A car was used by the present leader of the Opposition when he was Premier in the same way.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Certainly not.

Mr. Allen: Not so much.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Exactly the same. Every large business has motor cars, which are time savers. The Engineer-in-Chief receives £1,300 a year, and if he had to take train to Fremantle to attend a Harbour Trust meet-

ing a whole day would be occupied. By taking a motor he can attend a meeting, inspect the works, and return by lunch time. Officers inspecting buildings in the metropolitan area used to occupy all day, but under existing conditions there is a set time, and the Chief Architect and the inspector of construction can do the metropolitan area in one day.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Could not those men drive themselves?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That would not pay. If an amateur has charge of a car the loss is more than the gain. The Commissioner for the wheat belt in special circumstances has the use of a car, and the Chief Inspector of Stock, if an outbreak of disease requires investigation, also takes one. Thus time is saved, and there is economy in the general administration. A central garage pays handsomely.

Mr. Robinson: Answer my question.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The only other cars I know of are one or two in connection with the metropolitan water supply which are absolutely essential. Mr. Lawson, the only engineer in the metropolitan area, has a car.

Mr. Robinson: I am only asking about the system.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Mines department, the department of Agriculture and the Police each have a car which appear under separate votes. The central garage is for the metropolitan area.

Mr. GILCHRIST: The Minister said it paid handsomely to have a central garage. According to the Estimates, we lost £694 on it without considering the value of the service of the cars to the Treasurer's department. The estimate for next year shows a loss of about £1,000. On those figures the central garage does not seem to be paying handsomely.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If a Minister goes to the country he takes a car, and the cost comes out of the £1,000. We allotted cars for the returned soldiers, and when distinguished visitors arrive they are met at Fremantle, shown over the city, and taken back to

their boats. This expense comes out of the £1,000. Thus there is no extravagance; it is a wise expenditure, and is economical inasmuch as it saves the time of officers and expenditure in other directions.

Mr. Heitmann: You have the same number of officers.

[Mr. McDowall resumed the Chair.]

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I had intended to move to reduce the vote because while the amendment would reduce the general expenses we would be retaining on wages a man who would be idle through not having a car to drive. The Minister has admitted there are cars in other departments and I emphasise that these cars are only for the central garage, and probably for the Premier's department and the Works Department only.

The Minister for Lands: It takes in every department.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: There is the Agricultural Department.

The Minister for Lands: They are not in the city.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The cars are not wanted in connection with the Agricultural department in the City, and with the exception of the Premier's office and the Public Works Department there is no necessity to use them there.

The Minister for Lands: In the case of an officer like Mr. Sutton, it is essential that he should have the use of a car to take a run out to investigate the cause of some disease.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is false economy to keep this big vote here. It will mean that while the cars are there they will be used. It is estimated that the running cost of the cars including wages, petrol, lubricating oils, etc., is about 8d. per mile, and on this basis these cars would run about 75,000 miles in the year.

Mr. Smith: It would be cheaper to hire the cars.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Yes. The vote is altogether too big. It would be better instead of agreeing to the vote in its present form to discharge it from the

Estimates, and depend entirely on hired cars.

The Minister for Mines: It is an expensive thing to hire cars.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is very much cheaper than the present system. I suggest that the member for Irwin should withdraw his amendment, and I would then move for a further reduction. It would be much better to have less cars on hand than are actually needed for the other officers, and the Government would find themselves better off at the end of the year if they did reduce the number. Fully 90 per cent. of the vote is in connection with cars that are being run about the City.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Then it must be fully 50 per cent.

The Minister for Lands: It is not even that.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I would suggest that we should reduce item 2 (general expenses, etc., including hire of cars), leaving £1,000 for running expenses and £500 for wages. If we kept one car and hired others as they were required it would be much cheaper.

Mr. ALLEN: My remarks about motor cars and pleasure trips provoked an impertinent interjection by the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works: It was an impertinent remark from you.

Mr. ALLEN: I consider that the Government motor car service is excessive, and that if there is one item on which economy should be practised it is this one.

The Minister for Lands: It would be false economy.

Mr. ALLEN: It is stated that some of the officers cannot drive their own cars. Mr. Lawson can drive a car and yet I have often seen him being driven down to his office in the morning.

The Minister for Lands: He does drive the car.

Mr. ALLEN: I would point out that the City engineer drives his car, and that Mr. Kelly, his assistant, does so also.

The Minister for Works: How many cars have the City Council?

Mr. ALLEN: They have two.

The Minister for Works: We have three.

Mr. ALLEN: Our two cars do not cost as much as any two run by the Government. The remarks which I made about pleasure trips were not meant to be impertinent, as the Minister suggests. I know of numerous cases in which the Government cars are used on pleasure trips.

Mr. WILLMOTT: It appears that almost every person has a car nowadays. Even the inebriates have them. And yet in spite of the fact that there are so many cars in use by the Government there appears this increase in regard to horse and horse equipment. The Government motor car service is run in a very extravagant manner. A big saving could easily be effected. When there is a central garage for these cars I fail to understand how it is this huge expenditure is incurred. I shall vote for the reduction of the item.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott) was somewhat wide in his general comments on the question of motor cars. The vote under discussion is one for motor cars used in the City only. The motor cars referred to by the hon. member as scattered throughout the Estimates are for country use.

Mr. Willmott: Do you mean that the whole of this money for motor cars is to be expended in the City?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. As regards other motor cars on the Estimates, the Mines Department have eight or nine inspectors on the goldfields, and these officers are provided with cars because it is found that with such facilities they do their work better and much more economically than with a horse and trap. The same remark applies to inspectors of machinery and agricultural and lands inspectors. The motor car has superseded the horse and trap just as these superseded the bullock dray. Three motor cars are employed in the City, with perhaps a cripple. When in the East last year I had an opportunity of observing that the South Australian Government

use about nine cars in Adelaide, whilst the numbers used in Melbourne and Sydney are almost beyond counting. Allowing even for the relative size of the cities, three motor cars for Perth would not be out of proportion. I ask hon. members not to be influenced by the fact that the Government cars may be occasionally used for pleasure, but to consider the useful work done by the cars. Almost every week they are used to meet distinguished visitors arriving by the mail steamer, to whom it is desirable to show some official attention. They are also made available for charitable and other deserving objects.

Mr. Robinson: Private owners do the same thing with their cars.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: But that does not alter the fact that the cost has to be met.

Mr. Robinson: No private person expends £900 a year on a motor car.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The work of a private car cannot be compared with that of a Government car. Apart from their use by Ministers, the Government cars are for the general use of officers holding responsible positions. The three cars in constant use require the services of a mechanic.

The Minister for Lands: The mechanic also does repairs for the Police Department.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Having regard to the amount of work the cars are called upon to do, the vote is not excessive.

Mr. Allen: Then we cannot affect any economy on this vote?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member cannot bear to see a Labour Minister in a motor car. The hon. member's bile rises at such a sight. I hope the Committee will view the question in a fair light.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I want it clearly understood that I am not attacking this vote because the cars are used by Labour Ministers.

Mr. Allen: Nor does anybody else either.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: No matter what Government may be in power, the people of this State do not want to see their Premier walking to meet a distinguished visitor. In view of the general reductions of wages and salaries, however, I think Ministers should in their own behalf show a desire to reduce such a vote as this. I have never been able to convince myself that it would be cheaper for me to own a car than to hire one. I think the Government would find it would be preferable for them to hire cars, especially when it is possible to get reliable men as chauffeurs.

Mr. ROBINSON: I do not think the Acting Premier should make a wholesale accusation against members in connection with the use of motor cars by the members of the Government. Every member is only too pleased to know that the members of the Government use motor cars. It is quite the proper thing for every Minister of the Crown to have a car to ride in. The time of Ministers is valuable and the country wants to make the best use of their services. For £725 per annum every member of the Government should have a car for his own use and a driver to go out at his bidding. If three cars cost the Government £2,700 to run, it is too much money. I do not think there is any car in Western Australia which is costing its owner, including the wages of the chauffeur and all expenses, more than £400 a year. But here, three cars cost no less a sum than £900 each.

The Minister for Works: The hire of cars is included in the sum.

Mr. ROBINSON: The general expenses item appears to me to be abnormally high. It amounts to £600 per car, or if we take the suggestion of the member for Perth to allow £300 for hiring, it leaves £550 per car. One could buy a brand new car for that sum. What can the general expenses be that would amount to such a huge sum? I cannot help thinking, without levelling undue criticism against the Government, that if the services of a man who knew the motor business were secured to go thoroughly

into this matter, he would save the Government £1,000 a year. I cannot help saying that it is absolutely ridiculous for three cars to cost £2,700 per annum. There can be no car belonging to any private person in Australia which can be costing as much for maintenance as the three Government cars. I think nothing will be lost of the use of the cars if the vote is cut down as suggested.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If members reduce the vote we will have to cut out the country trips of our expert officers. To-day Ministers and officers do more work in the country than ever before. If you desire Ministers to go round the country districts they must go by motor car, and if you cut down the vote Ministers will remain in their offices. Outside the House it has been asked why Labour Ministers should want to ride in motor cars. Personally I have no objection to riding in a railway train, but I cannot spare the time to go out into the country by train. If the item is reduced, not only will Ministers see less of the country, but our officers, such as Mr. Sutton, Mr. Moody, Mr. Connor, and Mr. Weir, will have to remain in the City. We do not use the cars for pleasure to the extent hon. members seem to believe.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There are the departmental cars in addition to these.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is another misstatement. There is no car associated with Mr. Sutton, Mr. Moody, Mr. Connor, or Mr. Weir.

Mr. James Gardiner: If the reduction is made it will still leave you with £1,634 for Ministerial purposes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Our officers will have to go out more this year than they did last year, and I hope that Ministers also will go out more frequently.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The officers ought to go in the train.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, it means too much wasted time, both in travelling and in making connections. The car saves an enormous amount of time. There is no extravagance in connection with these cars.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Surely the Minister does not expect members to take his specious arguments seriously! He says Ministers and their officers will not go out into the country if the vote is reduced. What happened before we had this central garage?

The Minister for Lands: You knew nothing about the country.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: If necessary you will hire a car for the officers, and it will be debited to the department. On these short trips about town it would be cheaper to hire a car when required than to keep the Government cars constantly standing.

Mr. SMITH: I do not object to the use of the cars in the Government service, but the general feeling is that we are spending too much on the service. For one thing Ministers and their officers might well use smaller cars than they have today. Another saving might be made by purchasing cheaper cars which would serve the purpose as well as cars costing up to £1,000.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Officials when going into the country should travel by train. If Ministers prefer to take a motor car they should have it. It has been a surprise to me that the Minister for Mines has at times desired a car and it has not been available. The provision that certain officials indicated should have motors for country trips is not an economical arrangement. Good train services are run in most districts, and these officials have free passes on the railways. Until lately it was the practice for them to take trains to Narrogin or Katanning and there hire a car, which arrangement was far more economical than racking the cars over the roads to Katanning in daylight when previously they travelled by train at night without costing the State a penny. I agree that Ministers should have a car.

Hon. Frank Wilson: On the country's business, not on a fishing expedition.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Certainly.

Mr. FOLEY: If the cars were being used for the purpose stated by the Minister, no one would cavil. The interjec-

tion of the leader of the Opposition that State motors should not be used on fishing expeditions has given away the whole argument of the Opposition. If a Minister wishes to have a motor car to do his work more effectively, no one should complain. If the officials mentioned used the cars only on State business it would be all right, but these cars are being put to other uses. I have seen officials taking their families out on Sunday in Government motor cars, and it is up to those in charge of the cars to see that this sort of thing is discontinued. I saw the Secretary to the Premier taking his family out on Sunday. The taxpayers do not maintain cars for such officers to take their families and friends out on Sunday. I believe in giving concrete instances, and if other members had done the same it would have been more to their credit than casting aspersions generally.

Mr. THOMAS: I have been in somewhat of a quandary as to how I should vote.

Mr. Taylor: Now you are satisfied?

Mr. THOMAS: I have been influenced by the direct and emphatic statement of the member for Leonora.

The Minister for Works: That might have happened once.

Mr. THOMAS: I entirely agree with the hon. member. It would be a loss to the State if Ministers were deprived of the opportunity of getting about quickly and conveniently in order to attend public functions, to get in touch with the wants of the people, and to get to know them better. The Premier should have a motor car when he needs it, but I object to the abuse of these cars, and if I vote for the reduction it will be as a protest against such abuse. It would be a foolish economy to deprive Ministers of the legitimate use of motor cars, and I do not think any objection has been raised to this. As a protest against officers using Government motor cars on Sundays for private purposes I would vote for a reduction. I am inclined to think this is done to a greater extent than is admitted. It is time that the officials who are using the cars at the expense of the State should

be told that they must discontinue the action. I will not vote to carry on such a system. If Ministers kept as closely in touch with the matter as they should do I think a saving could be effected of at least £500 a year.

2 o'clock a.m.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: With the permission of the Committee I will withdraw my amendment to Item No. 2.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £455.

Amendment passed.

Vote (as reduced to £1,239) put and passed.

Vote—*Government Savings Bank, £23,109:*

Item—Manager, £528.

Mr. HEITMANN: I should like to know from the Minister why there is an increase of £85 on this item.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is due to the fact that last year the manager was a member of the Workers' Homes Board, but that now he has left the Board his full salary appears on the Savings Banks Estimates. There is no increase whatsoever to the manager.

Mr. HEITMANN: I think the Minister is making a mistake. The salary of this officer was never, so far as I know, £528 per annum.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, it was.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not think there can be very much opposition to this unless we are going to wipe out every increase on the Estimates. This officer has been getting a salary which is inadequate for the work he has to carry out. It is a ridiculous salary for the manager of a bank. I am not, however, satisfied with the policy adopted by that gentleman in connection with the business of the bank. When he was asked to stand up against the Commonwealth bank and told to open agencies throughout the State he did not exercise sufficient discrimination to ensure the success of the State Savings Bank system. It is a re-

flection on the public men of Australia that these two systems should be running side by side, and I hope the Minister will be able to give us some indication as to when the trouble will come to an end. It almost makes one cry to go through the country districts and see two institutions run by the same people operating one against the other. The Commonwealth had no right to enter into this business in opposition to the States, and certainly not in this State. In establishing their banks the Commonwealth made use of the popular institutions, the post offices. When the manager of the State Savings Bank appointed agents, as he was obliged to do, he did not appoint the most suitable men. The men who were appointed were the country storekeepers, and the result was that customers having £5 to lodge, but possibly having a big bill against them at the store, preferred to lodge their deposit at the Commonwealth Savings Bank, and the State Bank lost the business. I do think that Mr. Leechen did not stand up to the position as he should have done. Probably the Federal institution will win out against the State banks in the end.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Like the last speaker, I think that if ever there was a shabby thing done it was done by the Federal Government when they started their Savings Bank in opposition to our State Savings Bank. When the Federal Constitution was framed, it was clearly understood that the States should conduct their own Savings Banks. The salary for the manager of our Savings Bank I do not consider too large. Does it not seem that salaries of about £4 per week are inadequate for Savings Bank branch managers? In finding such salaries we risk not giving the man sufficient to pay his way.

Mr. HEITMANN: I am not yet satisfied that the manager's salary does not carry an increase. While I do not consider the amount of £528 too much, I hold that in such times as the present no man receiving over £200 per annum should be granted an increase. If the manager was formerly paid something on account of the Workers' Homes

Board, it was for extra work which he no longer performs.

Mr. Foley: On a point of order, seeing that a later item has been debated by the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner), is the member for Geraldton (Mr. Heitmann) in order in discussing this item of the manager's salary?

The CHAIRMAN: General discussion is allowed on the first item of each vote.

Mr. HEITMANN: I find now that the salary appeared as £528 on last year's Estimates. The manager of the State Savings Bank does not, however, carry the responsibilities of a manager of a chartered bank, since he is not concerned with advances or loans, the money passing through the Treasury. I agree with the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) that it is a pity our State Government did not protest in very strong language when the Federal Government were about to establish their Savings Bank to compete against ours.

The Minister for Lands: We did protest at the time.

Mr. Robinson: Why, you proposed to sell our Savings Bank.

The Minister for Lands: Never.

Hon. Frank Wilson: A former Minister for Lands went East for the purpose of making the sale.

Mr. HEITMANN: He went over to beg for better conditions from a Government who always opposed duplication. On this and other questions Western Australia has been treated in a disgusting fashion by the Federal Government, and it seems that the members of the Federal Parliament are going to take every opportunity of belittling this State. The running of the Federal Savings Bank in opposition to the State institution is absolutely unfair and unsound.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Bearing in mind my own protests against encroachments by the Federal Parliament on State revenues—amongst them the Savings Bank—I find the expression of opinions from hon. members opposite quite refreshing. Ministers now applaud the idea that we should have to put up a fight for the State savings bank. On

many occasions they pandered to the Federal Government on this very question and they negotiated to hand over the State institution to the Federal authorities. Hon. members are not true to their country; they are prepared to sell it at any time, and then they blame another place for it. I am sick and tired of hearing such childish arguments, and the sooner members realise their responsibilities the better. The vote has been increased this year by £1,040. It seems strange to have an increase in an institution which has suffered so severely from competition. The deposits have fallen off considerably. In 1914 the total deposits fell off to the extent of about £300,000 and in the recent months of the present year there has also been a falling off in the deposits. Why, therefore, should we have increased expenditure? I do not think that the question of starting branch establishments, which is apparently responsible for the increase in the vote is going to help us. We might just as well have kept the agencies going. If we had done that we would not have been involved in this expenditure in connection with the establishment of branches. The member for Forrest has complained about the agents. There may be isolated instances where unsuitable agents have been appointed, but taken all round I think we have had good results from the agencies in the past ten years. The hon. member also complains that a bank loses business because employees have to pay their money into the hands of their own accountant who is the bank's agent. That does not make a scrap of difference, and I have yet to learn that it has had any effect at the sawmills. I protest against the increase in the total expenditure. When we have a falling off in the business it is not sound administration. We ought to be able to keep down expenditure proportionately with the decrease of business. I hope the Minister will see his way clear to bringing down the vote to at least that of last year.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I desire to support the remarks of the leader of

the Opposition. It is the height of folly for the State Government to go on increasing expenditure in an endeavour to attract depositors who are leaving the State Bank and going to the Commonwealth Bank, even though they are not there getting the same consideration as they were getting from the State institution. We are increasing the expenditure to such an extent that presently we will be getting nothing at all out of the State Bank. A determined effort should be made to compel the Commonwealth Government to come to an understanding with the States in regard to savings bank business. The existing state of affairs is scandalous. If Parliament would stand loyally behind the Government we might reach some satisfactory solution of the difficulty.

Mr. MUNSIE: No matter what amount of money the State Government may spend in trying to retain the depositors in our State Savings Bank, I believe they must fail, at any rate in the country districts, where the Commonwealth Bank is invariably located in the local post office. I wish to contradict the statement of the leader of the Opposition that the present Government endeavoured to hand over the State Savings Bank to the Commonwealth Government. The present Government have fought the Commonwealth Government over their attitude in regard to the State Savings Bank. Governments of the past in every State have been to blame for the interference of the Commonwealth Government in the savings bank business. Even with the assistance of its savings bank department the Commonwealth Bank would not be wholly successful to-day but for the aid of the note issue. I hope the people of all the States will see the folly of endeavouring to support two savings banks, and will succeed in inducing either the Commonwealth or the State Government to give up the business. Personally I think the Commonwealth should run the Savings Bank since they have the post office, but the State should receive some consideration as regards the expenditure of the money.

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Mr. TAYLOR: Our unfortunate position is due to the fact that in the early negotiations between the State and Federal Governments they were to come to an amicable arrangement under certain conditions. While the negotiations were proceeding, the State Government sat quiet and when they did not meet the wishes of the Federal Government the latter entered into competition with us and it was too late for the State to put up a strenuous fight. I have always opposed the Federal Government commandeering this successful institution in a most unstatesmanlike way. No language is sufficiently severe to describe the Federal Government's attitude. This money was used for the benefit and development of the State. It was the people's money, and the institution was undoubtedly successful. The Federal Government embarked on their banking scheme, which had practically failed, and they saw no other way of escape when in open competition with the chartered banks than that of commandeering the large amount of accumulated wealth in the State savings Banks.

The Minister for Works: That is entirely wrong.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am sorry the question was not raised on the platform. The savings bank has been a great boon to this State. Although the amount of £85 appears to be an increase in the manager's salary, it is really not so because it was previously provided for by the Workers' Homes Board. If it were an increase I would oppose it.

[Mr. Holman took the Chair.]

Item—Commission payable to agents, etc., £4,500.

Mr. FOLEY: Some of the chartered banks acting as agents for the Savings Bank are not giving the State a fair deal.

The Minister for Works: A change was made after your complaint last year.

Mr. FOLEY: I believe no material alteration has yet been made. When the complaint was made last year the manager and the Government considered the matter and some alteration was made. When people went to the

chartered banks to pay money into a savings bank account, they were asked to pay it into an account with the chartered banks. I believe this sort of thing is still going on and I hope further action will be taken.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Government Stores*, £11,124 :

Item—Controller of Stores, £504.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER : I presume the controller controls all stores. I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that the stores held are altogether too large. There is no department which requires such careful supervision in this respect as the Government Stores.

The Minister for Lands : We have a very careful Controller.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER : So long as authority is given to indenture we shall have these amounts creeping up. We find one instance in which although the number of employees has decreased the amount involved has gone up. There is another item which has also gone up.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member cannot refer to the various items. He must deal with one item.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER : Can we have a general discussion on the Stores on Item No. 1 ?

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member can discuss the item dealing with the Controller of Stores.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER : Can we not discuss the Stores generally on this item ?

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member can refer to items lower down if in so doing he does not interfere with the discussion of other members on items higher up.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER : Can we have a general discussion ?

The CHAIRMAN : Under the Standing Orders a general discussion on the whole Estimates of the Department is held on the first Vote. That is to say, when the Department of a Minister is being dealt with the hon. member can deal with the whole of the divisions in the Department, but cannot have a general discussion on every division of the department.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER : It was to avoid getting into a false position that I started in this way. So far as the Government Stores are concerned, the whole vote is such that it will require discussion. The general Vote has increased, when at the present juncture there is no necessity for an increase.

Item—Clerks, 38, £6,315.

Mr. WILLMOTT : In this item we have fewer clerks than existed last year and yet there is an increase in the cost of clerical assistance of £646. That requires some explanation. It amounts to an increase of £17 per head at a time when we are all howling economy.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : There is no actual increased expenditure other than the statutory increases which must be provided. The item is made up of these statutory increases, the full drawing of salaries which were not fully drawn last year owing to officers being away, and by the filling up of three vacant positions.

Mr. WILLMOTT : We know that no increase can be greater than £12 per head, and yet there have been increases here of an average of £5 per head over and above the statutory increases. The explanation of the Minister does not fill the bill.

The Minister for Lands : It is the exact position.

Item—Wages and incidentals, £3,400.

Mr. ROBINSON : Will the Minister be good enough to explain how the net increase of £1,000 is accounted for ?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : This amount was previously provided under Stores Suspense Account dealing with the issues of stores which were provided for on the Suspense Account and paid for by the departments. The Auditor General took exception to the Suspense Account and claimed that it was not authorised by Parliament. As a result of that the Suspense Account was done away with and the item was provided on the Revenue Estimates.

Mr. Robinson : What was the amount last year ?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : It was the same amount. An item for the State Sawmills would be issued

against the Stores suspense account. As the item was drawn by the sawmills, there would be recoups to the Stores suspense account. The Auditor General said that the procedure was not correct, and that the proper course was to provide an item on the Estimates for the purpose.

3 o'clock, a.m.

Mr. Robinson: But it is shown as a loss. There is no method of recoup.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The amount on the Estimates is recouped by the various departments drawing stores.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Literary and Scientific Grants*, £11,200:

Item, Public Library of Western Australia, £3,250.

Mr. ROBINSON: Last year's vote of £3,000 was exceeded by £250. This year, in war time, the item is raised to £3,250.

The Minister for Mines: It was starved in previous years.

Mr. ROBINSON: What is the amount made up of?

The Minister for Mines: Books, salaries, upkeep, everything connected with the institution.

Mr. ROBINSON: Could not some of the books intended to be purchased be done without? Too much has been spent on luxuries for years past, and the time has now been reached for cutting down such items as this. Has any inquiry been made into the need for the expenditure?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The item was cut down last year, but the managing committee of the institution pointed out that they could not possibly manage on the amount provided, and so the item has been increased by £250. The Treasurer made inquiry into the matter.

Mr. Robinson: It will have to be inquired into by someone else.

Mr. GREEN: Though not opposing the item I wish to point out that the Perth library gets four times as much as all other libraries in the State put together. I have experienced great difficulty in getting very small grants for country libraries.

Mr. HEITMANN: For years past the committee of the Perth public library have pleaded hard for an increase, and now they have succeeded in getting one. It is up to Parliament to notify them that they must exercise economy. Last year there was a good deal of expense in reorganisation and recataloguing, which will not recur. At the present time we should be prepared to do without luxuries.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: This is not a luxury.

Mr. HEITMANN: Not many people in Perth use the library. I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £250.

Mr. TAYLOR: This item has appeared on the Estimates year after year. The vote is vested in the board of management and the Minister should be able to give us some detailed account as to how the money is spent.

Mr. Robinson: And how much of it is wages.

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes, and who is controlling it. We have heard some disparaging remarks about the control of this institution.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: One is reluctant to support a motion for the reduction of a vote such as this, but as the general trend is in the direction of reductions I am prepared to support the proposal. I have no doubt that big arguments will be advanced in favour of an increase rather than a reduction of the vote. I believe that the library in this State is much ahead of the people's requirements. The buildings are ten years ahead of their time and the expenditure on these buildings could well have been left over to some future time and the money devoted to the development of the interior. The undertaking of that work has increased the cost of the upkeep of the institution. I have heard of an instance of economy by the refusal to purchase the *Bulletin*. The reason was asked and the reply given was simply on account of lack of funds.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The best thing they have ever done there.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not care whether it was the *Producers' Review* or any other paper. A paper so widely

read as the *Bulletin* should be found in the library.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I have pleasure in supporting the reduction. For a long time huge sums of money have been poured into this library, sums huge as compared with the paltry crumbs scattered among the little libraries in the bush. I think the item should be kept down to £3,000.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I trust the Committee will not agree to the amendment. It is all very well to complain that the *Bulletin* is not to be found there, or that libraries of the same size do not exist in country districts, but it must be remembered that this institution is doing magnificent work. It is made use of, not only by large numbers of general readers, but by students also. Many of the books are sent round the State to remote libraries.

Mr. Taylor: A special item is provided for that.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: That is only to meet the expense of sending the books to those smaller libraries. It does not include the cost of those books.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The return freight is paid by the country library.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Except we keep the main library up to date it will be impossible to supply the country institutions.

Mr. Willmott: A lot of consideration is given to the country libraries.

The Minister for Mines: The last case of books that went to Bridgetown was returned unopened.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The institution is doing immense good, not only in the metropolitan area but in every part of the State. The vote was cut down last year, and the committee controlling the library are strongly averse to waste.

Mr. HARRISON: If economies are to be made, they must be made somewhere. The advantages derived from this institution by country people are not to be compared with those derived by people in the City. I support the reduction.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The trustees consist of the Hon. Sir Winthrop Hackett (President), Hon. H. Briggs,

Mr. F. W. Burrows, Mr. W. Dwyer, Dr. H. F. Harvey, Mr. R. S. Haynes, Sir Walter James, Dr. H. T. Kelsall, Mr. H. S. King, the Hon. the Chief Justice, Mr. C. G. Morris, Rt. Rev. Dr. Riley, Mr. W. Somerville, Hon. Sir Edward Stone, and Rev. D. I. Freedman. The report of the President for 1913-14 stated—

The trustees desire to draw the very serious attention of the Government to those paragraphs in the reports of the Chief Librarian and the Director of the Museum which relate to the question of the Parliamentary grants. The necessity for the increases asked for has been pressed upon the Government for some years past, and the trustees feel that the necessity is fully recognised. That increased grants are imperative is made more evident by the decision of the Government that the trustees must for the future be responsible for repairs, etc., to the buildings, a charge which up to this time has been borne by the Public Works Department. Consequently, whilst recognising the stringency of the financial conditions at this time, the trustees feel that they must strongly urge that some additional help be given to enable them to continue the work efficiently.

Mr. Gilchrist: What would the repairs amount to?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: About £200 a year. The chief Librarian, in his report to the President stated—

With regard to the question of the annual Parliamentary grant, I have for years past laid stress upon the fact that it is totally inadequate for the purpose. Whilst recognising the financial difficulties that exist at present, I feel bound to urge upon the trustees the necessity for some increase being secured. As a trust they are called upon to pay many expenses that were formerly paid by the Public Works Department. These alone have made the financial position serious, while the increasing requirements of a growing institution have made it quite impossible to continue

to secure efficiency unless the grant be considerably increased.

The vote referred to was £3,500 and that has been reduced to £3,250 though it was claimed that the larger amount was inadequate in view of the expense of maintaining the building. In regard to the number of volumes the Chief Librarian stated—

The reference library now contains 99,973 volumes, and the travelling libraries 11,687, making a total of 111,660 volumes in the institution. During the year 3,457 volumes have been added to the general collection. and 1,058 to the travelling libraries. These totals do not include the unbound newspapers, pamphlets, and parts which have been received. The total number of visitors to the library for the twelve months was 201,668, being an increase of 49,388 compared with the figures of last year.

Referring to the Children's library the same official wrote—

The children's room has proved very popular even though the trustees have not been able to expend any considerable amount on suitable books. The monthly attendance has varied between 1,500 and 2,000 and the interest taken seems to prove that setting apart a separate room for young people was justified.

The expenditure on wages and salaries was £1,872 out of the total of £3,868. Furniture, fittings, and repairs represented £110, and the purchase of books, binding, wages in connection with binding and material totalled £1,077. We have penalised this institution in the last two years to the extent of about £500 including the sum of £200 for repairs. The institution is fulfilling a good purpose and is growing in popularity and the vote should not be further reduced.

Mr. GILCHRIST: It would be false economy to starve an institution of this description.

Mr. Smith: Suppose we cannot afford it?

Mr. GILCHRIST: We shall have to and economise in other directions.

Mr. Willmott: That is what everyone says.

Mr. Harrison: Better have food for the body than for the mind.

Mr. GILCHRIST: I should be ready to support the amendment if the succeeding item on the Estimates represented the whole amount spent on extending the usefulness of the library to the country districts. Apparently £200 only represents the cost of getting all the boxes of books to the country. We understand from the report that 10 per cent. of the books purchased last year was put into the country library, which is altogether distinct from the reference library which is housed in the James Street building. I regret that the Committee have not seen fit to establish a lending library, in order that the advantages of the institution might be extended to those busy people who are not able to spend much time in a reference library. If some expenditure was devoted to the establishment of a lending branch of the library that institution would be of much greater use than it is at the present time.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: We have a good public lending library in Perth now.

Mr. GILCHRIST: The lending libraries about Perth are not free for one thing, and they are chiefly fiction libraries for another. A lending branch of the library to assist students in their studies would be at least as valuable as a reference library, such as has already been built.

Mr. CARPENTER: I should support a reduction in the vote if I thought by so doing we should not depreciate one of our national assets. It is evident that this committee has been called upon to make its share of sacrifice, and we ought to pause before we impose any further impediment upon its work. If we strike this amount off the Estimates the committee will either be compelled to neglect the building or the upkeep of the books, which would perhaps be

the greater evil. We do not want to destroy the utility of the library from the public point of view.

Mr. TAYLOR: The detailed account read by the Minister did not give what I required. I want to know the salary of the secretary and his functions, and particulars as to those who are employed in the institution. The librarian takes other work. For instance, he edited a work known as *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, in connection with which more men were rooked than over any other enterprise of the kind in Australia. I heard the librarian state in the witness box that he edited the publication, or corrected it for the press; and he also said that the knowledge gained in his position enabled him to qualify the cyclopaedia as a valuable work. Although part of this item will go to pay the librarian's salary, he has ample time to make propositions to impose on the public. I venture to assert that between 200 and 300 summonses were issued in connection with the cyclopaedia. I myself was sued, but my defence was successful notwithstanding sycophants posing on the strength of their positions in the public service who came forward to support the claim. The item should be postponed until the Committee know how past items have been expended and how this item is to be expended, especially in view of the hard times.

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

Ayes	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	13

Majority for 6

AYES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Cunnlugham	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Foley	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Green	Mr. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hettmann	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Hudson	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Johnston
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Collier	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Walker
Mr. Gilchrist	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Hardwick	(Teller).

Amendment thus passed.

[Mr. McDowall resumed the Chair.]

4 o'clock, a.m.

Item, Law Library, £100:

Mr. FOLEY: This item can be done without because there have not been many laws passed in any part of the world in the last twelve months. I move an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

Mr. ROBINSON: A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, and while my friend the member for Leonora is frequently right, on this occasion he is utterly wrong. The item for the Law Library might easily be £500. It is the most economically managed library in the State. They could spend in new editions a couple of hundred pounds, and the £100 would be little enough to pay for the various reports which come along from England, America, and other countries, and which have to be used by our judges. If we are going to reduce an item of this kind we had better wipe out the libraries and the literary institutes and shoot all the animals in the Zoo. Nearly all the lawyers have their own libraries, and they are absolutely independent, but the judges cannot be expected to have their own libraries.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): They can afford to pay for them.

Mr. HUDSON: The observations of the last speaker have no application to this vote. The law library is a branch of the public library, and is in Beaufort street, Perth. There is provision made in another part of the Estimates of £250 as a vote towards what is the law library referred to by the hon. member. The law library gives laymen, members of Parliament and others the opportunity of reading "Every man his own lawyer" and getting a smattering of law which leads him into trouble. I think it

would be a pity to wipe out the vote altogether, although it might be reduced a little.

Mr. ROBINSON: Will the Attorney General state whether the law library referred to in the Estimates we are just now considering is the law library of the Supreme Court? I was not aware that there was a law library in existence anywhere else, I notice on page 60 of the Estimates that there is an item of £250 for law books.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not aware of any law library except the one referred to by the member for Canning. The law provision under the Supreme Court is quite another matter. In the item occurring in the estimates of my department we provide all the latest legal literature for the use of the Crown Law officers, not only in the City but throughout the State.

Mr. Taylor: Is this the Supreme Court library?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Undoubtedly it is. Our own judges use it, and so too do the judges of the High Court. It is also open to members of Parliament. It is imperative that we should keep the law library up to date.

Mr. HUDSON: I do not desire to mislead the Committee. I take it that if this item is passed it will be administered by the committee referred to by the acting Treasurer. It is grouped under "Literary and Scientific Grants" and therefore is not the Supreme Court library. I would like the acting Treasurer to tell us whether the money he proposes to spend will be devoted to the purchase of books for the Supreme Court library situated at the Law Courts in Perth.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not in a position to say definitely whether there are two law libraries in existence. I am under the impression that this is for the library at the Supreme Court, and I am not aware that there is another law library in existence at the Public Library. However, if there is, this is the item.

Mr. WILLMOTT: There seems to be a grave doubt as to where this £100 is to be used. In the circumstances I

have come to the conclusion that the only reasonable thing to do is to delete the item. When we see that later in the Estimates there is another provision for law books, it seems very much like a duplication.

Mr. Hudson: If the Attorney General is right it is a duplication.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Then the proper thing to do is to delete the item.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There can be no doubt whatever about the destination of the money. There is but one law library.

Mr. Taylor: Where is it situated?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: At the Supreme Court. There is no duplication. The books in my department are purchased for the use of the Crown Law officers of the State, and sometimes the vote has to be increased as the magistracy is increased. These books are absolutely necessary to the carrying out of the work of the department.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Who controls the library?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is really under the control of the Barristers' Board.

Mr. Smith: Why are the items separated?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In the one case the item represents the library for the judges and the barristers, and in the other it is for the use of the officers of the department.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item—Western Australian Museum and Art Gallery, £3,300:

Mr. TAYLOR: I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £1,000.

We have heard a lot about the state of the finances and the strenuous times confronting the people. This is a luxury and while the war lasts we could shut the institution up without injuring anyone, merely providing for a caretaker.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the amendment is passed the whole amount might as well be struck out. The Director in his report—

Mr. Taylor: In what year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The year 1914.

Mr. Smith : It is old enough to be an exhibit.

Mr. Taylor : It is petrified and standing in the corner by now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : The report stated—

I must reiterate the necessity for an increased grant if the Museum and Art Gallery are to continue to meet the requirements of the public. The annual allowance a dozen years ago was £4,500, when there were only a couple of galleries to be maintained, and now that there are eight, and wages and cost of upkeep have been so greatly increased, the vote is only £3,800, barely sufficient to keep the institution open, without leaving any margin for the purchase of new specimens, and to make matters still more difficult, the cost of repairs to buildings has been ordered to be paid out of the vote in addition to other charges formerly defrayed by the Public Works Department.

The balance sheet shows that salaries totalled £1,645, wages £1,248, and furniture for show cases, glass jars, etc., £247, the total expenditure having been £4,122.

Mr. HEITMANN : This is practically a joint item.

The Minister for Lands : There is no connection between them.

Mr. HEITMANN : Then I would have preferred to reduce this item rather than the public library vote. There is less need for continuity in regard to the purchase of fossils than the purchase of books.

Mr. WILLMOTT : At one time the Museum and Art Gallery received £4,500. This amount was reduced to £3,800 and they still struggled along. Now we should see if they can do with £2,300. The amount of £2,893 for salaries and wages seems very large, and we can well dispense with some of these things at present. I support the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : We have not yet reached that desperate position when we should be forced to close up our library, art gallery, and museum. This vote has reached the minimum which will permit these

institutions to be kept open, and if the amendment is carried it will be necessary to close them for one third of the time. I was expecting much information as to where we could effect economies, but the whole result of to-night's work has been the suggested saving of about £1,000. What effect is this going to have upon the State ? It would be a bad advertisement for the State if we declared that in these times of stress we were obliged to close up the Art Gallery and Museum for four months because we had not enough money with which to keep them open. It is all very well for members from the country to talk like that.

Mr. Willmott : That is right. Sneer at them. You never do anything else.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : I am not sneering at them. It is all very well for them to slash into a few of these city institutions. If the city members were to retaliate on expenditure affecting the country there would be considerably more reduction. It is a paltry policy to slash into institutions of this character. They do not alone belong to the City but to the State as a whole. People from the country derive perhaps more profit from the institutions now under review than any others.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : It will not injure the credit of the country to close down the Museum and Art Gallery.

Mr. Heitmann : You protested bitterly on a previous occasion at the suggestion to cut down this vote.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : We had the money to spend then. To-day we are in debt.

Mr. Heitmann : You spent £500 on a snake house.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : I had the money to spend. The closing of this institution will not affect the country. What does affect the State is the ever accumulating deficit.

Mr. Heitmann : Put that in the Gallery too.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : If we want economy we have to start with small things, and cut and carve at every item. What is the good of saying this is a paltry item ? The institutions are neces-

sary of course, but for all that they are a luxury. I should be sorry to see the vote cut down but we have to begin somewhere, when we have not the money to spend. Are we to go on building up the deficit until it runs into millions? I venture to say it will amount to a million and a half before long. Is that going to help the country?

The Minister for Lands: What item are we discussing Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: We are discussing the question of reducing this Vote.

The Minister for Lands: I thought we were having a general discussion on the administration of the State.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the Minister for Lands not to make interjections of this nature. It is a reflection upon the Chair. The Leader of the Opposition is speaking in favour of reducing the vote and is perfectly in order. I resent the remarks of the Minister for Lands. They imply that I am not doing my duty in allowing the hon. member to speak.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is no argument to say that because this is a beneficial institution we must borrow money in order to keep it going. I do not know whether the reduction of the Vote would mean the closing down of the Institution. It might mean the putting off of two or three of the employees which would be bad for them. It might even mean closing the institution for certain days in the week. Is it not better to do that than to overstep the bounds of all reason in respect to our expenditure? The Premier made economy the key-note of his Budget Speech. If we are to play upon that note to any extent we must of necessity have reductions of the votes he has placed before us.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: My sympathies are rather with the Minister in this case. I realise that these institutions really belong to the State and that in their way they have strong educational uses. I also recognise that it is in expenditures such as these that we can afford to make some reductions. It is true we are ignorant of what effect any reduction will have upon these

institutions. I do not think that is our fault. The Minister should have been able to tell us. We were chasing £100 around here a little while ago and no one seemed to know anything about it.

The Minister for Mines: Ministers knew, but private members put us off the track.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: There may be justification for the Public Library being kept up to date, but I do not know that there is any absolute necessity for the Museum being kept up too.

Mr. Taylor: Not while this institution is in existence.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: There is not the same necessity. We would not be destroying the educational value of the art gallery.

The Minister for Mines: So long as we do not reach the point at which the institution must close up. A reduction of £1,000 would close it.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I cannot agree with the Minister. If £2,300 is not sufficient to keep the museum and art gallery open, without adding to them, the place must be very extravagantly managed. I presume there is a time when capital expenditure, as one might term it, ceases in museums and art galleries. In reducing this item, we shall be economising without depriving individuals of employment.

Mr. TAYLOR: I moved the reduction on lines that I thought would allow of the institution being still kept open, though perhaps not continuously as at present. Surely £2,300 will supply the wages and salaries required to keep the institution open for another twelve months. If that amount is not sufficient, the institution should be closed. Can any hon. member inform me how much of the item was spent last year on the purchase of new exhibits?

Mr. Willmott: Two hundred and forty-seven pounds.

Mr. TAYLOR: I think we can without injury to public interests save £1,000 on this item.

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

Ayes	21
Noes	12

Majority for	..	9
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AYES.

Mr. Allen
Mr. Carpenter
Mr. Chesson
Mr. Connolly
Mr. Cunningham
Mr. Foley
Mr. Jas. Gardiner
Mr. Green
Mr. Griffiths
Mr. Harrison
Mr. Hickmott

Mr. Johnston
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Mullany
Mr. Munzie
Mr. Robinson
Mr. Smith
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Willmott
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Gilchrist
(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin
Mr. Collier
Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Heltmann
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Johnson

Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Walker
Mr. Bolton
(Teller).

Amendment thus passed.

Item—Mechanics' Institutes, Working Men's Associations, Art Societies, etc., £750 :

Mr. FOLEY : The Acting Treasurer stated that great pressure had been brought to bear in favour of increasing these items, and he stated that he acceded to the requests which were made because he thought the arguments advanced were sound. So far as out back libraries are concerned, representations were also made by them that their institutions were also worthy of consideration. The library in the district I represent was informed that it would not be possible to give them a subsidy during the present year, and then they tried to raise a little money elsewhere. They found that they could not continue to pay 10s. a week to a young lady librarian to attend for two hours each evening and the members of the committee undertook to discharge the duties of librarian in turn each evening gratuitously. There are other institutions that are doing likewise, and in cases such as these where the people are doing their

best to help themselves, the Government should render some assistance.

Item—Zoological Gardens, £3,500 :

Hon. FRANK WILSON : Although this sum has been practically the same for the past four years, we are entitled to have some information about the manner in which it has been expended. I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £500.

5 o'clock a.m.

Mr. HUDSON : I think the acting Treasurer should give the Committee the required information. Failing that, perhaps the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) in whose constituency the Zoo is, could give the information. It might be found to explain his majority at the last elections.

Mr. ROBINSON : The words uttered by the member for Yilgarn are cheeky, insolent, and unworthy of any member of the House. His colossal ignorance on matters concerning his own profession is only equalled by his impudence on this occasion.

Mr. Bolton : Be a sport.

Mr. ROBINSON : Well, he did not even know where the law library is. Although the Zoo is in my constituency, I agree with the leader of the Opposition. While we have a huge deficiency staring us in the face it is our bounden duty to practice economy wherever we can.

Mr. TAYLOR : I hope the Committee will not be influenced by the heat of the member for Canning. The Committee should view this item as one not coming within the category of economy. The Zoological Gardens are extensively used by the children of Perth and suburbs, and no member should seek to deprive the children of healthful pleasure.

Hon. Frank Wilson : You closed up the children's library.

Mr. TAYLOR : No, my trouble was with the Museum, and children are not very much interested in looking at mummies. The Zoological Gardens fill a place in our children's lives. There is not sufficient money provided now for the satisfactory upkeep of the institution. The burning desire for economy should

not be used for party purposes. Economy should be exercised without unduly injuring anybody. I hope the hon. member who moved the reduction will withdraw it.

Mr. Bolton: If he does I will move it.

Mr. TAYLOR: Party hacks will do anything.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What are you aiming at? Explain yourself.

Mr. TAYLOR: I urge the Committee not to support the reduction.

Mr. GILCHRIST: Will the Acting Treasurer tell us what amount of money was spent last year on additions to the animals in the Zoo?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Unfortunately the report of the Zoological Gardens Committee is not on the Table of the House. It was duly tabled, but has been recalled for some purpose, and is not available at present.

Mr. GILCHRIST: I would support a reduction equivalent to the amount spent in additions last year.

Mr. Taylor: There were no additions.

Mr. GILCHRIST: The gardens are a popular resort for the children and it would be serious to interfere with the vote as suggested. It is necessary to maintain the gardens and feed the animals, and the number of attendants cannot be reduced.

Mr. HARRISON: There should be a reduction if it could be made without materially affecting the upkeep of the gardens.

The Minister for Works: The vote is less now than it was 10 years ago.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We were equipping the gardens then.

Mr. HARRISON: The Minister should state what reduction could be made while maintaining the gardens in their present state.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Without the information asked for it is difficult to vote for any reduction.

The Minister for Lands: Why this hypocrisy? I gave you information on the other votes and you reduced them just the same.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: We have to effect economies wherever possible.

The Minister for Works: You know they cannot do with less than is provided on the Estimates.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I think so, too.

Hon. Frank Wilson: If they have not the money they must.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: When the revenue is short it means we are really maintaining these institutions out of loan money. The Zoo receives certain revenue and it is not likely that it can stand any reduction.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is the revenue also spent?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I think so. A nominal reduction should be made on the understanding that the Minister inquires by how much the vote can be reduced. Surely the Minister should have come prepared with the information. The speeches on the general debate indicated that members were out to economise on every item. If the vote is reduced, it might have to be exceeded.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The Zoological Gardens are a sort of adjunct to the ferries. A big cut should not be made in this vote. I would rather it were reduced by £250. I used to sell the surplus stock from the Zoo and each sale realised £250 or £300, and not only have the board lost this but gate receipts will be considerably less owing to counter attractions. The vote should be retained. To reduce it by £500 would be unreasonable.

The Minister for Lands: The amount provided is the absolute minimum and is considerably less than was provided years ago.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am surprised at the leader of the Opposition moving a reduction to this vote. If anyone has fought to retain it in the past, it has been the hon. member.

Mr. Robinson: He had the money to pay for them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He did not have the money.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Do not talk rubbish.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is a difference between economy and economy run mad.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You do not know what economy is.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Is it practising economy to cut down a vote when that vote is really necessary in order to keep the place up to a certain standard? It is evidently the desire of the leader of the Opposition and the member for Canning to close down the Zoological Gardens.

Mr. Robinson: It is ridiculous to suggest that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If they want to do so let them cut out the vote altogether. On the last occasion that the leader of the Opposition held the position of Premier he promised if he could get an increased vote in respect to this institution to make it free to the public.

Hon. Frank Wilson: If the people had not listened to you they would have got it by this time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have been surprised at the manner in which so many of the votes have been dealt with. It is the first time I have seen opposition on the part of members to spending money in their own districts. It is economy to try and keep our institutions at a proper standard at the lowest possible cost. The leader of the Opposition assured this House repeatedly when the vote was larger than it is to-day that economy had been practised in this particular institution and that it would be impossible to keep the gardens open if the vote was reduced.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I never said that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not say these were your exact words.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I defy you to produce any report containing anything like those words. I never hinted at such a thing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the meaning of what you said.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nothing of the sort.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member's actions to-night have shown that his one desire is to close up these gardens.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is nonsense.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I trust the Committee will not reduce the vote. If they do so it will be to the detriment of the gardens and the people of the State.

Mr. GREEN: I trust the vote will not be reduced. The gardens have a great educational value for the children of the State and besides they afford a happy playground for them as well.

[Mr. Carpenter took the Chair.]

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I take exception to some of the remarks which have fallen especially from the Minister and I shall endeavour to refute the arguments used by another member who spoke just now. It is argued that because I defended this vote on a previous occasion that I must now maintain it at any cost. But the times are utterly different. In the past the item has been increased in order to allow of extension of the gardens, which were not then completely formed. I remember an evening's debate over £500 for a snake house. The item was also increased when tennis lawns were laid down. But when I increased the item I had the money. I fail to understand the attitude of the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green), who has been preaching economy on other matters, but draws a distinction in favour of the Zoological Gardens on the ground that children visit them. Children, however, also visit the parks and the public library, and the parks and library votes have been reduced. The Zoological Gardens have, in addition to the item, gate receipts, which in my time amounted to £1,500 or £1,750 a year. Assume they have dropped to £1,000, and there would still be £4,500 available for this year if the item is not reduced. I would rather increase than decrease the item, but we have not the money, and as reasonable men we should accept a reduction in this case and in every other case where reduction is feasible.

Mr. FOLEY: I trust the Committee will retain the full amount of the item. In my opinion, on certain subjects children can learn more from a day's visit to the Zoo than from a week's tuition in school. My impression of the

Zoological Gardens is that not a penny is wasted there; that all the cats there catch mice. I am much impressed with the difference, on this item, between the late representative and the present representative of Canning. At just about this time of the morning the late member dilated for an hour and a-half on the benefits conferred by the Zoo. The present member for Canning favours reduction of the item.

Mr. Robinson: We are in war time.

Mr. FOLEY: The Zoological Gardens are rendering great service to the State; otherwise I would not vote for the retention of the full amount.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am certain that the heart of the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) bleeds to think that he will have to vote for a partial reduction of this vote. He, like myself, would wish to see the finances in a condition which would enable us to give £10,000 to the Zoological Gardens so that they might be made even better than they are at the present time. We might then also make better use of the medicinal waters which flow there. But taking everything into consideration, I am of the opinion that the item should be reduced as much as possible. There seems to be a doubt as to whether this institution can stand a reduction of such an amount as £500. If that be the case, let us split the difference and make the reduction £250.

Mr. ALLEN: I intend to support the reduction of this item. It is all nonsense to say that if the vote is reduced the Gardens will have to be closed down. If we are in earnest and desire to go in for economies, then let us economise.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have no desire to press my amendment for the reduction of the item by the amount of £500, if hon. members desire that the reduction shall be only £250. By permission of the Committee I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £250.

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

Ayes	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	14

Majority for .. 1

AYER.	
Mr. Allen	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Smith
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. D. J. Stubbs
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Lefroy	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Chesson	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Foley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gilchrist	Mr. Walker
Mr. Green	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Griffiths	(Teller.)
Mr. Hudson	

Amendment thus passed.

Vote (as reduced to £9,700)—put and passed.

Vote—London Agency, £8,317:

Mr. HEITMANN: I wish to draw attention to the steady growth of this vote. Far too much money is being spent in the office of the Agent General. In 1911-12 the expenditure was £4,260. Then it mounted to £4,572, and last year it reached £9,748. This year it appears to show a decrease, but in any case there is not the work doing to justify the expenditure. There is no immigration coming along, and I am afraid there will be no loans to negotiate for a time.

The Minister for Works: Do not be too sure about that.

Mr. HEITMANN: And there are no further boats to buy.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There will be two or three to sell.

Mr. HEITMANN: A general agent could transact that business. I am prepared to vote for a substantial reduction in this department. We have a High Commissioner, notwithstanding which the expenditure on our London Agency is steadily growing.

The Minister for Works: Well, the State is growing too.

Mr. HEITMANN: I wish it was growing in proportion with this vote. I think a considerable reduction is called for here.

Mr. WILLMOTT: It appears to me the apparent decrease shown in this vote, as against last year's, is not a real decrease. There are items here which serve to support that belief. No less than £300 is set down for entertainments, and this on top of a salary of £1,500, and a motor car costing over £700, when the State is supposed to be deep in poverty. I have visited the White City and seen the miserable exhibition there put up by the Agent General's office. It made one almost ashamed of being a West Australian. If we had put up a fair exhibition of our produce we need not have been afraid of anything that Canada could produce. I was not in the least impressed with what I saw there.

Mr. Bolton: Is there something personal between yourself and the Agent General?

Mr. WILLMOTT: No.

6.0 o'clock a.m.

As to procedure.

The Minister for Works: On a point of order, can the hon. member discuss this division of the Estimates? It has been ruled already that this cannot be done.

The Chairman: The question before the Chair is that the vote of £8,317 be agreed to.

Mr. Willmott: That is what I was discussing.

The Minister for Works: The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Holman) has ruled that the hon. member must discuss an item and not the division as a whole.

The Chairman: I have no wish to depart from any ruling given by the Chairman of Committees.

Mr. Willmott: The Minister for Works is wrong. The position was exactly the reverse.

The Minister for Works: No.

The Chairman: If the hon. member intends to move for the reduction of any item, I hope he will do so.

Mr. Foley: On a point of order, when the Chairman of Committees was in the Chair he ruled that a member could discuss only a particular item and would not be allowed to discuss the whole division.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That is not so.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is.

Mr. Foley: I wish to know if your ruling is the same.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Speaking to the point of order, I understood the Chairman of Committees' ruling was exactly the opposite to that stated by the hon. member. I understood that on the first item the whole subject could be discussed.

The Minister for Works: No, the whole subject can be discussed on the introduction of the Estimates.

The Chairman: The hon. member is not in order in discussing the whole division. I understand the ruling was as stated by the Minister for Works and supported by the member for Leonora, that any discussion on this division must deal with a particular item.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: But that the whole division can be covered on the first item.

The Chairman: I do not see how the vote can be discussed unless an item is mentioned.

Mr. Willmott: Then it is applying the gag.

Mr. Robinson: A ruling was given when we were considering the Government motor car service and I was confined to discussing the vote of £955, which was the total of the whole of the items.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I wish to speak on item No. 19.

Mr. Willmott: I wish to speak on item No. 1.

Committee Resumed.

Item—Agent General, £1,500.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I was speaking on this item when I was howled down by the Minister for Works. I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £500.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: You cannot do that; it is the subject of an agreement.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Members know that it is impossible to reduce this item without doing a personal injury to the Agent General. The term of his office is fixed at a salary of £1,500 per year and if we reduce his salary it would be tantamount to a personal attack on him which is not justified.

MR. WILLMOTT: I have already said there was nothing personal in my attitude. I am surprised at the statement of the Minister for Lands.

MR. ALLEN: The Minister forced you into doing something of the kind.

HON. H. B. LEFROY: Any economy desired should not affect the salary of the Agent General. His is practically a statutory appointment for three years and the salary is fixed at £1,500 a year.

MR. WILLMOTT: Is he there for the next three years?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: No, he has 18 months to go.

HON. H. B. LEFROY: The salary is not too great for the position. I see that the Agent General gets the benefit of an entertainment allowance which was not previously attached to the office. I know that in 1904 the Estimates for the department were in the region of £4,000.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is a big difference now. The head office is larger, for instance.

HON. H. B. LEFROY: The Agent General has no more work to do now than he had then. The indenting of course adds to the expense of the Department, but there is a difference in regard to the engineering branch.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: I hope the Leader of the Country Party will not persist in his amendment. It would be unfair to the present holder of the position of Agent General to reduce the salary. Indeed, it would be a breach of faith to do so, and illegal. The matter of economies in the office could be discussed at some future period when a new Agent General is appointed. It seems to me that the increase which has been spoken of has been caused largely in the engineering branch. That in itself would account for several thousands of pounds a year.

MR. WILLMOTT: In view of the circumstances, I will ask for leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Item—Inspecting Engineer, £576.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: In the old days this engineering work was all done by private engineers, and the system was found to be unsatisfactory and expensive. It was then decided to send from Western Australia an engineer to take charge of inspections and attend to the indenting. This system has shown an economy over the previous system. Recently there was a suggestion to economise in the number of engineers, and it was proposed that the service of, I think, the second engineer be dispensed with. The Commissioner of Railways, however, made a special appeal for the retention of the engineer, going so far as to ask that, if the question was one of economising on the Agent General's office, the salary might be paid out of the Railway Department vote, so that the department could still have the protection of this indenting officer.

Item—Extra Clerical Assistance, £184:

MR. O'LOGHLEN: I move an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

There is absolutely no reason for this item, although it is a small one, and its excision will be an intimation to the Agent General that we want economy.

MR. HEITMANN: Before the amendment is put, the Government have a right to give some information. The vote is growing without any information as to the reason for its growth. One would almost think that "coming events cast their shadows before," and that the big arm chair is being got ready.

HON. H. B. LEFROY: The same item appeared last year, and apparently it is provided annually to be used if required. An amount of £1,844 is provided for the Indenting Office. Years ago all this work was done by an agent on commission. The question of the most economical method was discussed in this Parliament during many sessions, and eventually it was decided to take the work from the private engineer

or agent and to appoint an inspecting engineer of our own in the Agent General's office.

Mr. Heitmann: Why is an engineer required for that work?

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: An engineer is needed to inspect locomotives, rolling stock, permanent way material, and so forth purchased by the Government in Great Britain and Europe. The assistant engineer would be sent to Belgium, for example, if material was purchased there. The item of clerical assistance, I take it, is really necessary for the carrying out of the work of the Indenting Office.

The Minister for Lands: I think we could do without the item this year.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: There will not be so much indenting this year.

Amendment put and passed, the item struck out.

Item—Incidental, including Postage, Stationery, Travelling, Rent, Fuel, including British Income Tax, etc., £3,400.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I intend to move a reduction of £400 in this item. I think every member is agreed that the work is not so great this year, and the reduced amount would be, in the circumstances, ample.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £1,000.

In connection with this item I would like the Minister to explain why the Agent General's British income tax is lumped with other items this year, and how much will be paid on account of it. In the past we have always had an item of £87 for the Agent General's income tax.

Hon. H. B. Lefroy: That represented the tax on the salaries of various officers employed in the agency.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: This year, we know, the British income tax is considerably increased. Though not objecting to payment of the amount, I think we should know how much it is.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A reduction of £1,000 is going to extremes. There is certain incidental expenditure which must be provided for, and a reduction of £1,000 will mean that the

item must be excessed, unless we interfere with the working of the Agent General's office. The reduction first mentioned, of £400, would leave the Agent General probably in a position to carry on the work, because this year there will not be as much travelling, nor will cablegrams, postages, and so forth be as heavy, as in previous years.

Mr. James Gardiner: And the Immigration Office is gone.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. As regard income tax, we do not yet know what the amount will be this year, though we know it will represent a substantial increase.

Hon. H. B. Lefroy: I think it will be about £150 on the Agent General's salary alone.

Mr. TAYLOR: I hope the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) will withdraw his amendment. When hon. members generally are desirous of economising on an item, it is unfair that too high a reduction should be moved. The Minister for Lands has said that £1,000 is too large a reduction to permit of the proper working of the office.

Mr. GREEN: I am given to understand by a person who has been in the old country that the Agent General is greatly engrossed with his military duties, and that half the time he is in camp. What is the position of a State officer out here who goes into camp? Does his civil pay cease? Sir Newton Moore is drawing a fairly large salary and I only regret that he is immune from reduction. The officers of the London Agency do not appear to be impressed with the fact that we are greatly concerned about effecting economies at the present time. So far as immigration and the flotation of loans is concerned there cannot be very much work to do in the London office, and therefore Sir Newton Moore, as a side line, is amusing himself with military matters.

Mr. Taylor: That is unfair.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £400.

Amendment passed.

Item—Expenses incurred by the Agent General in Entertaining, £300.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I move an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

Amendment passed, the item struck out.

Vote (as reduced to £7,433)—put and passed.

Votes—Public Service Commissioner, £1,635; Taxation, £14,246—agreed to.

Vote—Workers' Homes Board, £4,307:

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Will the Minister explain whether it is necessary to employ practically the same staff at the present juncture. I notice that there is a slight reduction. I would like to hear whether, in view of the fact that the erection of the majority of these homes has been stopped, it is necessary to still keep all the officers employed, and whether it would not be possible to transfer some to other departments.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member will notice that there has been a reduction so far as the number of clerks is concerned, some of them having been transferred to other departments. At the same time there is still a considerable amount of work to be done in the way of collecting rents and watching the buildings to see that they are not knocked about. The Board are working on as low a margin as it is possible for them to do considering their ramifications.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Miscellaneous Services, £46,253:

Item—Parks, Recreation Grounds, etc., £3,000.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Last year the amount expended was £2,003 and this year it has been increased to £3,000. Will the Minister explain the increase?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There has been great discontent amongst members of the Chamber because of the amount of money made available for other parks and reserves. Last year several members complained of the attitude of the Government in economising in regard to this particular vote, and consequently some of the reserves which did not get anything last year will be paid this year. The object is simply

to put the vote on a higher basis than it was on last year. The increase is due to the representations which were made by hon. members.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I move an amendment—

That this item be reduced by £300.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Will the Minister tell us what amount was voted for King's Park last year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The distribution last year was, :—Melville Roads Board £100, King's Park £1,725, Monger's Lake Board £127 15s., and the Mundaring Weir Grounds £50.

Mr. FOLEY: As the result of some improvements at King's Park recently a considerable quantity of timber became available for marketing. A portion of it was sold, and to that extent the State reaped some benefit, but I regret to say the balance was wantonly burnt by the caretaker.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: No, it was sold.

Mr. FOLEY: It is monstrous to think that this wood should have been burnt when so many poor families must be in want of firewood.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Did you see it burnt?

Mr. FOLEY: Yes, I saw it.

Mr. Willmott: So did I.

Mr. FOLEY: If the King's Park Board cannot conserve the interests of the State better than to allow valuable firewood to be destroyed, a reduction of their vote will teach them a lesson in economy.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am afraid the hon. member has been misinformed. As a member of the King's Park Board I know what takes place up there. A good deal of useless timber and undergrowth has been cut away, but the only wood burnt was not worth carting off. A considerable quantity of timber was cut and stacked, and Whittaker Bros. offering the highest price for it, they got it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Were tenders called for the purchase?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No, but quotations were secured, and Whittaker Bros. gave a very good price for it. It was of little use for firewood. A few old logs may have been burnt in the park,

but they were immense tuart logs which could not be carted away. The roads in the park being only light gravel, the wood had to be taken out in specially small loads on broad tyres.

Mr. ALLEN : I am glad to have heard the explanation in regard to this matter, because I hope the vote will not be reduced. The board have had a good deal of trouble getting through with what money was available for them. It is very necessary that the park should not be allowed to go back.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER : With the permission of the Committee I will now make my amendment definite and move that the King's Park Board's item be reduced by £300. I understand a fair amount of work has been done up there out of the War Unemployment Fund, and the park must bear its fair share of reduction.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : The hon. member does not realise the position. This is the national park of Western Australia, and it was made to suffer a reduction last year. The work done by the unemployed would not have been done by any other means. The £1,725 is used wholly on maintenance. It is a struggle to get through on that. Last summer the roads got in a bad condition and more than the amount of the saving will probably be required to repair them. The board are working on an overdraft and if the item is cut down, the park cannot be maintained.

Mr. Bolton : The same argument applies to the Zoo and to the Museum which you voted to cut down.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : But for the assistance given by the Honorary Minister in providing work at the park for the unemployed it would be in a bad condition indeed.

Mr. ALLEN : What was the amount voted last year ?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : It was reduced from £2,500.

Mr. ALLEN : The roads in the park should not be allowed to go to pieces. The park is used for the recreation of the people and cheeseparing of this kind is detrimental and will necessitate the expenditure of a larger sum later on.

The Perth City Council are spending more money on parks in the City than the whole of this vote.

Mr. ROBINSON : Under last year's Estimates King's Park was cut down from £2,500 to £1,725.

Mr. E. B. Johnston : The rest of the State got practically nothing.

Mr. ROBINSON : Comparisons have been drawn between the Zoo, the Public Library, and the Art Gallery, but they were not interfered with last year. Those institutions have, so far, received their full quota during the period of the war. Instead of 12 men working at the park the number has been reduced to five, and only by the assistance of some of the unemployed were the board able to struggle through.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : Even then the overdraft was increased.

Mr. ROBINSON : If the vote is further decreased, I cannot see how the park can be maintained. An appeal to the public last year resulted in a considerable sum being raised.

Mr. O'Loughlen : Possibly another appeal would be successful.

Mr. ROBINSON : There have been so many calls upon the pockets of the people lately that any success could not be expected. Only the summer rains saved the roads in the park. Anyone who knows the work of the board is satisfied with it, and the board are fairly representative of all sections. A horse and cart which were formerly used have been sold, and the number of men cannot very well be further reduced if the roads are to be watered. The board have received a report that the roads were so worn owing to the lack of water that several hundreds of pounds will be required to reinstate them. This is a national park and it must be maintained. If the roads are allowed to wear through, it will cost £5,000 to put them in order.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : I hope the vote will not be reduced. The fact of decreasing the vote would not necessarily represent economy. If we allowed the show place of Western Australia to get into a state of disrepair, it would be false economy. Practically the whole

of this vote is expended on the maintenance of the park and for the employment of necessary labour, and if it is reduced a number of workmen will be thrown out of employment. It would be unfair to allow the park to fall into disrepair and to throw men out of employment when they would have little opportunity to obtain work elsewhere.

7 o'clock a.m.

Mr. GREEN: I trust that the amendment will be carried. Even on the proposed amendment it will mean that the King's Park Board will take nearly half the old vote on public parks. It is true it is a national park; but it is also a natural park, and as such can be managed with very little attention. On the goldfields it is impossible to have a foot of park without a large expenditure of water and labour. The beauty spots in and around the metropolitan area are many and varied, but the parks on the goldfields and in many of the country districts are the only beauty spots which exist. Once cease work upon these and stop the expenditure of money and there cease to exist these oases in the desert. I think we can effect this slight economy.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It would be much fairer if the item was left as it is and if £300 was taken off the whole vote. As it is at present we are voting a £1,000 increase for other parts of the State and taking £300 off the King's Park vote. If the vote is to be reduced let all the parks in the State share equally in the loss with King's Park.

The Minister for Works: You have been preaching economy all night; now practise it.

Mr. FOLEY: There is a danger in carrying out what the hon. member for Perth desires. The danger is that the outside parks will not get a fair proportion of the amount, for the reason that the King's Park board would be continually waiting on the door-step of the Minister and would put such a good case before him that the amount would still be given to them and the other parks be left in the cold.

Point of Order.

Mr. Heitmann: I move—

That the question be now put.

Mr. Taylor: The hon. member cannot move such a motion. The question is "that the question be now put." The Standing Orders will not permit him to move such a motion.

Mr. Green: Why waste time?

Mr. Taylor: I am not wasting time.

The Chairman: What is your point of order?

Mr. Taylor: The motion is "that the question be now put." Under the Standing Orders we cannot recognise such a motion. The question ought to be "that the Committee do now divide."

Mr. Heitmann: That is the question which I asked should be put.

Mr. Taylor: The hon. member did not put it that way.

The Minister for Lands: Chair!

Mr. Taylor: I bow to the Chair. There is no intention on my part to be disrespectful.

The Chairman: Has the hon. member finished presenting his point of order?

Mr. Taylor: My point of order is this—is the hon. member in order in moving that such a question should be put by you? I was getting to my seat at the time. The question should be "that the Committee should now divide."

The Chairman: The hon. member for Geraldton intended to move it in that way.

Mr. Taylor: I am not responsible for the hon. member's intentions.

The Chairman: When the discussion ceased the hon. member put the motion in that form, namely, "that the question be now put." I am quite aware that this is not strictly in order, and that the motion should be "that the Committee do now divide." If the hon. member raises the point that the motion should be put in that way I will give the hon. member for Geraldton an opportunity of putting it in that form.

Mr. Heitmann: I move—

That the Committee do now divide.

The Chairman: The question now is—
That the Committee do now divide.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Surely Sir, you will give an hon. member the right to speak?

The Chairman: The question has been put.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I would respectfully point out to you that the hon. member put the wrong question. You had accepted the point of order, and I rose to my feet for the purpose of speaking.

The Chairman: What do you want to speak about?

Hon. Frank Wilson: I want to speak upon item No. 23.

The Chairman: I have allowed the hon. member to move his motion in the correct form. I must put the question. Indeed I have already done so.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have no right, I claim, Sir, to put the motion when a member is on his feet.

The Chairman: I did not see the hon. member on his feet at the time I put the motion. I cannot have an hon. member discussing a question when I have put it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I claim, Sir, that you are wrong.

The Chairman: If the hon. member wishes he can dispute my ruling, but he must do so in the proper manner.

[The Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. Carpenter: I have received from the leader of the Opposition the following objection:—

I object to the Chairman's ruling that he would permit the member for Geraldton to alter his motion "That the question be now put" to "That the Committee do now divide" when other members had risen to speak to the question before the Committee.

I wish to explain that the member for Geraldton moved his motion in the form "That the question be now put." A point of order was raised that this was not the correct form. I thereupon gave the member for Geraldton an opportunity of cor-

recting his motion, and he did so at once. I did not observe any member rise before the member for Geraldton had made that correction. Therefore I claim that I was right in allowing the member for Geraldton to put his motion in the form recognised by our Standing Orders.

The Deputy Speaker: An objection has been raised by the leader of the Opposition. We have heard the Chairman's explanation, and I would allow the leader of the Opposition now to make a statement.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The position was this. The member for Geraldton moved "That the question be now put," which is contrary to our Standing Orders in Committee. A member must move "That the Committee do now divide." The member for Mount Margaret took exception, and rose to a point of order. The Chairman recognised that the point of order was good. Therefore there was nothing before the Committee. I immediately rose to speak to the question before the Committee and the member for Canning rose at the same time. Notwithstanding that, the Chairman said he would permit the member for Geraldton to amend his motion; in other words, to adopt the right phraseology; and the Chairman refused to permit me to speak. Therefore I took exception to his ruling.

The Deputy Speaker: If the member for Geraldton moved "That the question be now put" that would not be in order.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He did, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: It is specially laid down in the Standing Orders how to move that a question be decided at once, and every member should be conversant with the Standing Orders. If a member desires a question to be put without further discussion, he must move "That the House divide." Had the matter rested at that, I would have had no hesitation in deciding that the Chairman's ruling was not the correct one. But the Chairman, in his explanation, states that after the member for Geraldton had moved "That the question be now put," and when ob-

jection was raised by the member for Mount Margaret, he, the Chairman, allowed the member for Geraldton to put his motion in the amended form "That the Committee do now divide." The Chairman further states that he accepted the amended motion.

Hon. Frank Wilson: When we were on our feet.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chairman is the only person who can decide which member has the floor at the time. I can only accept the Chairman's explanation that he saw the member for Geraldton and—

Hon. Frank Wilson: The member for Geraldton was not on his feet at all then; he was sitting in his chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order No. 160 reads as follows:—

A motion, "That the House do now divide," moved and seconded, shall take precedence of all other business, and shall be immediately put from the Chair without any discussion taking place: Provided, that no such motion can be made so as to interrupt a member while speaking.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The motion of the member for Geraldton was not seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members will realise that as the House was in Committee no seconder was required. I can only accept the decision of the Chairman that the member for Geraldton had an opportunity of amending, and did amend, his motion to the proper form.

Hon. Frank Wilson: When I was on my feet.

The Deputy Speaker: The chairman of any meeting is the only person who can decide as to the question of order or as to what member has the right to speak. That being the position, I must uphold the Chairman's ruling, and say that the motion of the member for Geraldton, having been amended to "That the Committee do now divide," is absolutely in order.

Committee resumed.

[*Mr. Carpenter took the Chair.*]

Motion (That the Committee do now divide) put and negatived.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Will the Minister explain how it was that last year only £2,003 was expended out of the vote of £3,000? If £2,003 was sufficient last year, why is it necessary to vote £3,000 again this year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have already explained the position. Last year King's Park got its full vote of £1,725 and the remainder of the vote, making up the £2,000 was spent in the coastal districts. The whole of the vote therefore was spent in the coastal districts and nothing went to the goldfields. The proposal this year is to see that the goldfields get their quota.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: There is already £750 provided for coastal grounds which is an increase of £500.

Mr. Robinson: In the King's Park there are seven miles of roads to be maintained.

Mr. GARDINER: I can, if the Committee desires, make my amendment to provide that the reduction shall be £300 or ten per cent. all round.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amount is small enough now; why make any reduction at all?

Mr. MUNSIE: I am going to protest against a reduction of the goldfields vote being made. Every time the Estimates have come before us I have protested against the undue amount allocated to the parks and reserves in the metropolitan area. I will support the reduction if it is to be made apply exclusively to the King's Park Board, but if there is anything to come off the country districts I will oppose it.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	13
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	5
				—

AYES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Foley	Mr. Smith
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Williams
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Bolte
Mr. Hudson	
Mr. Lefroy	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Aunsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Connolly	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Green	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Johnston
Mr. Johnston	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Item—Control of Trade in War Time Royal Commission, £2,000.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: As the continuation of it was thrown out in another place I assume this item will automatically cease.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, there cannot be any expenditure on it.

Item—Grain and Foodstuff Board, £1,000.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: What is the position in respect to this item?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The board has gone out of existence, and so the vote will only be used to the extent of settling up. Like the Royal Commission, the board has ceased to exist, and so nothing can be expended from the vote except what may be required for cleaning up.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Have the Colliery Coal Commission ceased their labours?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is not proposed during the present financial year to proceed with that Commission.

Item—Police Benefit Fund Refund Service Fees, £500.

Mr. O'LOUGHLIN: Are the papers dealing with this fund available, and what is the position of the fund? I have a special reason for asking. I do not think the police have much say as to their representation on the board controlling the fund.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot give the exact state of the fund,

but I may say an election is being held at present for two members of the board.

Mr. O'Loughlin: What is the use of holding an election when the man elected is not put on?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That has not happened recently. Two representatives of the police are being elected now.

Item—Grant to Pharmaceutical Council, £43.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Why is this grant made?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This item is to provide a railway pass in connection with the administration of the Poisons Act.

Mr. O'LOUGHLIN: Has the administration of this Act been handed over to this council?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That was the case in years past.

Mr. O'LOUGHLIN: We have public officers to administer the various Acts, and it is strange that this one should be handed over to the Pharmaceutical council. It does not appear to be an economical arrangement.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I move an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

The Government have struck out more important items pertaining to other boards.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Some years ago the pharmaceutical society administered the Poisons Act. They went to a lot of trouble, and saved the country great expense. It was represented to the Government that they were worthy of a railway pass, because the secretary had to travel to different portions of the State, and the council were granted £40 to cover the expense of this pass. This is an economical arrangement for the Government, because the Act is administered for the cost of a railway ticket, and this amounts to only a book-keeping entry because the money is returned to the Government through the Railway Department.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In view of the explanation I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Item—Departmental advertising except Railways and State steamship service, £2,000.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Will the Minister give some explanation of this new item?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are bringing all our advertising, other than in connection with the departments mentioned, under one heading, and under one vote. At present there are various votes and the book-keeping involved is enormous. In order to concentrate this expenditure and reduce the cost of book-keeping, the items have been put into one total. Incidentals are also largely concentrated instead of being distributed amongst various departments.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What was the expenditure last year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The amount provided this year is less than the total expenditure for last year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Could not we do without it?

Item—Grant to Yalgoo Roads Board, clearing street at Warriedar, £25.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I thought these votes always appeared under the Works Department? That is where they should appear.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This matter was settled between the Under Secretary for Works and the Under Treasurer.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know, but it is being paid from my vote.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This will empower two departments to make these grants. The Minister for Works should control such expenditure.

The Minister for Lands: So he does; this is a mistake.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister for Works does not seem to know much about it.

Vote (as reduced to £45,953) put and passed.

[This completed the Estimates of the Colonial Treasurer's Department.]

[The Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

BILL—COTTESLOE BEACH RATES VALIDATION.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT—ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SHOW.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [7.47]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Thursday, the 7th October, at 4.30 p.m.

Question passed.

House adjourned at 7.48 a.m. (Wednesday.)

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 7th October, 1915.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—ADVANCES TO INDUSTRIES.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What amount has been advanced in cash or by guarantee under the Agricultural Bank Act and the Savings Bank Act to persons engaged in any industry? 2, Names of persons ob-