

provinces objecting to the Minister taking control. But apparently there must be some mutual understanding between the various municipalities concerned. Mr. Nicholson has not raised the same objection to the distribution, but he now suggests that it would be better if the local authorities collected the money. I am not convinced that a case has been made out for taking any of the control from the Minister. It is the divided control of the past which has been responsible for the clause. It appeals to me as a solution of the difficulty. I fail to see that any new department will be set up, for we have all the necessary machinery to-day. Since the Minister is to distribute the funds, he should be the one to collect them. The amendment affects the whole principle of the Bill. I will support the clause.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: None of the arguments advanced have influenced me in the least. I see no occasion for amending the clause, but I fully sympathise with the position of Mr. Nicholson, and I feel it has not been customary to take divisions on what might be regarded as vital points in a Bill on Thursday afternoon, when many of our members have left to go home. However, it will be necessary from this day forward to sit on Thursday evenings, and perhaps even to meet on Fridays. I am agreeable to reporting progress.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

#### RESOLUTION—WHEAT PRODUCTION, PRICE GUARANTEE.

##### Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting concurrence in the following resolution of that House:—"That in the opinion of this House it is in the best interests of Australia that the sum of 5s. per bushel at the sidings should be guaranteed by the Commonwealth Government to growers of wheat for a term of five years."

#### BILL—SUPPLY, £975,000.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

#### SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colbatch—East) [6.9]: Now that you are back in the Chair, Sir, I should like to intimate to hon. members, as I indicated in Committee just now, that for the remainder of the session it is my intention to sit on Thursday evenings as well as other evenings; and I may find it necessary to ask hon. members to meet on Fridays as well.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th October, 1919.

Questions :	Page
Hampton Plains, woodline extension ...	1123
Royal Commission, National Workers	1123
Firewood companies, concession and agreement	1123
Standing Orders Suspension ...	1123
Leave of Absence ...	1124
Bills: Supply, £975,000, all stages ...	1124
Bunbury Common ...	1124
Land and Income Tax, 2s. ...	1125
Perth Mint Act Amendment ...	1127
Annual Estimates: Votes and items discussed ...	1128

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

#### QUESTION — HAMPTON PLAINS, WOODLINE EXTENSION.

Mr. LUTEY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Have the Lakeside Woodline Company, under their present concession, power to run a spur line to, or near, the new find at Hampton Plains without consulting the Government? 2, If not, will the Government consult Parliament before they grant the company permission to do so?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Mines) replied: 1, Yes, but the permit to construct the line is for the carrying of firewood and purposes incidental thereto. 2, No application to extend the powers granted under the permit has been made to the Government. Should this be done, and Parliament is in session, Parliament will be immediately informed of the fact.

#### QUESTION — ROYAL COMMISSION, NATIONAL WORKERS.

Mr. GREEN (for Mr. Jones) asked the Premier: 1, Does the amount of £140 0s. 5d., given as the cost of the Royal Commission on the National workers up to 23rd October, 1919, include the amount, if any, paid to witnesses? 2, Is it the Government's intention to make Mr. Lazarus (O.B.E.) a permanent Commissioner?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No payments are being made to witnesses. 2, No.

#### QUESTION—FIREWOOD COM- PANIES, CONCESSION AND AGREEMENT.

Mr. MUNSIE (without notice) asked the Premier: When will he make available the papers relative to the Kurrawang Firewood Company and the Lakeside Firewood Company which were ordered by the House on the 15th October to be laid on the Table?

The PREMIER replied: I do not know why the papers are not here. I will see that they are here on Tuesday. I am sorry the hon. member did not mention the matter to me, when I would have brought them along.

## STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.35]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill and also the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill through all their stages in one day.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.36]: It ought not to be necessary to suspend the Standing Orders in order to obtain supply while Parliament is in session. I can understand the necessity for that course on the first day of the session.

The Premier: I overlooked the matter, and to-morrow is the last day of the month.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the Premier overlooked the matter, of course the House will meet it. But I observe that the latter part of the motion asks for the suspension of the Standing Orders with a view to allowing the passage in one sitting of the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill, which measure appears as an Order of the Day for the second reading. Before we suspend the Standing Orders to put a Bill through all its stages, we ought to have an explanation why that course is necessary.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [4.37]: The fault lies with me in not asking for supply earlier. The need of it escaped my attention. To-morrow is the last day of the month, and so it became necessary yesterday to give this notice of motion. The Estimates now being before the House, the passing of a Supply Bill is not of the same importance as in the early part of the session. I regret the omission. As regards the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill, the Commissioner of Taxation yesterday sent me a note requesting that the Bill be put through in order that he may send out notices making assessments. If the House has any objection to passing the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill, of course that is another matter; but I hope hon. members will pass the measure, which is practically the same Bill as that of last year. The matter is really a formal one. I hope the House will agree to the motion.

Question put and passed.

## BILL—SUPPLY, £975,000.

All Stages.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

Committee of Supply.

The House having resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. Munsie in the Chair,

The PREMIER and COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.41]: I move—

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the service of the year ending the 30th June, 1920, a sum not exceeding £975,000.

Owing to an error on the part of the Treasury, the figures in the Supply Bill are £30,000 too much; and later I propose to ask hon. members to agree to an amendment in the fifth line of the Title of the Bill, changing £380,000 to £350,000.

Question put and passed; resolution reported, and the report adopted.

Supply Bill introduced.

Resolution in Committee of Ways and Means having been passed, a Supply Bill was brought in providing for the expenditure of £975,000.

In Committee.

Mr. Munsie in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Issue and application of £975,000:

The PREMIER: Hon. members will notice that there is a clerical error in the printing of this clause. The clause states that the sum to be employed out of the General Loan Fund is £330,000, whereas it should be £350,000:

The CHAIRMAN: This will have to be treated as a clerical error and altered accordingly. The title of the Bill has been correctly read in accordance with the Message received from the Governor. I cannot allow any amendment to be moved to that because it would put the whole Bill out of order.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—agreed to.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

## BILL—BUNBURY COMMON.

Introduced by the Attorney General and read a first time.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Mullany, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Foley (Leonora), on the ground of urgent public business.

## BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX.

## Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is the same as that passed last year except with regard to pastoral leases. The land tax last year was the same as that proposed for this year, and the same thing applies to the income tax of last year and that proposed for this year, the only difference being in regard to pastoral leases. The method of calculating the amount of tax is to multiply by 20 the rent reserved under the lease. As hon. members know, many of the pastoralists are now paying double rent, because of the Act passed in 1918 giving the pastoralists the right to renew their leases. The pastoralists, therefore, pay double rent and I think they should pay tax on that double rent. Under this amending Bill the tax will be calculated on twenty times the amount of the rent that is now paid, which is double the rent reserved under the lease in each case. A man who was paying 10s. per thousand acres is now paying £1 per thousand acres instead of 10s., and it is only right that he should pay a tax of twenty times on the pound instead of twenty times on the 10s.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What difference does it make when they pay only the one tax?

The PREMIER: It will make some difference.

Hon. P. Collier: The tax will be doubled.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do not most of the pastoralists pay one tax?

The PREMIER: The hon. member is right. If the income tax is greater than the land tax, the pastoralist only pays on the greater tax.

Hon. P. Collier: How will it be when the appraisement is made? Will it not mean that the squatter will have escaped the payment of tax from year to year?

The PREMIER: He has escaped up to now. I am told that it will take some years before the rents are properly assessed. We ought to tax on the actual amount of the rent paid. It will be readily understood that, if we are to impose a land tax, there must be some basis of calculation, and the basis we are adopting is twenty times the amount of rent now paid. This amendment is the only new thing in the Bill. I do not suppose a very large sum will be collected; still some money will be collected, and it is my duty to ask the House to rectify the situation. I shall not call it an omission because the rents have only recently been doubled. The leader of the Opposition was quite right in saying that when these lands are re-assessed, the value to be taxed will be altered, but we can only deal with the situation as we find it.

Mr. Willcock: Cannot we insert a provision in this measure subject to re-appraisement?

The PREMIER: I do not think so; it might cause confusion.

The Honorary Minister: These properties change hands.

Mr. Willcock: The tax is on the land no matter who the owner is.

The PREMIER: It will have the effect of doubling the present tax in every case.

Hon. P. Collier: The Commissioner of Taxation was a long time waking up to this fact.

The PREMIER: I think it should have been done before. However, I am taking the earliest possible opportunity to rectify what I think was an omission, but it is not long since the rents were doubled.

Hon. P. Collier: Two years.

The PREMIER: I ask the House to agree to the proposal, and to impose the taxation which was imposed on land last year. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.2]: After hearing the glowing accounts from the Premier regarding the future prospects of this State, I am very much surprised that such a Bill should be introduced.

The Premier: Do not you want any taxes?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is no doubt the Premier's optimism is so great that he considers the State is now on the high road to recovery, and will in all probability right itself at a very early date. That being so, I do not know why the Premier considers it necessary to introduce a Bill of this description this year.

The Premier: There is an estimated deficit of £600,000.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is true there will be a deficit, but the deficit will continue to increase so long as we provide additional revenue for the Government. Members will find from the Estimates that the estimated revenue has increased by approximately £358,000, but the proposed expenditure has increased by £394,000 which shows that, so long as we provide more revenue for the Government, that revenue is not used for the purpose, as Parliament intended, of reducing the deficit, but the expenditure is increased proportionately; and we are as badly off at the end of the year as if we had not provided additional revenue. It is time the House took a hand and showed the Government that it is necessary to bring our finances into a better position than they are in to-day. The Premier as good as said that, if the future of this State is to be successful, and if our financial position in the future is to be good, we must not take more money out of the pockets of the people.

The Premier: I did not say anything of the sort; I am asking you to do it now.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am referring to the Premier's statement of a week or two ago. He then said it was necessary for those engaged in industries to retain the money for the development of the industries. He said the State would right itself

much quicker if the people retained the money in their own pockets, and thus were enabled to produce more than would be the case if we taxed the people further and took more money from them. The Premier has been very optimistic regarding the future of the State. I do not blame him; we need an optimistic man in charge of the affairs of the State to-day, but the optimism should go a little further. It is useless to be optimistic about the future if, at the same time, we take more money out of the pockets of the people. If the Premier really believes in the policy he preaches, it is necessary to leave the money in the pockets of the people and not introduce a Bill such as this to take more money from them. The incidence of taxation in this State is very unfair. If members refer to the latest return of the Commissioner of Taxation, they will find that the land tax has decreased considerably while the income tax has increased by a very small amount.

The Premier: That was due to an overcharge in the previous year.

Hon. P. Collier: Even allowing for that, it has decreased.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The present position warrants the House in letting taxation go for a while until we can put the incidence of taxation on a more equitable footing than it is to-day. The owner of city property, which is being let out to tenants, is exempt from land tax in his income tax. He pays only one tax. The worker who, through the increased cost of living can scarcely make both ends meet—in fact a large percentage of them are in debt—if he owns a cottage, has to pay land tax and income tax, both. Yet the man with city property is exempt from one tax. Further, we find that the owner of city property, if the premises are let to a tenant, charges the equivalent of his taxation on to the tenant, and the owner is personally really exempt from both land and income tax.

The Premier: He would be a pretty simple tenant to stand that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have instances of where that has been done. It was stated distinctly and definitely by one of the richest firms in this State that, so long as the Federal and State Governments increased taxation, they intended to increase their rents to make up the amount of taxation due. The taxes collected to-day are passed on in most instances, and a large amount of these taxes has become a burden on the people. The pastoralists paid very high taxation last year, but they could afford to do so on the price of wool. If we compare the taxation last year with the taxation they paid under ordinary conditions, I do not suppose it has increased in anything like the same proportion as the value of their produce. This has been brought about by the increased value of wool, owing to the war, and the State has benefited as a result. Coming to the salaried man, however, taxation has jumped from £16,000 to

£73,000, and consequently such men have a hard job to live and pay their way. They have to pay the double tax, both land and income tax, and I am safe in saying that out of the £34,000 raised by land taxation last year, mostly all of it came from these workers. Most of the farmers last year paid a small increase in income tax instead of land tax, one tax from which they are exempt. We have prospects of a good harvest. We have had bountiful rains and we realise from the remarks of the Premier that a very large sum of money will be brought into the State during the present year as a result of the harvest. Regarding the pastoral industry, we are told that the wool clip in 1918 was double that of 1914. The flocks of sheep and herds of cattle are increasing by thousands. The pastoral wealth of the State has never been so great, and has never shown such promise of expansion as it does now.

Hon. P. Collier: It was never better.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Additional areas for agricultural settlement are being taken up by the thousand. The outlook in the gold mining industry has not been so bright for several years; in fact, we are told that the Hampton Plains find will probably excel the Kalgoorlie field.

The Premier: Who told you that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We know how the country jumped ahead after the discovery of the Coolgardie goldfield. We then had money to burn. The finances of the State were so buoyant, as a result of the ordinary revenue coming in, that money was actually wasted. Buildings were erected in those days which to-day would be considered a scandal. Our pearling industry was never so encouraging; shell to-day is bringing a record price. The timber industry is so buoyant that all that is required are ships to take our timber to the markets. The dairying industry is making rapid strides. The pig-growing industry has expanded and bacon factories are being started in almost every part of the State. We are told that more money will be brought into Western Australia during the present year, owing to the increased activities in our various industries and to the generally bright prospects, than the State has ever known before.

Mr. Green: You forgot to mention that the fowls, too, are working overtime.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That being so, I think we can with confidence ask members to do away with additional taxation this year. Let us prove the justification or otherwise of the Premier's optimism.

The Premier: You are trying to improve on it, are you not?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Let us put faith in the Premier.

Hon. P. Collier: For one year, anyhow.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Let us try to make ourselves believe what the Premier believes. The Premier said the other night

that he would endeavour to show during the debate the effect of increased trade upon the finances. He pointed out that the outlook all over the State was particularly bright for all the great industries. He said there was a great and growing demand for land in our pastoral and agricultural areas. According to the Premier, people are rushing the departments to engage in our primary industries. Taxation was introduced at a time when the State was at a low ebb, when it was necessary to build up the finances. To-day the improved condition of the country is doing that, and consequently there is no necessity for a Taxation Bill.

Mr. Davies: Do you say that seriously?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member will find out presently. The Premier showed that the loss on the Railways last year was £395,794 as against a profit of £128,160 in 1914. He said that they would be sure to pick up their traffic again at an early date. He remarked that the timber traffic would be restored and should increase the railway earnings to the pre-war figures.

The Premier. That was in respect of timber.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier, proceeding, said that would represent an increased revenue of from £175,000 to £200,000. Agriculture, he said, should produce 200,000 tons of additional freight and should show next season an increase of 250,000 acres under crop. Pastoral rents would increase not only by increased rents on present leases but by the leasing of additional lands; the settlement of soldiers would probably reach 4,000 men, and the early return to an active immigration policy would increase production without dislocating employment. In all departments he anticipated increased earnings. Then there was the mining revival and the new find at Hampton Plains, the demand for raw products at high prices, and the increase of shipping. Best of all, our soldiers had returned from the war—an important factor, considering that 40 per cent. of our effective manhood had been away serving their country. It was, he said, not difficult to understand what their work as producers would mean to this State. He told us the people of this State had never looked out upon so great a return for their produce. We were distributing to-day in wheat dividends upwards of £500,000. Our grain now growing should realise, in cash, before March next, £3,000,000, and he hoped further dividends would follow, as our surplus grain should be now quickly shipped. Our wool proceeds should realise £2,500,000 and all this money was near to hand. In addition we had our monthly gold yield. Then for soldier settlement we should probably bring into the State during the financial year a sum equal to £1,500,000, so there should be a lot of money circulating in the State. All these things meant a speedy return to prosperity and increasing revenue. After this glowing picture by the Premier, after considering the prospects and remembering that

close on seven millions of money is to be brought into the State during the next 12 months, ought not the Government to realise that by the expenditure of that money amongst the farming community, the mining community, the pearling community, the timber community, and other industries, the result should be increased revenue to such an extent that there should be no further need for taxation? The incidence of taxation to-day is altogether wrong. We endeavoured 12 or 18 months ago to have it improved, but the House, on account of the confusion which then prevailed, thought it necessary to broaden the area of taxation—so long as it did not fall on the farmer. In some instances people were not in a position to pay taxes, but they paid cheerfully, on account of the darkness which prevailed throughout the world at the time. Now the silver lining of the cloud is in sight. The Premier has told us that the prospects were never so bright and that the State is going to be restored to its previous prosperity. The potentialities of the State are so great that it is almost impossible to stop the tide of progress. All we want is men. All the industries are in need of men by the thousands, and if men are required men must be paid. I think on the evidence of the Treasurer, as disclosed in his Budget Speech, there is no necessity to introduce fresh taxation. I interjected at the time that there was no necessity for any further taxation. The Premier said he did not mean any further additional taxation. What I intended to say was that there should be no taxation at all. We should then be able to show the other States that we had put our foot on the first step of the ladder, that our prospects were bright and the future assured. It would have been one of the best advertisements the State could have. As I have said, while we continue to provide money for the Government the deficit will keep on mounting. The increase in revenue this year is estimated at £375,000. But when taxation was considerably increased no endeavour was made to use the money to mend the finances, to enable us to get on to a solid footing, and so long as we continue to vote taxation, the Government will continue to increase the expenditure. I think the House should take a hand in this. I move an amendment—

That "now" be struck out and "this day six months" inserted in lieu.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

## BILL—PERTH MINT ACT AMENDMENT.

### Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [5.27] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill to increase the annuity to the Mint by £2,500. The Mint was established in 1897 by the Imperial Government

at the request of the then Government of the State. It is controlled and run by the Imperial Government on behalf of the State. The arrangement was that the State should provide an annuity of a sufficient sum to cover the cost of operation, any unexpended balance being returnable to the State, together with the gross earnings of the Mint. Year by year we reap a profit. Last year it was £9,000. The expenditure was first fixed at £10,000 and from that it was raised as the business increased in volume to £20,000. Again in 1905 it was increased to £22,500, and the present Bill provides for advancing the provision to £25,000. To the present date the existing annuity of £22,500 has not been exceeded, but the expenditure has been gradually increasing owing to the rising cost of materials until in recent years the total of the annuity has been closely approached by the expenditure, and at the request of the Imperial Government the State has had to give an assurance that any additional amount required would be provided. During the years of war the price of stores used has increased immensely, but no alteration in the scale of salaries and wages has yet been made. This alteration is now inevitable, and I understand that increases are being arranged by the Imperial Government. Inclusive of these increases, the estimate of expenditure for 1919-20 is £23,210. The Mint has always been a profitable institution, the average profit for the past three years being £8,936.

Hon. P. Collier: After all expenditure has been paid?

The PREMIER: Yes. In view of the above condition of affairs, the Imperial Government has requested the increase of the annuity to a figure which will cover the anticipated expenditure, and leave a margin to meet contingent expenses, such as retiring or compassionate allowances under the Imperial Superannuation Act, 1909. The amount asked for, £25,000, is expected to cover all requirements for many years to come. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES—1919-20.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 28th October; Mr. Piesse in the Chair.

Vote—Taxation, £23,855.

Item, Chief Land Tax Assessor, £324:

Mr. SMITH: I would like to know why the increase given to this officer is only £6, whereas the increase given to the Income Tax Assessor is £48. The duties of the Land Tax Assessor require considerably more skill than do those of the Income Tax Assessor.

The duties of the latter are almost mechanical. The Chief Land Tax Assessor has to be skilled in valuing land and must be able to form a proper idea of whether the land has been correctly valued by the person putting in a return. On that account the officer's salary should certainly be higher than that of the Income Tax Assessor.

The PREMIER: It is the Public Service Commissioner's classification.

Mr. SMITH: If that is how the Public Service Commissioner classifies these officers, the sooner we get a Commissioner who can carry out a more business-like classification, the better.

The PREMIER: The officer in question is being paid the salary fixed under the classification. I appreciate the officer's ability and energy and I would be glad to increase his salary if it was possible to do so. I certainly think he is under-paid. I shall make a note of the matter and pass it on to the Public Service Commissioner.

Item, Accountant, £336:

Mr. SMITH: This officer is receiving an increase of £30 as against the increase to the Chief Land Tax Assessor of £6.

Hon. P. Collier: A grade rise.

Mr. SMITH: It seems to me to be an Irishman's rise. There does not appear to have been any system adopted in connection with the granting of these increases. I can assure the Premier that this kind of thing will lead to a lot of dissatisfaction. The Premier knows that if he gets hold of a good officer he should pay that officer well. That is the policy to adopt always. I trust the Premier will look into this matter and see that justice is done.

The PREMIER: I will do so.

Item, Clerks, £8,633:

Hon. P. COLLIER: This item shows a big increase, though I see that there is a reduction of over £1,000 in the vote for temporary clerical assistants. Why was it necessary to increase the permanent staff to such an extent last year?

The PREMIER: Additional work is being performed and it was reported to me that extra assistance was needed to see that everyone paid his tax. I was assured that the employment of this extra clerical assistance would mean additional revenue. A good deal of revenue has been lost through the lack of officers. Besides that, soldiers have returned and are taking their places again in the department.

Hon. P. Collier: But £2,000 is a huge increase in one year for clerks in one department.

The PREMIER: It is a large increase, but it is due to the fact that we want additional work done with a view to obtaining payment of taxes which ought to have been paid and have not been paid.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Instead of the staff of the Commissioner of Taxation being increased, the services of the local authorities should be utilised for the purpose of col-

lecting the State land tax. The local authorities could include a demand for the tax in their rate notices. By this means the cost of collecting the land tax would be considerably reduced, even after deduction of a small allowance to the local authorities for the work.

The PREMIER: I will take the hon. member's suggestion into consideration for next year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am afraid the increase in this item is an indication of how the deficit has been piled up. Permanent heads can, of course, always put up a satisfactory explanation of why they should have increases of staff. In the department of the Commissioner of Taxation salaries increased last year by £3,700, and this year shows a further increase of £3,400, making an increase of £7,000 for salaries in this one department within two years. An increase of revenue does not necessarily mean an increase of work; the clerk who makes out an assessment for £50 can just as easily make out one for £100.

The Premier: But the Commissioner of Taxation says that if he gets the additional staff he can get in additional taxation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have no doubt that the Commissioner of Taxation has put up a plausible case. But his staff would be better employed in attending to such cases as that brought forward by the member for North Perth a year or two ago—where a man who should have been a large income taxpayer had evaded payment since the very inception of income tax in this State—than in pursuing taxpayers who owe a few pence. I personally received a threatening letter from the Crown Solicitor last year demanding payment of 9d. Let the Commissioner turn his staff on to the men evading their obligations to the extent of hundreds of pounds, and refrain from wasting paper, envelopes, and postage on utterly trifling debts.

Mr. SMITH: I am very pleased that the member for North-East Fremantle is beginning to see light, and adopting my ideas in regard to collection of land tax through the local authorities.

Mr. Munsie: The member for North-East Fremantle has advocated that course for years.

Mr. SMITH: If the staff of the Commissioner of Taxation is undermanned, and an increase is necessary in order that all taxes due may be collected, this item represents very good policy. It would be extremely foolish to allow arrears of taxation to accumulate just for the sake of a few clerks' salaries. I trust the department are not busying themselves with issuing notices to taxpayers owing, perhaps, 1s. or 9d. Such amounts might be allowed to stand over until the next payment is due. This is the practice of mercantile firms. I am sure it must sometimes cost the department as much as 1s. 6d. to collect a balance of 1s. We see the Commissioner proceeding in the courts for taxes

that are years in arrears, and inquiries at the Police Department would show that a great deal of the time of police officers is occupied in hunting up persons who have not paid their taxes. The system advocated by the member for North-East Fremantle would do away with all that trouble, and allow of taxation being collected very cheaply.

Mr. PICKERING: I agree that it would be a wise course if we could amalgamate the State and Federal Taxation Departments.

Hon. T. Walker: To whom would you give supreme command?

Mr. PICKERING: To the State authorities.

Hon. T. Walker: The Federal authorities would not trust them.

Mr. PICKERING: If, however, the collection of land tax were effected through local authorities, they would require payment for their services as collectors under the Crown. Moreover, land taxation is not on all fours with the ordinary rating by local authorities. Therefore I do not favour that suggestion.

Item, Incidental, £3,390.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The paper on which the Federal taxation forms are printed is thin, and one can put a Federal return into an envelope and post it for 1½d. On the other hand, the State taxation forms are of thicker paper, and just over weight, thus requiring 2½d. postage. I trust the Premier will give consideration to the question of having the State forms printed on thin paper.

The Premier: They are ever so much too big.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes; and they could be much simplified, too.

The Premier: I will bring the matter under the notice of the Commissioner.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Workers' Homes Board, Nil.

The CHAIRMAN: I must draw the attention of hon. members to a rather puzzling position. So far as I can understand there is no vote in this division. Under the heading of "Total" we find the sentence "less rebate to Workers' Homes Fund" and at the bottom of the two columns we find the word "Nil." I cannot, therefore, put this vote.

The Premier: The two columns balance.

Mr. PICKERING: When we were dealing with this vote last year we were not permitted to discuss it.

The CHAIRMAN: I said I could not put it.

Mr. PICKERING: The officers in this department do not appear to be getting the grade increase given to other officers. As the department is now commencing to operate, I think some increase might now be given to the secretary. I believe that this gentleman has already had offers made to him from other quarters.

The CHAIRMAN: As there is no question before the Committee I cannot permit a discussion on this vote.

Hon. W. C. ANGWYN: The statement as it appears here is entirely wrong. The Workers' Homes Board has shown a profit, and it is ridiculous for the vote to appear in the Estimates in this form. The expenditure by the Government in the working of the Workers' Homes Board is so much, and the other amount set down here is that which was paid into Consolidated Revenue for the services of the officers.

Vote—Miscellaneous services, £46,179.

Item, Cemeteries, Grants for fencing, £50:

Mr. GRIFFITHS: An application for a grant in connection with the cemetery at Bruce Rock has been met with a paltry offer of an advance, which is not sufficient for the purpose required. Representations were made to the Treasurer, who offered to go into the matter, but he was evidently influenced by the report of an inspector with the result that the grant will not be sufficient to carry out the objects intended. The people consider that their request is not receiving due attention. Their loved ones are buried in the cemetery, and cattle and horses are running over the graves.

Hon. P. Collier: They cannot be very much loved if cattle and horses are allowed to run over the graves.

The PREMIER: There are numerous applications for grants in connection with these cemeteries, and the amount involved in all the requests is a large one. It should be possible for the local residents to erect some sort of temporary fence around these cemeteries. They should not be left unfenced.

Hon. P. Collier: The local people ought to be able to do that, but they come to the Government for everything.

Item, School sites, purchase of, including title fees, surveys, etc., £2,200:

Mr. SMITH: Will the Premier explain where these school sites are situated? The amount involved under this heading last year was only £3.

The PREMIER: One of these sites is in connection with the Fremantle school, which requires to be enlarged. As it will be necessary to increase the areas around these schools in other parts of the State, it was thought advisable to put this money on the Estimates.

Item, King's Park board, special grant, May drive, £500:

Mr. GREEN: Will the Premier explain this item? In a previous item £1,900 is set down for the King's Park board, and now another £500 is being given to them. This £500 represents more than is being given for all the other grounds in the State.

The PREMIER: The care of this park is the responsibility of the Government. The roads have to be made, and the gardeners

have to be paid by the Government. Everything that is done is done at our expense.

Mr. Green: Is this a new drive?

The PREMIER: No; it is a new road on the old drive. Occasionally private persons have made grants of money for special work in the park, such as that made by Mr. Lovekin, but the responsibility belongs to the Government. The May drive is worn out and had to be renewed. The money has been actually spent and the road put in order.

Mr. JONES: I admit that this national park should be kept in order, but the fact that the road is in a bad condition is due to the extensive motor traffic upon it. Would it not be possible to impose a special tax on all motor cars going through the park?

Mr. Willcock: You mean a toll?

Mr. JONES: Let owners of cars take out a special license to enable them to motor through the park. It need not be a large amount that would have to be paid, but the revenue should be large enough to keep the road in repair.

Mr. GREEN: The sum of £1,900 already passed for the King's park board should be sufficient to enable them to keep up the roads. The total amount that we now propose to give is £2,602. The amount is absurd. I move—

That the item be reduced by £1.

The PREMIER: I have no wish to spend money on these parks, but so long as they are a charge against the State we must keep them up. All the parks within municipal boundaries should be cared for by the municipal authorities. The people who go into these places are not only those who pay taxes to the local authorities. I shall keep a firm hand upon expenditure of this kind and only give what is necessary in the interests of the general public. These parks are used by the people of the State.

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

Mr. JONES: I support the amendment. The Premier might have told us whether he agreed with the idea of taxing motor-cars which cause the damage to May Drive.

The Premier: I wish we could.

Mr. JONES: Would it be possible to issue a license? Most of the motor-car owners are exceptionally patriotic. They fly small flags on their cars, and the faster the car goes the more the flag waves and the more patriotic they are. The Premier would only need to suggest that, since the cars destroyed the road, they might contribute 5s. or 10s. a year each and sufficient funds would be forthcoming to keep the road in repair. What is 5s. or 10s. to members of the gasoline aristocracy?

Mr. PICKERING: I oppose the amendment. We recently passed the Traffic Bill which has imposed additional burdens on motorists and the suggestion of the member for Fremantle savours of the reintroduction of the old toll system, which would be ridic-



alous. The drive is used not only by motorists but by the general public. A tax could not be levied on the whole of the motorists in the State, and a special system of taxation would be necessary.

Mr. Jones: I suggested appealing to their patriotism.

Hon. P. Collier: I should not care to guarantee what the result would be.

The PREMIER: I hope the amendment will be withdrawn. To reduce the item by £1 would not have a great effect. I realise that the money is needed in other places.

Hon. T. Walker: The Esperance railway for one thing could be started.

The PREMIER: Not with the £1 by which it is suggested the item be reduced. If that would start the Esperance railway, the hon. member could have it to-morrow. The greatest care is exercised in connection with all these grants. I have been asked for numerous grants which I should have liked to give, but I was unable to do so.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item, Melville road board—special grant, latrines, Point Walter, £100:

Mr. PICKERING: Has this money been spent?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. PICKERING: I fear the money has been badly spent. On the occasion of my latest visit last summer, the latrines were in a disgraceful condition.

The Premier: Improvements have been made during the last four months.

Mr. PICKERING: The Premier should get the work passed as satisfactory before the money is handed over.

The PREMIER: The member for North-East Fremantle has given special attention to this matter, and I am satisfied he will see that we get value for the money. This is a public park, and it is not right that conveniences should be lacking.

Hon. T. Walker: Great crowds go there every summer.

The PREMIER: Yes, people from all parts of the country. I have been there and realise the danger to the public health if adequate conveniences are not provided.

Mr. JONES: I can assure the member for Sussex that the improvements more than justify the expenditure. The members of the road board regret that they had to apply for Government assistance. If they could have made a charge for the use of the conveniences, no application would have been necessary.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I support the remarks of the member for Fremantle. The money has been wisely spent.

Item, Bonus suggestions for effecting economy in public service, £53:

Mr. SMITH: Two things strike me in connection with this item.

Hon. P. Collier: Last year £2 was spent—a lot of suggestions!

Mr. SMITH: How does the Premier estimate the amount likely to be required this year, seeing that only £2 was paid out last

year? It is a reflection on the Public Service that its officers could recommend only £2 worth of improvements last year.

Hon. P. Collier: Two pounds' worth of genius in the whole service!

Mr. SMITH: The Premier might have assessed the value at a very low rate. What is the nature of these suggestions? Have they effected a saving? It is a good idea to pay for such suggestions.

Mr. Pickering: It is certainly not an expensive idea.

Mr. SMITH: The Premier should explain the item so that we might help to perfect the idea.

The PREMIER: I cannot say very much about the idea of this item, because it is the late Colonial Treasurer's idea. Of the amount of £53, fifty guineas is to be paid to Mr. Glyde, now manager of the State Steamship Service, to whom the suggestions were, in the first instance, referred. There is a tremendous stack of them, and I shall be pleased to let any hon. member go through them. I have not had time to do so. Mr. Glyde did a great deal of extra work for the Colonial Treasurer's office, with excellent results; and it is thought that he should receive some extra payment. I understand that the senior public servants are at all times willing to listen to suggestions without these being invited formally.

Mr. SMITH: While agreeing that Mr. Glyde has no doubt earned the 50 guineas, I am not satisfied with the Premier's explanation. I gather that numerous suggestions have been sent in, but have not yet been looked at.

The Premier: What I said was that they had not been looked at by me.

Mr. SMITH: Who does look at them? Is it fair to ask the public servants to submit suggestions merely to be ignored? Is the Premier the final arbiter on these suggestions? Does he decide whether a suggestion shall be accepted, and how much is to be paid for it if it is accepted?

The Premier: No.

Mr. SMITH: There is room for suggestions, and they may result in considerable savings. Either the idea of paying bonuses should be abandoned altogether, or a substantial amount should be placed on the Estimates for that purpose, and a proper system adopted for considering suggestions.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I would have been better pleased if the member for North Perth had moved that the item be struck out. The futility of providing such an inadequate amount is self-evident. The idea of calling for suggestions was brought in with a flourish of trumpets, and we were told that it would yield big results. I believe that the system obtains in the large departments of other States, as well as in private businesses. Here, apparently, suggestions have been sent in, but have been ignored. I personally know of two suggestions which were submitted. I do not know whether they have been considered at all,

but nothing has come of them. One suggestion sought to bring about economies in regard to the travelling allowances and expenses of officers, and its adoption would at least have placed those payments on an equitable footing. The other suggestion was submitted by a late officer of this House, and it would have meant a considerable saving if adopted; but somehow it was hung up.

The Premier: I think that suggestion was acted upon.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Then another man has got the credit for it, and he is down for an increase on these Estimates. Originality ought to be recognised and rewarded. Either this item should be struck out, or else a substantial amount provided. It is absurd to say that a Public Service numbering some thousands of men does not contain a few capable of making suggestions which are for the public benefit. Possibly the suggestions which have been sent in have been looked at merely in a haphazard way; or else there may be a feeling that a subordinate officer who makes suggestions is not altogether loyal to the service.

The Premier: Let us have a select committee to go into the suggestions.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I hope the Premier will not treat the matter frivolously. He himself accepts suggestions every day of the week from the public as well as from public servants.

Mr. LUTEY: I hope this matter will not be passed over lightly. I should like it to be taken seriously, and a substantial amount provided. Suggestions from employees should be encouraged here as they are in America. The Australian mine manager is the worst in the world as regards giving encouragement to employees to make suggestions. Men in the mining industry have made suggestions which effected economies of thousands of pounds, but those men received no reward whatever. There are instances in which suggestions have been made light of, and subsequently pirated by those who ridiculed them. Jealousy may have prevented the acceptance of suggestions made by public servants on the lower rungs, or there may have been a fear that a junior man would get his senior's position. I would like to see £1,000 placed on the Estimates in this connection, and I would let it be known that any departmental head who kept back a valuable suggestion would be dealt with in a fitting manner.

Mr. GREEN: I agree with the previous speakers that the amount of this item should be increased, but as an old public servant I recognise that under the present conditions even a large amount would not produce the results which might be expected. I believe the Commonwealth Government were the first to offer rewards for suggestions tending to economy or greater efficiency. The problem that confronts State enterprise is how to create opportunity for greater initiative on the

part of the workers. So long as heads of departments are responsible for the work instead of allowing the heads of branches to use their initiative, we shall have this old idea that the man below may come to the front too rapidly for the advancement of the head himself. We should give the workman a chance to suggest improvements in the job on which he is engaged. The man doing the work knows most about it. Scope should be given the initiative of the individual workman. So long as we retain our present bureaucratic system Government enterprise must fail.

The PREMIER: I assure hon. members that I am just as anxious as they are to have this vote well handled. I propose to encourage suggestions from departmental officers. I have every desire to advance all deserving men in the service.

Item, Expenses in connection with goldfields woodlines dispute, including Royal Commission, £200:

Mr. MUNSIE: Surely the Royal Commission did not cost £200, seeing that it sat for only a couple of days. I should like some explanation of this.

The PREMIER: The Royal Commission went to the goldfields. Also the Conservator of Forests was there for some time, marking out and inspecting the forest. The Conservator's expenses are included in this item. The expenses of the Royal Commission were not large, but still they were something. Mr. Lane-Poole did considerable work up there.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am not altogether satisfied with the explanation. Last session we passed the Forests Bill, and voted a salary of £800 and expenses to the Conservator. Apparently because he went to the goldfields to inspect a firewood forest, special expenses had to be paid him. The cost of the Royal Commission would not exceed £50, which leaves £150 for Mr. Lane-Poole. This ought not to be charged here.

The Premier: He did not get anything extra.

Hon. P. Collier: Apparently they have charged up portion of his salary against this special work.

Mr. MUNSIE: But it is part of the duty of the Conservator to look into these matters.

The PREMIER: The Act provides that a certain portion of the revenue from our forests shall be set aside for special expenditure in connection with forests.

Hon. P. Collier: In other words this is a means of getting £150 from the money voted which would otherwise go into that fund.

The PREMIER: Certainly it would serve to maintain the Forestry vote and give the Conservator a little more to expend. Personally I think his expenses should be charged against the Forestry vote. I believe we have to set aside £20,000 this year to be spent at some future time upon forestry work.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am surprised to see this amount provided for the short time Mr. Lane-Poole was up there. Only a few weeks earlier he was supposed to have gone right through that district at considerable expense to the State. The Premier would be well advised to look into the travelling expenses of this officer.

Item, Government stores depreciation adjustment, £1,000:

Mr. SMITH: This item did not appear on last year's Estimates. I assume it is meant to balance some alleged depreciation in stores.

The Premier: That is so.

Mr. SMITH: What stores can have depreciated during the last year or two? Almost everything has appreciated very considerably, and instead of a debit item there should be a very substantial credit note. I do not think we should pass such an item.

The PREMIER: I expect this has to do partly with damaged stores. Apparently year by year £1,000 is allowed for depreciation. Through an oversight it was not included in last year's Estimates.

Mr. PICKERING: I understand there is a large quantity of galvanised corrugated iron in the Government Stores at Fremantle which has depreciated on account of damage by salt water while on its way to this State. I believe this is now under offer to someone. Is this part of the depreciation allowed for here?

The Premier: I do not know. This amount is set aside year by year.

Mr. GREEN: We might report progress at this stage so that the Premier may consult his departmental heads and obtain the necessary information on these points.

The PREMIER: It is an amount that is voted year by year. Last year it was omitted through an oversight. It is a proper provision to make. There must be some depreciation in such a large quantity of stores as we have on hand.

Item, Grant to Pharmaceutical Council, £47:

Mr. GREEN: What is the reason for this grant? The council is only a trades union on a higher plane. Until a grant of this sort is apportioned out to the different trades unions of the State, I do not see why we should pass the item unchallenged. The principal object of the council has been to prevent different stores in the country from selling patent medicines in order to keep the profession a close corporation. It is evident that we are now endeavouring to perpetuate such a system by this grant.

The PREMIER: This item is to defray the cost of a railway pass for the registrar. All fines are paid into revenue, and this grant is therefore covered.

Item, Incidental, £750:

Mr. JONES: I should like to know what this item means.

The PREMIER: It is perfectly harmless. It provides for expenditure which is not chargeable to any particular department, and is intended to cover expenses in connection with the Premiers' conferences, the inspection of hotels by police officers, and so forth.

Item, Industrial relief etc., £7,000:

Mr. NAIRN: No amount was granted in this connection last year, but £7,000 is being provided this year. What is the explanation?

The PREMIER: This was to provide relief for people in distress in Kalgoorlie at the time of the woodline strike, when the mines were closed down and so many persons were thrown out of employment.

Mr. LATEY: It was the termination of an agreement.

The PREMIER: At all events, it was a cessation of work. There was no chance of the people getting work in that locality, and relief had to be afforded.

Mr. JONES: Was all this money spent in Kalgoorlie?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. JONES: It is painful to me that such an item should have to be provided on the Estimates. It is a monument to the incapacity of the Government to settle such a simple matter as this.

Mr. NAIRN: Do you think the money should not have been paid?

Mr. JONES: It should not have been necessary to pay it. Had it not been for the pharasaical woodline owners, who refused to consider the renewal of the agreement, no such amount would have been provided here. Would the hon. member be glad to see all the women and children in the State starving? I am pleased that we had a Premier who was able to deal with the situation in the way that he did. Had it not been for certain incompetent colleagues of his, and had he not been handicapped in that way, the matter would have been settled and the Government would not have had to find this money.

Mr. NAIRN: I certainly would not be prepared to stand by and see women and children starve. This is not a matter in which it is necessary to indulge in any heat.

Mr. LAMBERT: Whilst I think the Premier was justified in the action he took, I must enter a strong protest against the action of the woodline companies. The employees gave these companies three months' notice that they desired to confer with them in the matter of their wages and conditions, but the companies deliberately sat back, prepared to see the people starve until they obtained what they wanted.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: You do not blame the Government for their action?

Mr. LAMBERT: No. There has never been a more deliberate, cruel or callous act on the part of any set of employers than was witnessed in this particular case. I

fear there is a danger of these companies being given an absolute monopoly on the goldfields. It is a shame that people like this should use the concession which they have obtained from the Government to hold up an entire community in the way they did.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is wrong in saying that I did not have the utmost assistance from every member of the Government in this matter. I hope there never will be a similar happening again in Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Lambert: If some provision is not made to prevent it, it will occur again.

The PREMIER: We will make such provision as will render it possible to guard against a repetition of this trouble.

Mr. Lambert: The companies are in a better position now than ever.

The PREMIER: I do not think so. We have to seriously consider the question of the cost of mining, whether in respect to water, wood or anything else, whenever the opportunity offers.

Item, National volunteer workers, compensation, wages, and other expenses, £1,000:

Mr. MUNSIE: I would like an explanation from the Premier as to what this amount is for and how much longer this business is going on. I notice by the Estimates that we paid £2,311 last year. What was that for?

The PREMIER: Everyone is aware of the happenings on the wharf, and when the men left they were out of employment for some weeks and they were assisted by the Government. They are not being assisted now. There was a shortage of work at that time, and there must have been 1,000 men out of work in the country. The position is changed now; there is work for everybody.

Hon. P. Collier: How much a week were they getting?

The PREMIER: Various sums.

Hon. P. Collier: How was the £2,311 spent last year? There was no vote last year.

The PREMIER: I cannot say off hand, but I will let the hon. member have the information. The £1,000 on the Estimates for this year has already been spent.

Mr. Munsie: Are these men getting work now?

The PREMIER: There is work for them, but we had to give them something until work was found. The hon. member knows that I am concerned about the employment of everyone, and we all realise that nothing could be worse for the community than to have men out of work.

Mr. JONES: Am I to understand that the National workers were the only people who were out of work in the community?

The Premier: There were others.

Mr. JONES: Is there provision on the Estimates for the sustenance of other men who were out of work? I imagine from the Premier's remarks that we are dealing with men who were out of employment in the

metropolitan area and who were anxious and willing to work. Of all the hundreds or thousands who were unemployed in the State, the only people who were provided with money were the National workers of Fremantle. I do not understand whether the £1,000 was expended in dry nursing these delicate, tender, hothouse plants, or whether it was £2,311.

Mr. Munsie: The year before it was £3,907.

Mr. JONES: I notice that last year we voted for the maintenance of National workers the sum of £5. That, however, was exceeded by £2,306. If the £1,000 which we are voting now is to be multiplied in the course of the year at the same ratio, we shall before the year is out spend half a million in the maintenance of the National workers.

The Premier: The contribution ceased long ago.

Mr. JONES: Has the £1,000 been spent already? If so, it has been spent in the four months which have passed. If the Government are to start a new industry, I am anxious that they should begin in the direction of manufacturing scabs.

The Premier: I do not think you should use that word.

Mr. JONES: I will apologise to the Premier, because I want him to clearly understand that I deeply sympathise with him for having had to deal with things of this sort. He is too clean a man to have to handle such dirty work. But this £1,000 is causing me considerable concern. If the 400 odd men who saved the country on the wharf at Fremantle and behaved in the patriotic fashion which has recently come to light—if these wonderful paragons of all the virtues are to be compensated to enable every one of them to start in business as they all hope to be able to do—

Hon. P. Collier: They are all intent on starting business.

Mr. JONES: I do not know where we shall end.

Hon. P. Collier: Some of them will start newspapers.

Mr. JONES: Or probably make a living by taking in each other's washing, and that will be a very dirty business, too. But I do not think £1,000 will be nearly sufficient. On top of all this the Government intend to compensate the saviours of the country. What do the Government intend to do? I am rather worried as to what is going to happen to these Galahads, these knight-errants of modern day society, that I really would like a full explanation from the Premier. I hope he will set my mind at rest and enable me to go home to sleep peacefully and be fully content with the knowledge that these, our grand and noble countrymen, these gallant gentlemen who went to Fremantle and at the risk of their lives did so much to save our bleeding country in its time of stress—that he will assure me these men will be looked after properly, and whether we are going to have more sums

of £1,000 scattered over the Estimates as though an inky-footed fly had crawled over the pages of the Estimates and left its marks here and there.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am surprised to learn from the Premier that the £1,000 has already been spent. That is a very serious admission in times like the present. But these people have cost the State already about £7,000, and we have a Commission sitting which will cost easily up to another £1,000 before it finishes its work. Last year we voted £5 and spent £2,311. This year we are asked to vote £1,000. I want a definite assurance that there will not be one penny paid in compensation as the result of the Commission's inquiries until Parliament has had an opportunity of debating the matter. I want a definite assurance that the amount of £1,000 which we are voting now will not be exceeded this year. The Premier said he was sorry that the member for Fremantle called these people scabs. I say they are scabs of the very worst type—every one of them. I would have been prepared to forgive them if they had all done what a few did, namely, walk off when the trouble was ended. There would then have been no soreness left. Perhaps those who walked off at the end of the trouble were not scabs. The Premier: You have no right to call them that.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have every right to call them scabs, their true name. A man ought to apologise to his boots for compelling them to walk on the same footpath that these people use.

Hon. P. Collier: We ought to disinfect the House every day after these people come up here in droves.

Mr. MUNSIE: I never go near that end of the building for fear of being infected by the scabs. I expect an assurance from the Premier that he will give Parliament an opportunity to discuss the matter before any further payments are made. In a way I am rather pleased that the Commission has been appointed, because I am satisfied that the evidence which has been published in the Press, if it does nothing else, will have the effect of frightening others who may desire to scab in the future.

Hon. P. Collier: It will warn them off for all time.

Mr. MUNSIE: The men who are giving evidence are telling some beautiful lies. We might call them champion liars.

Hon. P. Collier: They are poor workers but they are great liars.

Mr. MUNSIE: I can prove that some of them have been telling lies before the Commission. One of these nationalist scabs swore that he was injured on the wharf and that in consequence he could do nothing for two or three months, whereas as a matter of fact he was injured while working for a private employer and drew no less a sum than £400 as compensation.

The Premier: These men are giving evidence on oath.

Hon. P. Collier: You ought to gaol them.

Mr. MUNSIE: And that scab was not single handed either. In many instances, the evidence is not true. I wish many of the witnesses had received the treatment they say they received. It would have been a lesson to them.

Mr. LUTEY: I do not think it right that the Commission should have sat in this building. Perhaps we should not refer to it, seeing the Commission has sat in a room at the other end of the building. Probably it is due to the training of the Speaker that the Commission did not sit at this end of the building.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no reference to the Commission in this item.

Mr. LUTEY: The item deals with these gentlemen who are receiving the £1,000. It was high-handed action to allow the Commission to sit in Parliament House.

Hon. P. Collier: Have not you any regard for members of another place?

Mr. LUTEY: No, I have not. I know some of these men and, when they have the audacity to say, "Good-day," well, I feel as if I would just as soon hit them in the nose as look sideways at them. It is a shame that the Commission should have sat on the premises, when we have to practically rub shoulders with these men.

Mr. MUNSIE: I want an assurance from the Premier that he will not pay any compensation before we have had an opportunity to discuss the matter. I am not prepared to pass this item and to find next year that £20,000 or £30,000 has been expended in compensation.

The Premier: This item has nothing to do with it.

Mr. MUNSIE: This item represents compensation for National scabs, and I am not prepared to allow the Government to pay away another £20,000 or £30,000 during the next six months, and then tell the House the money has been spent. Will the Premier give us an opportunity to vote on the question of the amount to be paid in compensation?

The PREMIER: The matter of the Commission or compensation should not be discussed now. This amount was spent to keep these men until they could find work.

Mr. Munsie: That is what we shall be told next year in regard to the £20,000 or £30,000.

The PREMIER: We had to see that these men were fed. There are some valued citizens among them, and they had to be treated as such.

Mr. Munsie: If you spend £20,000 or £30,000 to send them out of the State, I shall gladly vote for it.

The PREMIER: I suppose they would be glad to go.

Mr. Munsie: Let them go, and the State will be well rid of them.

Mr. Lambert: They must be very fleet runners.

Mr. Munsie: They have had good training, anyhow.

The PREMIER: The Commission will make a finding and, if the House is sitting, I shall immediately advise members of the finding.

Mr. LAMBERT: Surely the Premier can give an assurance that no large amount of compensation will be paid until the House has had an opportunity to discuss the findings of the Royal Commission.

The PREMIER: If members take up the attitude that no compensation should be paid, the proper method is to give notice of motion. It is not right to ask me, in connection with an item like this, to give an assurance that no compensation will be paid. It would be unwise to discuss the question while the Commission is sitting. It would be unwise to test the feeling of the House while the Commission is sitting.

Mr. Lambert: They would tell bigger lies if we passed a motion.

The PREMIER: I dare say the Commission will complete its labours before Parliament adjourns. If Parliament is in session, I shall intimate the finding to hon. members.

Mr. Munsie: If it is not in session, will you pay the compensation and tell us next year that it has been paid?

The PREMIER: We shall have to abide by the findings of the Commission.

Hon. P. Collier: Don't say that!

Mr. Lambert: You will have to adopt the findings?

The Honorary Minister: No, be guided by them.

The PREMIER: We shall have to be guided by the findings of the Commission. The Government will have to stand by their own acts. I maintain it is not right to discuss the Commission on this item, or on a separate motion.

Mr. JONES: The Premier should give an assurance that the £1,000 on the Estimates—

The Premier: It has nothing to do with the Commission now sitting. I give you that assurance.

Mr. JONES: I want an assurance that the £1,000 will not be exceeded without first obtaining the consent of the House. That is not a hard undertaking to give. Next year I do not wish to be told that a sum of £30,000 has been spent. It would ill become a Government possessed of business acumen to do anything like that. With the go-slow methods the Commission is adopting and the numerous witnesses being called, the proceedings might yet extend over months and months. I do not say the Commissioner is deliberately delaying progress, but three guineas a day is a very fair wage and, naturally, a man would not wish to finish the job too soon. Probably Parliament will be in recess before we have an opportunity to discuss the findings. It is not unreasonable to ask the Premier for an assurance that the amount of £1,000 will not be unduly exceeded before we have an opportunity to discuss the findings of the Commission.

The PREMIER: This item has nothing to do with the Commission. It is to cover assistance already granted to these men, which assistance has been stopped.

Mr. Jones: What will happen if the Commissioner awards £30,000 compensation and the House has risen?

The PREMIER: I do not think that possible or probable. I do not know where the £30,000 would come from. This item has nothing to do with the Commission.

Mr. Pickering: Will the compensation be found by the State or by the Commonwealth?

Hon. P. Collier: I do not think we ought to discuss that.

Mr. MUNSIE: I shall not be satisfied until I get an assurance from the Premier that the House will be given an opportunity to discuss the Commissioner's report. The Premier says this is neither the time nor the place to ask for that assurance.

The Premier: I do not think it is.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Premier suggested that notice of motion should be given.

The Premier: That is, if you must discuss it.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am not prepared to give such notice of motion while the Commission is sitting.

The Premier: I said it ought not to be done.

Mr. MUNSIE: It is the duty of the Premier to give the people an assurance that no compensation will be paid until their representatives in this House have an opportunity to discuss the report. That is only a fair proposition. This Commission is likely to cost the State 90 per cent. more than any other Royal Commission ever appointed in the State, even if the recommendations of the others had been carried out to their fullest extent. If the Premier will definitely have the Commission closed before Tuesday next, I shall give notice of motion, to test the feeling of members, that no compensation be paid until such time as we have had an opportunity to discuss the matter. This is the most lopsided Commission that was ever appointed.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Premier would be well advised to ask the Commissioner to complete his report within a couple of weeks.

Mr. Munsie: Parliament will be in recess then.

Mr. LAMBERT: These chaps have had a pretty fair go and all the good any further evidence is likely to do will be infinitesimal.

The Honorary Minister: You have raised their hopes considerably by this discussion in talking of £40,000 or £50,000 compensation.

Mr. Jones: We know Mr. Lazarus.

The Honorary Minister: He was a better man than Dives.

Mr. Jones: He was covered with scabs.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Premier should undertake to ask the Commissioner to fur-

nish his report within a week or two, so that, if he does recommend excessive compensation, we shall have an opportunity to discuss the matter. That is only fair.

The PREMIER: I repeat that in my opinion the question should not be further discussed at this stage. I cannot give any undertaking just now. If the Commissioner can make his report within, say, the next fortnight, I shall certainly submit it to Parliament. I will inquire whether he can do so.

Mr. JONES: In view of the Premier's failure, despite the very reasonable request which has been made, to give an assurance that this item—

The Premier: I say that I hope the report will be here before we prorogue.

Mr. JONES: I am very pleased to hear even that. However, the powers given to the Royal Commissioner are so extensive, and the views and opinions of Mr. Lazarus are so well known, that it is necessary to take every step to check these outrageous payments of compensation to national workers. Therefore, though with reluctance, I move—

That the item be struck out.

Though unemployment has been rife since the very inception of responsible government in Western Australia, this is the first time that it has been found necessary for the State to expend thousands of pounds in feeding people; and such a class of people!

Mr. GREEN: I unreservedly support the amendment. For a man who is not in the working class movement it is difficult to realise the strength of the feeling entertained by the average worker towards the man who has betrayed his own class to the employers.

Mr. PICKERING: I support the item. I will not enter into the merits or demerits of the dispute, but we know very well that when the wharf trouble first arose the title of national worker was warranted. Whether events since then have been such as to give reason for challenging that title, I will not argue. However, I believe that the Royal Commission was promised as one of the terms of settlement; and until the Commissioner's report is available the Committee should, I think, hold its hand. As regards this particular item, assistance had to be given to the national workers, and the money has been spent.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	16

Majority against .. 4

AYES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Green	Mr. Roche
Mr. Holman	Mr. Walker
Mr. Jones	Mr. Wilcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. O'Loghlen

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Maley
Mr. Broun	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Money
Mr. Davies	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Draper	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Duff	Mr. Smith
Mr. Durack	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Hardwick

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Item, Peace celebrations, £50.

Mr. LAMBERT: While last year's amount for this item was possibly justified, I want to know whether this £50 is to be handed over to city bumbles to fly flags, or how it is to be spent.

The PREMIER: The amount has been spent on illuminating public buildings.

Mr. LAMBERT: Fifty pounds is an unnecessarily large amount to spend on lighting up public buildings. We could express our gratification in a more economical manner. By all means let us celebrate Anzac day, or Peace day; but such items as this should be cut out altogether.

Item, Railway and tram passes for disabled returned soldiers, etc., £500.

Mr. LAMBERT: Has the Premier considered the advisability of marking in some slight manner the State's appreciation of Western Australian V.C.'s by granting to the brave men who have so distinguished themselves a free pass for life over our railway system? I have asked a question previously on this subject. The number of Western Australian V.C.'s is not great, though undoubtedly hundreds of our soldiers deserved that magnificent distinction. The free passes might be restricted as the Minister for Railways thinks fit, but the granting of them would be a slight expression of our appreciation of these heroes.

The PREMIER: I fully appreciate all that is due to returned men, and especially those who have so highly distinguished themselves as to win the Victoria Cross. The member for Coolgardie brought the matter up some time ago, and since then I have been in communication with other Governments on the subject.

Hon. P. Collier: You will have to be very careful not to make an invidious distinction as regards men who have won other honours.

The PREMIER: I agree with that. Whatever is done should be done by all the States of the Commonwealth. We must bear in mind, too, that a great deal remains to be done for injured and crippled soldiers. All these matters take some time to settle. A great deal of hardship and suffering remains as the result of the war. I know the Government will have the support of hon. members in anything we may do to make life easier for the men who have fought in the war.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In this connection I may refer to a question which I put to the

Premier and to which, after a delay of about three weeks—due, I was informed, to the necessity for finding out what the other States were doing—I received the stereotyped reply that the matter was being considered. I am not particularly concerned about the question raised by the member for Coolgardie, for the reason that all our V.C.'s, with one exception, are now in as good a state of health as when they went away; and a man in good health would not seek a privilege of the description suggested by the member for Coolgardie. But I believe that the whole community are in favour of carrying out the policy of New South Wales, namely to give one-legged soldiers and blind soldiers a pass. I know the Premier will do his best. The first duty of the Government is to those who are crippled rather than to men in robust health who have won honours. Colonel Murray, who has won more honours than any other man in the Australian army, will be returning in a few weeks, and I am quite certain that he would not look for such a concession as that proposed.

Mr. PICKERING: The Victoria Cross carries with it all that any reasonable man could desire. In England it is not customary to give monetary recognition with the Victoria Cross, the distinction being considered sufficient. No man who has gained such an honour would require any further consideration. If any privilege is to be given it should be given to those who have suffered through their service.

Mr. LAMBERT: The looking after of maimed soldiers is undertaken by the Federal Government. Since that Government monopolises almost every possible source of revenue, I do not think the State should take upon itself charges of this kind.

Item, Subsidy south-east coast mail service (State steamship service), £1,150:

Mr. ANGELO: Will the Minister explain what this item means?

The PREMIER: This is a subsidy to the State Steamship Service for the mail service on the south-east coast. It represents the difference between the contract price of the Adelaide Steamship Company and that which the Commonwealth Government were prepared to pay.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Colonial Treasurer's department.

Department of Agriculture; the Honorary Minister in charge of the votes.

Vote—Agriculture Generally, £57,201:

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. F. E. S. Willmott—Nelson) [9.42]: I do not think this vote requires much explanation, considering the excellent annual report from the department which members have before them. The report shows that all the important officers of the department have put up for the use of hon. members a great deal

of valuable information. In the expenditure of this department some savings have been made. Eleven salaried positions have been dispensed with, representing a saving of £2,061. We have taken some of the staff and placed them under the general manager of the Wyndham meat works and their salaries will be charged up to that undertaking in future. The expert staff has been strengthened by the appointment of a sheep and wool inspector, a new dairy expert and two extra potato inspectors.

Mr. O'Loghlen: There are no potatoes to inspect.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Indeed, there are. Every potato that comes into the State has to be inspected.

Mr. O'Loghlen: It is a ridiculous embargo, building up a monopoly for the growers of the South-West.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I may say that new regulations have been formulated and will be laid on the Table within the next few days. To my thinking the old regulations were somewhat too stringent. When we were a perfectly clean State with no potato disease, it was an excellent idea that every precaution should be taken, but now that, unfortunately, we have a number of potato diseases, it is as well to modify the restrictions. I do not propose to say anything with regard to the Wyndham meat works, for that subject will come up for discussion later on. At the metropolitan abattoirs and saleyards a greatly increased number of stock has been dealt with, exceeding by £56,000 the values of last year. The work of the irrigation expert has been largely used in connection with the soldier settlement scheme at Harvey and other places, and visits have been paid to Carnarvon and other centres where it was thought special inducements might be offered to soldiers. The fruit inspection branch also has given valuable service to the soldier settlement scheme as well as to private individuals.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Have you a new inspector?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The chief inspector is Mr. George Wickens, who has held the appointment since the fruit commissioner left the State. I do not know of any better officer in the service.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Was he in charge of the Brunswick State Farm at one time?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No. Under these Estimates we deal with vermin. The operations of the new Vermin Act, and the policy of the Government in eradicating rabbits from the worst breeding grounds on Crown lands, have had the effect of materially abating this pest. Hon. members will agree that money spent in this way has been well spent. On a recent trip through the eastern districts I was agreeably surprised to find how very few rabbits were met with. On my last visit, 18 months ago, the whole country was overrun with them. We were threatened with



an invasion of sparrows. Although some hon. members may be disposed to treat this subject hilariously, anyone who knows what a serious pest these birds are will agree that anything that can be done to keep the sparrow out of Western Australia will be of great benefit to the State. It was reported that sparrows were coming into the country. An inspector who was sent out discovered sparrows on a station on the South Australian side. He proposed to take action against them by laying poison, but the owner of the station refused to allow anything to be done. Since then, however, satisfactory arrangements have been made with the South Australian Government for dealing with the sparrows, and I hope we shall not be troubled with them, at any rate for many years to come. The arrangements made contemplate the laying of poison around any water. In that district there is hardly any bird life except sparrows, and so nothing but sparrows will suffer. The area under cultivation has increased materially since 1914. In that year it was 137,000 acres, whereas at the end of 1918 it had reached 1,647,369 acres. This is a gratifying increase. The number of sheep now in the State exceeds 7,000,000, and is nearly 3,000,000 in excess of what it was in 1914.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And yet mutton does not come down.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It has come down very considerably in the last few weeks. As the great South-West is opened up and our flocks increase, so will the price of mutton to the consumer come down. The entomological branch has given special attention to the destruction of some of the pests from which our flocks suffer, such as blowfly and weevil, and the operations are extended to embrace forestry work. Very good work can be done in this direction, and very excellent officers have been appointed to carry it out. The information contained in the annual report will make interesting and informative reading. It is solid matter, but not dry.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I do not see any provision for soil analyses, or for Mr. Mann's journeys to Harvey during the last two months for the purpose of sampling soils there.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This work is done in the course of Mr. Mann's ordinary duties. We have had samples of soil from Ravensthorpe, about which we did not know very much, and during the last few months many of the soils have been classified. These samples are reported on by Mr. Mann in the ordinary way.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Which department pays for the work?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The money comes out of the vote of the Agricultural Department.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Under which item would it come?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It would come under the item for the economic entomologist.

Mr. Smith: The entomologist does not test the soils?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Mann does that, but the officer is under him. Instead of having two laboratories we have one, and the work is carried out to the entire satisfaction of everyone concerned and at greatly reduced cost to the State. Hon. members will see that increases are conspicuous by their absence, and that there is a decrease in the Estimates as a whole.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What about Wyndham?

The HONORARY MINISTER: That does not come up for discussion under this vote.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There is an increase shown in connection with the item for clerks, including those in business undertakings and trading concerns.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The newly established office of general manager of the Wyndham Freezing Works involves a sum of £1,600 a year, but this is not the place in which to discuss the matter. I commend the Estimates to the consideration of hon. members.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [9.35]: The Honorary Minister has stated that we have before us an interesting and informative report. I have read most of it myself and can bear out what he has said. I should like to bring under the notice of the Honorary Minister a matter about which I have already consulted the Premier, whom I judge to be in sympathy with it. Some time ago a Royal Commission on agriculture took a considerable amount of evidence. Amongst other things, the commissioners mentioned in their interim report the question of the mortality amongst farmers' horses. It was pointed out that those losses were in a great measure due to the lack of men skilled in veterinary work in the districts referred to in the report. I have gone to the trouble of finding out how many veterinary surgeons and veterinary practitioners we have in Western Australia. I have ascertained that there are only eight fully qualified veterinary surgeons in the State, of whom only four are here to-day. Of veterinary practitioners I have a list of 22, of whom only about 18 are practising. We have, therefore, in the neighbourhood of a score of men possessing veterinary knowledge who are competent legally to practise amongst our stock. I brought this matter up before the Premier in 1917. I pointed out that there were certain men in the back country possessing a knowledge of veterinary matters, who were precluded by the Act from practising. If they did the work for nothing they were enabled to practise, but they were not in the position to do the work without fee. In my own electorate there were three or four men who possessed veterinary knowledge. In conversation with various other country mem-

bers I found that in certain districts, in the Toodyay district, for instance, there were men who were particularly skilful in this direction, but who were not veterinary practitioners and were not, therefore, allowed to accept any fees for their work. I hold no particular brief for any of these men, but I do say that in view of the small number of veterinary surgeons and practitioners we have in Western Australia, and as we have no veterinary college to which those particularly interested in the work can go for the purpose of obtaining the necessary training, we should make some provision by which these other men could exercise their veterinary skill in the direction of preventing so many of the losses, to which I have referred, occurring in the country districts. This, of course, would be subject to their proving that they possessed the necessary skill to enable them to carry out the work. In the Bruce Rock district the loss of horses in two years was 142. I am assured by people in that district that had it not been for Mr. Titus Lander, who went out repeatedly at his own expense to treat the horses of settlers, the mortality would have been very much greater. I have suggested to the Premier that the Act should be amended in such a way that the Governor in Council would have power to nominate any person or persons, whom he might think were entitled to be registered under the Act, and that such nominee or nominees should have all the rights and privileges of a veterinary surgeon practising under the Act. I know it will be said that it is not right that we should introduce legislation for individuals. In this case, however, my object is not to assist an individual, but to assist the settlers in the country districts. If there are men in the agricultural areas who can prove that they possess the necessary skill and experience in dealing with sheep, cattle, or horses, they should be brought under the provisions of the Act so that their services would be available to the owners of such stock. I believe that Mr. Titus Lander could have been made a veterinary practitioner but for his honesty. He was asked if he was making his living at the business, but he replied in the negative. At the time he was the member for East Perth, and in all probability did not expect that later on he would become a farmer. He did not look to the veterinary calling as a means of earning a livelihood. I have taken the trouble to obtain some endorsement of what I have said regarding Mr. Lander's skill with and his love for animals. We find that the S.P.C.A. gives him every credit for the good work he has performed regarding the purification of the milk supply in the metropolitan area and tubercular troubles amongst cattle, and generally for his veterinary skill. Mr. Lander possesses dozens of references from owners of stock in various positions, and when he can prove that he has demonstrated his skill over a period of 17 years, I say that we should enable him to practice veterinary work in the district in which he lives. Men

possessing the qualities of good nature that are so noticeable in Mr. Lander are called upon by every Tom, Dick, and Harry in the country. He never refuses to relieve the sufferings of animals when possible, but always refuses to take a fee. If, however, we could amend the Act in the direction I have suggested Mr. Lander would be able to give his services to his neighbours and accept some remuneration for those services, and he would also be the means of saving much of that loss which has occurred during the last two years. I wish to touch upon the question of potash supplies for fruitgrowers. I have read with a great deal of interest the remarks with regard to fruit growing. Some little time ago I, as Whip of the Country party, had handed to me a request that we should endeavour to see that a proper proportion of the world's supply of potash was made available for the growers in this State of fruit, potatoes, onions and vegetables. I asked the Minister controlling the department certain questions and I pointed out to him that the report he had received from the Mines Department set out that 129 tons of alunite ore had been treated and 90 tons of fertilizer had been made ready for use, that the present plant was producing six tons per day, while, in the near future, it was probable that this would be increased to 20 tons. I am informed that this is very misleading; it only represents a three per cent. potash content. I told the fruit growers what I learned, and they are anxious to know—I hope the Minister will be able to inform us—whether this source of potash supply is likely to become a commercial proposition, and whether it is likely to be made available at anything like a reasonable rate. The information that I have obtained from the Mt. Lyell people, is that potash to-day costs £25 to £30 a ton. The cost previously was £15 a ton. I also asked the Minister for Agriculture a question with regard to the deposit of glauconite sand at Gingin, which, according to a bulletin issued by the Geological Department is worthy of being tested by the Agricultural Department. I have not been able to learn yet whether any attempt has been made by the Agricultural Department to make that sand available. It has been suggested in the bulletin of the Geological Department that the sand could supply, in a rough and ready way—in the absence of potash which is now almost unprocureable—a potash suitable for the purpose for which the agriculturists require it. The Mt. Lyell people have also informed me that potash from alunite would cost approximately £50 a ton, and it is in regard to this that I would like to have some information from the Minister. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) has told me that, so far as the experiments at Kalgoorlie are concerned, his opinion is that the potash will not prove a payable proposition. To ascertain whether that is so or not is what I am after. An-

other item to which I desire to refer is fencing wire. The Honorary Minister knows that I have been interested in this question for a considerable time. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) told us that in regard to No. 10 galvanised fencing wire, a quote given was £60 a ton, and that the man who wanted it was subsequently able to import it for £29 10s. a ton c.i.f. Fremantle. People who require this kind of fencing material should get their lamps well trimmed so as to learn exactly what is going on. Some time in August a question was asked Mr. Massey Greene as to what provision was being made with regard to providing fencing and barbed wire netting in view of the alarming spread of the rabbit pest in the Eastern States. After stating that it was practically useless for the Government to set out to purchase fencing wire at the existing high prices, particularly on a falling market, Mr. Greene finished up by saying—

*I am glad to be able to say that within the next six weeks or so a very large plant will be in operation in Australia which will be able, in a very short time, to draw sufficient wire to meet the whole of Australia's requirements in wire netting. Once the wire is drawn, the actual weaving of it into mesh is a comparatively easy matter.*

That was about eight or ten weeks ago, and since that statement was made in the Federal House, I came across a paragraph in an Eastern newspaper headed "Wire Works for Australia; Millions of tons of barbed wire for sale," and it stated—

*Definite information concerning the project for the establishment of new wire netting works on a very large scale in Australia is contained in a cable message received from Mr. G. Delprat, general manager of the Broken Hill Proprietary Co.; now on a visit to Great Britain. Mr. Delprat states that an English firm proposes to establish works at Newcastle to supply the Australian market.*

In reply to a question as to the quantity of wire netting, barbed wire, and fencing wire which the Imperial Government has for sale, the High Commissioner, Mr. Fisher, has informed the Minister for Customs (Mr. Greene) that over a million tons of barbed wire, more or less rusty, is available where it is lying in American ports at £10 per ton. A large quantity is being derusted and coated in England, and will be available after treatment at £16 10s. per ton. Quantities of wire netting may be obtained but no galvanised wire is available, says Mr. Fisher. In speaking on the Address-in-reply I urged the Honorary Minister to keep an eye on what was going on. I believe he has done so, but we private members cannot always get inside information and that is why I am stressing the matter to-night. There is still another question to which I wish to refer. Mr. Tudor asked in the Federal House whether the Minister for Trade and Customs would state if it was correct,

as reported in the Press, that his department intended to hand over to the Wheat Pool the profit of £100,000 made by the sale of cornsacks. Mr. Greene's reply was that the Government proposed to take steps that would lead to the £100,000 made out of the wheat sacks being refunded to the Pool. If that is to be done it is just as well that those who are dealing with the matter should be kept on the move.

Mr. Munsie: The matter should never have been handed over to private firms.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That is so. I believe that £300,000 was taken from the people by that deal.

Mr. Munsie: The farmers throughout Australia were robbed.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That is what makes me anxious that the £100,000 should go back to the farmers.

Mr. Munsie: The money will come out of the taxpayers' pockets.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It will come out of the farmers' pockets. I notice from the report presented by the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt that the Commissioner has done what should have been done long ago, that is, to set out the activities that he has to cover. Perhaps no one knows better than I do the work that is done by Mr. Sutton. Seven years ago I drove Mr. Sutton to Mr. Flower's farm at Kodj Kodjin, where he delivered his second or third lecture. Mr. Sutton then stressed the fact that the farmers who were on light land would have to see to it that they introduced different cultivable methods, that they would have to get sheep for their holdings, and that the light land would require treatment very different from that of the heavy lands, that they could not go on cropping continuously without changing the crops and without stock. I thought at one time that the Commissioner was not following out his original ideas, but I have since learned that that officer has been particularly busy in regard to the introduction of new varieties of oats to supersede the old Algerian, something that would be earlier and would suit dry conditions better. I notice in his report that he mentions the fact that he has evolved two varieties, namely, Burt's Early and Lachlan. Both are eminently suited for the dry conditions and these will help, particularly on the light lands, to make payable propositions which were previously difficult. In his report on light and wet lands, the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt states that he has been giving serious attention to what is regarded as a very big problem so far as Western Australia is concerned. We have a certain proportion of heavy lands in this country about which we need not worry ourselves. The problem, however, is the immense area of light lands, and they are of endless variety. We have the mallee land, the land of Kulin, about which there has been a good deal of trouble of late, the wodgil, and the lands at Ongerup. There is land that seems to be poorer even than the wodgil, and

what is to be done with that I am not able to say. But even within a few miles of this poor land we find land which will produce practically anything. It is a big problem and I am pleased that the Commissioner for the wheat belt is tackling it in a businesslike way. Within 12 miles of the poorest of some of this wodge country, there is a lot of land of apparently similar character carrying light scrub, and some of that land which has been brought under cultivation is growing magnificent crops of oats. The wodge land is so poor that the Government have had to move many of the settlers from it on to other blocks, so that that land is now deserted and a lot of money has been lost. Members on looking through the report, might be inclined to cavil at the references to agricultural lectures and visits, and the reports and bulletins published. Ever since I have been in the House, I have advocated these things strongly, and I still maintain that they should be encouraged to the very utmost. Any number of our settlers had very little or no experience, and I am pleased that we are beginning to realise it is almost useless to put a man without experience on the land. The Repatriation Department are insisting upon applicants having a certain amount of knowledge before they are granted land. The Yankee and the Canadian discovered this long ago. They insist that a man about to take up land shall satisfy one of the district representatives that he has a knowledge or aptitude to fit him for the calling. I should like the Government to introduce a Bill to amend the veterinary practitioners law, for I am sure that those men who are giving their services gratis have the sympathy of hon. members. I hold no brief for Mr. Titus Lander, but I know of other men who are giving their services in a similar way. I know Mr. Lander, and I know of his work and I have made an appeal because such a man should be given the right to charge for his services. However, he will not accept a penny except for the drugs, and in many cases he even gives them without charge.

Mr. Green: He is averaging three days a week for nothing.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have known him to be taken from his harvester to attend to a horse or a cow that was dying; in his good-natured way he left his work for the good of another settler. For such services he declines to accept a penny, because he is not willing to put himself under the whip. He said if he could not be paid for his services in a proper way, he would have to knock off lending assistance because he cannot afford to neglect his own place.

Mr. Lutey: You said there are many others.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: So there are. I know of three or four, and the member for Tood-yay (Mr. Piessie), I know, could mention others.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The trouble is that Lander will not knock it off; he will keep on until he is bankrupt.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am glad the Commissioner is taking up the matter of the light land so keenly. Lectures have been given by him throughout the length and breadth of the country, and a considerable amount of useful information has been disseminated by him. I have had an opportunity to put data before him, and have found that he is quite au fait with the matter. When I explained to him how settlers in my own dry areas regarded certain things, he was keenly interested, and I think my remarks may have caused him to enlarge his knowledge in some directions, as I had a better knowledge of the particular district which he in his larger sphere had not had an opportunity to acquire.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [10.6]: I must confess I am not equally gratified with the report made in regard to the Department of Agriculture. This State in 1917-18 spent a very considerable sum of money in an investigation of the south west districts. A lot of very useful evidence was obtained and a valuable report was made. Time after time, it has been acknowledged in this House that the most important matter connected with agriculture in the South-West is that of drainage. All this information as to the analytical value of manures, the various kinds of cereals, and the stock production is altogether useless unless we have means to get the surplus water out of the heavy, black, strong land. With a department spending no less than £57,000 per annum, there is a great failing in the fact that little or no mention is made of the important subject of drainage. In this particular department we have the fruit expert, the dairy expert, the sheep and wool inspector.

Mr. Griffiths: You are wrong.

Mr. MONEY: If the hon. member looks at the Estimates, he will find all the inspectors I have mentioned, but there is no drainage inspector or instructor, and thus the most important subject of the whole lot is entirely omitted. No provision is made in connection with this, the most important factor in the success of agriculture in the South-West. Although this report was obtained in 1917-18, the time has arrived when we should do away with this stereotyped annual report—which is in the nature of a flourish of trumpets—and consult those who know and who would be willing to give the result of their experience towards devising a method to develop the South-West on the only successful lines possible, namely, by the use of lime and the drainage of the land. The success of settlement on the land, particularly of our returned soldiers, could be furthered by the appointment of local committees acquainted with the conditions of their particular districts.

Their knowledge should be availed of to the utmost, and they should be urged to visit and take an interest in the hundreds and thousands of returned soldiers who are going on the land, going there in many cases without that local help and, I am sorry to think, with the prospect of nothing else but failure for many of them. The greatest help that can be given them is the friendship and sympathy and advice of those who have been successful in the particular locality. It would be well if the Government seriously considered this question, and devised means to decentralise this most important industry in the State. We have worked it from one centre—Perth— notwithstanding that for years we have been preaching the necessity for decentralisation. Still, not a step forward have we moved in the direction of decentralisation. We all admit that this is the correct policy, and that it should be carried out, and yet so little is done to carry it out. Most of the expenditure of £57,000 a year is centralised in Perth. We lose too much power in distance; too much time and expense in travelling. There should be a system of field inspectors, and until we can make provision for the necessary field inspectors we should encourage the most successful men in each district to fulfil these functions. I am sure that five out of every six persons who settle on the land in the South-West have no concern whatever as to the need for outfalls in connection with the drainage, and the necessity for these outfalls should be brought home to them by local field inspectors. It is useless to talk about draining a field unless the water can be given an outlet somewhere. It is as important to settlers to have the levels and know where the outfalls should be, as for a mariner to have a chart and know where the rocks are for the safe navigation of his ship. It matters not what official inspectors we have, it matters not what bureaucracy we have, unless we have the help and guidance and experience of those who have made a success of settlement under local conditions, the Department of Agriculture is not fulfilling and never can fulfil the functions for which we are expending this huge sum of money.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [10.13]: In introducing the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture, the Honorary Minister has pointed out with some pride that there is a certain amount of saving this year. I am not with him in that opinion; I am sorry to see that there is a saving in this department because if there is any department which will be responsible for the welfare of the State, it is the Department of Agriculture. The member for Bunbury has just pointed out that the department have the spending of £57,000. But we in this State are to be responsible for the expenditure of between three and four millions for the re-

patriation of our soldiers. Further, we have it from the Premier that a tentative offer has been made by the British Government, whereby we may receive 36,000 ex-service men, who are to be financed to the extent of £500 each. That means another 18 millions sterling for which this State will have to be responsible. Therefore the Agricultural Department are to be responsible for the wise or the foolish expenditure of about 22 millions sterling within the next four or five years. In view of these huge figures we should have the very best expert knowledge available in the spending of that money. It will depend on that expert knowledge whether the State is going to benefit as it should, or whether the expenditure is going to result in failure. The time has come when the Agricultural Department should have a permanent head. The present acting head is a gentleman receiving £648 per annum. I understand he has a good record as an office man, but knows nothing about agriculture, which has not been his profession. I suggest we should have a director of agriculture, and give him £1,500 or £2,000 a year to control this most important and growing department. Such an appointment would give us that continuity of policy which is so very necessary for the successful conduct of the department. Of course we have a Minister in charge of the department, but Ministers come and go. Unless we have a permanent head such as I suggest, I do not think much good will result from the future operations of the department. I would like to see at the head of that department a gentleman with something like the qualifications of our Premier—a man of business and also of farming experience, and at the same time a good administrator. The world should be secured to obtain such an officer, and he should be pretty well allowed to name his own salary. In a large measure it will depend on his administration whether the department will succeed in the future. The Honorary Minister points out with pride that we have new experts in dairying, in sheep, in wool, and in poultry. No doubt these experts are very important; but, to judge from the salaries appropriated to these officers, I do not think we have obtained the very best brains. The dairy expert especially should be a gentleman who can command a higher salary than we see on these Estimates. Further, I would like to see attached to the department an irrigation engineer. We have a very good irrigationist now, but Mr. Scott acknowledges that he knows nothing about engineering. In the North-West we have vast areas suitable for irrigation. I am not referring to the Gascoyne alone, but also to the Ashburton, the Harding, the Fortescue, and other rivers. We must look ahead, for if the ex-service men are coming we must be prepared to place them on country. Therefore the department should engage the services of an irrigation engineer; I mean an engineer who has been working

in connection with rivers such as are found in our North-West. I believe that such a gentleman could be loaned from the Indian Government. To begin with, the appointment need be merely a temporary one, long enough to allow the officer to inspect and report on our northern areas. This should be done speedily, so that we may know promptly what area of good land is available for the men we hope to obtain from the Old Country. In the eastern wheat belt, which a Parliamentary party visited recently, I noticed some deep wells. But a great deal of the water conservation in those districts is dependent on dams. That is an expensive system, and I think experiments might be made in the wheat belt with bores to search for deep wells and sub-artesian water. By the erection of wind-mills and tanks provision could then be made for stock. The matter ought to be taken in hand very soon, because, as the Honorary Minister has pointed out, the numbers of our sheep are increasing very rapidly. If we want to carry the number of sheep that we ought to carry, we must make the necessary provision. If one or two boring plants were sent to those districts for the purpose of experimenting, I believe good results would accrue. With regard to conservation of fodder, I think it would be a good idea to adopt the suggestion made by the Royal Commission on Agriculture that an experienced farmer, one who has had a good deal to do with the preserving of fodder, should be brought over here from the Eastern States. His visit need not be a very long one. He could see the various settlers concerned, and advise them what to do. Lastly, I wish to suggest to the Minister the establishment of a school of instruction in agriculture close to the city and the more thickly populated portion of the State. We have State farms at Narrogin, Denmark, Brunswick, and Chapman; but it is impracticable for most of the men who are interested or wish to be instructed in agriculture of any description whatever to visit those distant farms for tuition. If a small area were acquired near Gosnells—where there is some good and fairly cheap country—an experimental school could be established there, with small plots of wheat, and fodders, and vegetables. One day per week could be set apart for lectures. On that day the departmental experts could attend and give tuition to all who cared to come. The tuition should be free of cost. If this scheme were adopted, I feel certain that a great many people would interest themselves in agriculture, and, instead of hanging about the towns to earn a meagre living, would go out into the country to settle for themselves. I strongly urge the establishment of a school of agricultural instruction close to the city. The project need not prove very expensive, because the school might become largely self-supporting. For my own part, before becoming a member of this House I went several times to the Bruns-

wick and other State farms for the purpose of acquiring knowledge of stock and of fodder growing methods. This ran me into considerable sums, and I am sure the expense would debar many people from acquiring the knowledge unless they could secure it much cheaper than I did. I trust the Minister will favourably consider my suggestion. If it is acted upon, perhaps it will do some good and assist the department in carrying out the very important functions committed to their care.

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [10.25]: In speaking on these Estimates, I desire to congratulate the Minister responsible for the appointment of a dairy expert. I am not at one with the last speaker in condemning an expert merely on account of the smallness of the salary paid to him. It is hardly possible for this State to afford the salaries we would like to pay such officers. But if we are able to secure suitable men at lower salaries, we should avail ourselves of their services. In connection with dairying, I am glad to see that the department have introduced a system of herd testing. Members would do well to read the report on this subject, which shows the importance attaching to that aspect of dairying. The report discloses that in Victoria the average yield of butter fat is 140lbs. per annum, while in New South Wales it is 170lbs. Against those averages, Western Australia has an average of only 110lbs. These, of course, are averages for herds. There are herds which yield much higher tests. There is one case of an average of 416lbs. of butter fat, and there are individual cows that yield up to 1,000lbs. of butter fat. These figures show how far Western Australia has to go as a butter producing State. If by introducing the herd testing principle we can improve our herds, the question of paying good wages on dairy farms will be solved. If we get cows giving, say, 200 or 300 lbs. more butter fat than those which we are milking to-day, evidently the margin of profit will be very much greater in this State and the difficulty of securing labour will in large measure be removed. I am glad the department have also seen fit to appoint a potato expert, and I should like to read one or two extracts from his report, which will disabuse hon. members' minds on the question of potato production in Western Australia. Whenever that question has been raised in this Chamber, it seems to have been looked upon rather as a matter of ridicule. The annual report of the Agricultural Department bears out what I said on the Price Fixing Bill, namely, that a minimum price is essential for the encouragement of the potato-growing industry to its fullest extent. The Chief Inspector of Agriculture for the South-West writes—

Potatoes are an expensive crop to produce, costing from £20 to £25 per acre,

so that a crop of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  tons per acre at £8 per ton is required to square the ledger. If an arrangement were made by which a minimum price could be guaranteed to growers it would stimulate the production of potatoes. This procedure has been followed in Great Britain during the war period and creates in the grower a feeling of security which at once reacts in larger areas being planted and production thereby increased. Importations for the year ended 30th June, 1919, have amounted to 5,493 tons of potatoes and 1,187 tons of onions. The acreage under potatoes and the yield during the last five years are as follows:—1914, 5,229 acres, 17,803 tons; 1915, 6,500 acres, 21,600 tons; 1916-17, 5,838 acres, 16,841 tons; 1917-18, 4,484 acres, 11,320 tons.

It is evident that large quantities of potatoes are grown in this State, and that they are not grown so much in consequence of the excessive prices ruling lately as has been asserted in this Chamber. My contention in this respect is supported by the shrinkage in area which is disclosed by the table I have just quoted. The fact that potatoes are not grown to the full extent they should be in this State is due to the fluctuations in their price and to the absence of a minimum price. I join with the member for Bunbury in his remarks on the vital importance of drainage to the South-West. I also join with him in thinking that more should be done in the matter of drainage than is shown in the departmental reports or on these Estimates. The only reference to drainage that I can see in the report is—

Farmers are rapidly being educated as to the value of drainage and practical results are visible in many districts, which is very gratifying. Careful levels are taking the place of slipshod methods, and in all cases the settlers appreciate the assistance given by the department.

It is of no use farmers in the South-West taking up the question of drainage until a national scheme has been resolved upon. Unless the Government are prepared to lay out a system of main drainage right through the South-West it will be useless for farmers to tackle the proposition. It is essential that the Government should give careful attention to the growth of fodder plants, more especially in the South-West. Much of the country down there is without value until improved. Yet when the land is improved it can be made to produce good pastures, which will carry a considerable number of stock.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Like the hon. member, it is sometimes sour.

Mr. PICKERING: I think the hon. member himself is sometimes sour, especially after a bad day at the races. It takes a lot of money to develop this land properly, but under correct treatment it will carry large numbers of stock. I know many people who are now producing good fodder crops and securing a big return therefrom. We had at Brunswick an experimental farm which was

a good proposition as far as it went. It was the only demonstration farm we had in the South-West, but it has now been abandoned. The member for Gascoyne suggested the establishment of an experimental farm or training college in one of the suburbs of Perth. I can see no utility in placing such a farm where there is so little land for settlement. It is better that we should have small experimental farms scattered throughout the country. If the hon. member had looked at the departmental report, he would have seen that the Government have under consideration the establishment of an agricultural college, and that a committee has been appointed for the purpose. I do not look with great favour on the appointment of the wool and sheep expert. We in the South-West are not in a position to utilise his services. A man with a wide knowledge of sheep is more likely to bring about the introduction of the class of sheep best suited to a particular district. I am glad to notice from the report that Mr. Wickens, the chief inspector of fruit, has recovered from his very serious accident and will shortly resume work. He is a most zealous officer, and has rendered most excellent service to the department. I hope the Minister will take care to see that sufficient shipping space is obtained during the coming season for the fruit we hope to export. In regard to the vermin boards, there is room for improvement in their constitution and in the disposition of the areas brought under their jurisdiction. The whole of the area between the No. 1 rabbit-proof fence and the coast should be formed into vermin boards and every portion of it brought within the purview of the Act. The member for York referred to veterinary research, and instanced the case of Mr. Titus Lander. Apparently it was in the interests of that gentleman that the hon. member put up his fight.

Mr. Griffiths: Absolutely wrong.

Mr. PICKERING: Whilst quite in accord with the hon. member in regard to that particular case, I do not think it should be made a general rule that anyone who believes he can practise veterinary science should be ipso facto registered as a veterinary surgeon. The member for York said that if candidates could satisfy a judge, they should be appointed. I understand the veterinary board are prepared to accept anybody who can pass the necessary examination. If we are to say that anyone who can pull a horse's tooth is to become a veterinary surgeon, God help the farmers when they have an important case!

Mr. Griffiths: You do not know a veterinary surgeon from a veterinary practitioner.

Mr. PICKERING: They are both entitled to collect fees under the Act. I do not set myself up to be a judge of veterinary surgeons.

Mr. Griffiths: Well, you do in respect of most things.

Mr. PICKERING: In respect of those things on which I am capable of exercising judgment I have no hesitation in doing so.

Mr. Griffiths: Or even where you only think you are capable.

Mr. PICKERING: I am strongly opposed to the throwing about of degrees in veterinary science to unqualified persons. The Veterinary Board of Western Australia is quite capable of saying who should be registered as a veterinary practitioner or a veterinary surgeon. If there is a special case, such as that instanced by the member for York, I think perhaps consideration should be given to it, for the reason that the gentleman concerned could not make application to be registered as a veterinary surgeon at the time. If we have had the facts of the case, and I do not doubt it, special consideration should be given to it, but it should not be taken as a precedent for the registration of anyone who is not qualified to practice.

Mr. Griffiths: That is quite right.

Mr. PICKERING: It is a vital thing for people who have valuable stock to know that the men to whom they hand it over are capable of treating it properly. They should not have to go to people who will accept the responsibility without the necessary knowledge or capability to give treatment.

Mr. Griffiths: That is the last thing we want.

Mr. PICKERING: It was the custom in Australia to allow anyone to practice medicine whether he was qualified or not. It became necessary to introduce legislation to prevent this. All those men who were practising at the time were allowed to continue doing so, but fortunately they have died out. The same thing may be said in regard to veterinary science. I wish to refer to the butter industry. I had an opportunity when butter was scarce of bringing to the House some samples of butter from the Busselton factory. A unanimous vote of thanks was passed to me for the opportunity that was given to members to taste butter of such good quality. The member for Bunbury had the opportunity of saying what the Bunbury butter factory had done. I wish to show what has been done and is being done by the Busselton butter factory. It is under the control of the State and I hope will be turned into a State trading concern. The report of the department contains this reference to it—

The Busselton factory controlled by the State has had to be enlarged during the year and special provisions made for the handling of the large number of cream cans that come to hand. An additional room 40 by 35 has been provided with a concrete floor and other conveniences. A 400-gallon Batch pasteuriser has also been provided and is now installed ready for operation, and an additional Simplex churn has been obtained and placed in position. The engine and refrigerating plant has been reinforced by additional units and numerous other

improvements have been made, some of which are still uncompleted. As soon as this work is finalised the factory will be able to handle a much larger quantity of butter than under previous arrangements, and it is anticipated that the pasteuriser will enable a very much better keeping sample of butter to be turned out. The supplies have greatly increased during the year, the total amount of butter fat received being 159,788 lbs. and the quantity of butter made being 183,065 lbs. Butter to the value of £14,272 5s. 5d. was sold, and the sum of £12,601 11s. 1d. was paid to suppliers for butter fat, the average price paid for butter fat per lb. being 17.81 pence. This price should prove most satisfactory to suppliers and is, I think, the highest average price yet paid for the supply of butter fat.

Mr. Lambert: What profit was made?

Mr. PICKERING: There was not much loss, if any. Hon. members will be glad to know that this factory is doing so much for the development of the South-West, and doing it on sound business lines. The work it is carrying out warrants large extensions, and these extensions will be justified, as anticipated by the Commissioner for the South-West. The herds are increasing and their quality improving. The butter test has improved and everything in Busselton and the surrounding districts, which is controlled by the Busselton butter factory, is showing progress and advance. This is due almost entirely to the fact that the State, in the time of Mr. W. D. Johnson, took over the Busselton butter factory and placed it on a good foundation. It has continued to go ahead from that time. Prior to the taking over of the factory by the State, the settlers did not get a correct assay of their milk, or the correct return for their supplies. The number of subscribers had fallen to seven, but to-day we are supplying thousands of pounds worth of butter to the local market. There is no doubt that this has done much to keep down the cost of living. The more we encourage this butter factory, and the more we improve the dairying industry by the proper selection of the herds, and the more assistance that is rendered by the State in the way of the introduction of fodder plants and things that are suitable to the production of butter, the more will advantage accrue to the State, and the more readily shall we overtake the position occupied by the other States to the end that we may join in the federation of butter suppliers that are now exporting this commodity to all parts of the world.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10.47]: I regret we have not had brought down an amendment to the Fertiliser Act. The Honorary Minister, with his knowledge of this subject, knows the importance it is to the farmers of the State, and I regret that dur-



ing this session he has not been able to place the whole of the control of the fertilisers of the State upon a much better footing. We find that although the farmers spend about £300,000 a year on the purchase of fertilisers, the department has only conducted something like 118 analyses of fertilisers. This number of analyses should not occupy any competent chemist more than a fortnight.

Mr. Smith: The office is busy analysing the soils of Harvey.

Mr. LAMBERT: Possibly the Government Analyst is still busy on potstill whisky. Last year the department spent about £28,000 on rabbit poisons and this year £21,000, and yet we find that only five analyses have been run by this overworked department.

Mr. Smith: How many of these were correct?

Mr. LAMBERT: I would not like to say. We have different laboratories dotted about all over the State. We have first that of the Railway Department. They are running their own laboratory with their own stores. Then we have the Geological Department doing exactly the same thing. Next we have the Government Analyst under a separate housing scheme and a separate department, and he too has his own stores. I hope the Minister for Agriculture will suggest to the Minister for Mines that there shall be some co-ordination in the departments by which the Government Analyst, if he has some agents which are required by other departments, will not refuse to supply them. As things are at present nothing but chaos results. I would also impress upon the Government the necessity for, if possible this session, introducing a Bill to amend the Fertiliser Act. This would be a non-contentious measure, and it is very badly needed. It is rather illuminating to find from the report of the Chief Inspector of Rabbits that the farmers are establishing dingo clubs for the purpose of dealing with that pest. Undoubtedly there is a serious side to this and it is one to which attention should be given. There are some fine lands in the Port Augusta district but the only drawback is the dingo, and we should give our attention to the pest nearer home and not forget that there is threatened a serious invasion on the border. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) has such an extensive knowledge of all the matters connected with this department, and he dealt with the various ramifications of the department in such detail that one almost shrinks to add even a comment. There are many matters, however, in regard to which the Minister should supply hon. members with information. An attempt should be made to follow on the lines of those adopted by the Bureau of Agriculture of the United States of America, which institution is doing good work, and if we did nothing else but disseminated the information contained in the bulletins of that bureau we would be doing a good service to the State. I hope the Minister will make a note

of the fact that there are some valuable bulletins issued by that bureau, and the department would be justified in reprinting some of the information contained in them and distributing it amongst our farmers. Something should also be done on the lines followed in America in connection with the analysis and classification of soils. I hope the Minister has made a note of the few points to which I have referred and that he will take action in the direction of bringing about reforms which are essential if we are to increase our production.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [10.55]: There are one or two matters in connection with the Estimates of this department to which I would like to refer. Having had considerable experience in connection with dairy farming, which subject has, under this vote, received much attention, I might be permitted to offer a few suggestions. The best means by which we can get improved results in this direction is by the State farms keeping pure bred stock, instead of disposing of that stock at Show time as has been the custom. The bull calves should be kept and at a later stage should be sent to those centres where dairying is being established. The advantage to be derived from pursuing this policy would very quickly be evident. If we are to reach that goal that the Minister has in view and which we all desire to see achieved this is the quickest way to do it. The dairy herd at the Hospital for the Insane should be kept intact instead of a portion of it being disposed of as is done year after year, and the animals should be distributed throughout the various dairying centres.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The same thing applies to pigs.

Mr. HARRISON: It applies to all animals the breeding of which we desire to encourage.

Mr. Smith: Are the bulls which are sold at the Royal Show not distributed throughout the dairying centres?

Mr. HARRISON: They could be distributed to better advantage if that distribution were in the hands of the department. There is also the need to give attention to the question of the distribution of pure seeds. The Commissioner of the wheat belt has been experimenting successfully with oats and he has shown that it is possible to grow oats on land farther east than was hitherto profitable by the creation of Burt's Early. It makes first class hay and, if this had been the only product with which Mr. Sutton had succeeded, the State would have been amply repaid for any expense in which it has been involved to date. As a result of the development of seed culture, we have been able to grow early wheats at a profit much further east than was contemplated would be possible some years ago and, with these special seeds, we are now able to take ad-

vantage of our short climatic period to grow these cereal crops. The Minister for Lands would be well advised to open up some land around Westonia in blocks of, say, 3,000 acres, on which I believe agriculture could be successfully carried out. The Premier paid a visit to Southern Cross recently and it was stated that two of the dairy herds there were second to none in the State. If that is true, and I have no reason to doubt it, it seems quite feasible to extend mixed farming right out to Southern Cross. Therefore, why not give individuals a chance to select land in sufficient areas to enable them to make good upon it. The expenditure provided in the Estimates is meagre in comparison with the development which should accrue to the State if the industry is wisely and justly encouraged.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [11.2]: I wish to direct attention to the report of the Chief Inspector of Rabbits in which he refers to the dingo pest. He states that the dingo has been responsible for the destruction of tens of thousands of sheep. I wish to stress this section of his report and impress upon the Minister the absolute need for better provision to cope with this pest. I regret to find there is no provision in the Estimates for a cross fence at the top of Cowcowing lakes to keep out the influx of dogs and rabbits from the north. This cross fence is vital to the success and progress of that inland settlement, and I hope the Minister will give the matter favourable consideration.

This concluded the general debate on the Estimates for Agriculture Generally. Items were discussed as follow:—

Item, Chief Inspector of Stock, £528:

Mr. LUTEY: The pig industry is becoming important. There seems to be a good deal of misunderstanding as to whether farmers may use wheat for feeding pigs. I am informed that some farmers have experimented with wheat as fodder for pigs, and have found it satisfactory; but others are under the impression that they are debarred from using their wheat for this purpose and must sell it to the pool. Will the Minister make the position clear?

The HONORARY MINISTER: A farmer may feed wheat to his pigs if he so desires. Trouble has arisen because some farmers have used wheat in this way instead of sending it to the pool, and the pigs have been sold and the money has been pocketed by the farmers. These farmers were under the Industries Assistance Board, and the money was not rightly theirs. The board should have received the whole of the proceeds of the crop.

Item, Chief Inspector of South-West, £360:

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The hour is late to talk about bull calves or barrow pigs. Last year it was reported to me on the best of

evidence—and I have no reason to doubt it now—that the Chief Inspector for the South-West, Mr. Wicken, put up a minute to the effect that barrows should not have been valued by the manager of the Brunswick State Farm at £5 each because Millars' company quoted them at 17s. 6d. The "Sunday Times" had a good deal to say in relation to this item and it has not been disproved. The officer in question claimed that the Press criticism had injured his reputation and no doubt a big journal with a wide circulation might undermine an officer's reputation in this way. Though I have not perused the files, I am sure I was correct. However, I wish to say in justice to this officer, that I had no desire to injure him. If it is true that he did put up the minute, he has no right to be in the department. If it is not true, the files should disclose it. I am sorry I did not call for the files to ascertain whether it was correct, but if I had called for them it might have been found that the silverfish had been busy at that time. If the officer did not write such a minute, I do not wish to do him injury. I understand he felt the Press attack keenly. The Minister should know whether it is correct.

Item, Assistant irrigation expert, £204:

Mr. LUTEY: Reference has been made to the importance of drainage. Some years ago, in company with the member for Forrest, I had an interesting trip to the Murray River, where we saw under experiment a shovel which, while digging the drain, built up the banks. It was a good machine and I am wondering whether the department have any knowledge of it.

The Honorary Minister: Yes.

Mr. SMITH: In addition to an irrigation expert receiving £456, we have an assistant at £204. Irrigation in Western Australia seems to be a delusion. It has done more harm than good. The Honorary Minister laughs.

The Honorary Minister: I do.

Mr. SMITH: What has been the experience at Harvey? Under irrigation that district has been ruined.

The Honorary Minister: Irrigation will be the making of it.

Mr. SMITH: Irrigation on proper lines might have proved successful, but it has not been carried out on proper lines. We are employing irrigation experts who are doing nothing. Where are the irrigation works.

Mr. Money: The assistant irrigation expert was not responsible for that.

Mr. SMITH: I know nothing about the responsibility for the work. The fact is the work is not here. Irrigation should be dropped, or we should obtain the services of officers who know something about it.

Item, Narrogin school of agriculture and farm, £3,362.

Mr. PICKERING: The amount of this item has increased. Is it the Minister's intention to extend the operations of the school

and farm? The Under Secretary's report states that the establishment of a new agricultural college on some site to be decided is in contemplation. I have come in contact with many students of the Narrogin school, and they express great satisfaction with the tuition there.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The present accommodation at this institution is known to be altogether inadequate, but unfortunately the committee appointed to go into the question of site for a State college of agriculture have not yet arrived at a decision. Until they do so, and until a vote for that purpose is approved, it is impossible to carry on as the Government would wish. Everything possible will be done to fill the gap by extending the operations of the Narrogin school, without, however, putting up any permanent additions, as these might have to be taken down and removed to a new site. The Narrogin school has become wonderfully popular, and when the time arrives for the establishment of a new college, largely extended quarters will, I think, be required. Western Australia depends almost entirely upon agriculture, and therefore we should give the best possible farm training.

Item, Fruit and orchard inspection, including wages, £2,688.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I understand that the State orchard inspectors do a great deal of work for the Repatriation Department, but that the State Government receive no reoup from the Federal Government in this connection.

The Honorary Minister: That is so.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It should not be so. It is a fair thing that the Commonwealth Government, if they utilise our officers, should pay something towards the upkeep of the department.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The point is that the orchard inspectors are employed in connection with soldier settlement work, which is entirely a State matter, although funds are provided by the Commonwealth. Of course, the State is responsible for the expenditure of the money, and also responsible for the interest. I will look into the question raised by the hon. member.

Item, Potato inspection, including wages, £717.

Mr. PICKERING: I hope no drastic alteration will be made in the regulations governing the importation of potatoes, without consultation with the growers. I have shown to-night that the potato industry is of great importance to this State. The only means we have of checking the dumping of potatoes here is the protection afforded by the existing regulations, Parliament having declined the alternative of fixing a minimum price for potatoes.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The representatives of the potato growers have already been consulted, and I understand they

concur in the new regulations, which will be laid on the Table shortly.

Mr. Money: With whom did those representatives consult?

The HONORARY MINISTER: They consulted with Mr. Baxter.

Mr. Money: Whom did they represent?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The potato growers in the South-West. I am not talking about representatives of the buyers and brokers in Perth. The representatives of the potato growers passed certain resolutions in conference, and they have since consulted with the Honorary Minister, Mr. Baxter; and the new regulations are the result.

Mr. PICKERING: If only as a matter of courtesy, the president or secretary of the South-Western conference should have been notified of any contemplated alteration in the regulations governing the importation of potatoes.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Had I not promised to assist the Minister to get these Estimates through, his remarks on this item would have made me move that progress be reported. He has assured the member for Sussex that the new regulations will meet with the approval of the potato growers in the South-West. I could talk for hours on the iniquity which is being practised to-day in this connection.

The Honorary Minister: That is under the existing regulations.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have a few potato growers in my district. The position as regards the supply of potatoes in the South-West recently has been tantamount to a crime. A line was drawn from Mundijong eastward, but the member for Katanning has succeeded in getting that line moved so that relief might be given to his constituents. During the last three months the residents of my electorate have been unable to buy potatoes at any price at all. It seems to me there are one or two influential men in the South-West cornering the potato supply, and absolutely placing this article of diet beyond the reach of the consumers. The potato grower of the South-West is doing pretty well when he gets £12 a ton.

Mr. Pickering: He gets nothing like that price.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If we cannot grow potatoes, do not let us be deluded into penalising the consumer for all time. The residents of Holyoake have not had a potato for three months. The grower is not getting the advantage, and the grower represents only an infinitesimal proportion of the people of the South-West. When the regulations come down I shall be heard.

Item, Experimental plots in the South-West, £200.

Mr. PICKERING: What does this item mean?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is proposed that plots shall be set aside on private farms and, instead of, as in the past, trying to grow 40 different varieties of fod-

ders on one farm, we shall see what can be done on experimental plots in several districts.

Item, Veterinary science scholarship, £40:

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: What does the Minister propose to do in regard to the case put up by the member for York? Every member on this side is desirous of assisting the member for York in securing some slight amendment of the Veterinary Act, which will be of service to the farmers, without involving pecuniary loss on the individual. Mr. Lander is an instance in point, and there are others doing the work to-day without receiving any recognition. I think the Government might go out of their way to assist those men. An item could be put on the Estimates, which would afford some recognition of the services of the few men already doing good work among the settlers and their dumb animals.

The PREMIER: I have in view one gentleman who certainly deserves special consideration, although perhaps not by way of an item on the Estimates. I think it would be right to so amend the Act as to admit the gentleman I have in mind. Had he not been a member of this House at the time, he would have been practising and would have been admitted.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Will you do it this session?

The PREMIER: If possible, yes. Of course we cannot break down the Veterinary Act. This gentleman was not admitted simply because, for the moment, he was not charging fees.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.27 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 4th November, 1919.*

	PAGE
Assent to Bills	1150
Select Committee, Fruit Cases Bill—Extension of time	1150
Bills: Droving Act Amendment, Select Committee's report	1150
Merchant Shipping Act Application Act	1150
Amendment, 3R.	1150
Midland Railway, 3R.	1150
Supply £975,000, 2A., Com., report	1151
Wheat Marketing, Com.	1151
Perth Mint Act Amendment, 1R.	1157
Land Tax and Income Tax, 1R.	1157
Prices Regulation, 2R.	1157
Vermia Act, Amendment 2R.	1157
Traffic, Com.	1157

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

### ASSENT TO BILLS.

Messages from the Governor received notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Mental Treatment Act Amendment.
- 2, Anzac Day.
- 3, General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act Amendment.
- 4, Justices Act Amendment.

### SELECT COMMITTEE—FRUIT CASES BILL.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. A. Sanderson the time for bringing up the select committee's report was extended by one week.

### BILL—DROVING ACT AMENDMENT.

Select Committee's report presented.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [4.35]: The date for presenting the report of the select committee on the Droving Act Amendment Bill is not until this day week, but the report is ready, and, with the permission of the House, I move—

That the report be now received and read.

Question put and passed.

Report received and read, and ordered to be printed and to be taken into consideration during the Committee stage of the Bill.

### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Merchant Shipping Act Application Act Amendment.
  - 2, Midland Railway.
- Passed.