

of the officers concerned was the engineer at Coolgardie who had contracted influenza and had been seriously ill for months past.

Mr. GEORGE: As there were other employees engaged on loan works it was probable that elsewhere on the Estimates these increases appeared wrongly. He had no desire to prevent anyone from getting his increase, but it should be obtained in a legitimate way.

Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Mining School*, £4,630 :

Mr. BATH: Had any attempt been made to keep a record of those who had gone through the school, obtained certificates, and acquired positions? All these records were kept in New Zealand, and it would be wise to adopt the same principle here. The information would be most interesting as it would show the result of the work of the school and the positions the men who had gone through it attained.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The suggestion was an excellent one, and he would ask the director to see that such a record was kept in future. The performances of those who had gone through the school were excellent, and they should be kept.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*State Batteries*, £83,596—  
agreed to.

Progress reported.

#### BILL—REGISTRATION OF DEEDS, ETC.

Received from the Legislative Council  
and read a first time.

*House adjourned at 11.7 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Friday, 3rd December, 1909.*

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

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands: Return  
showing Expenditure on State Farms.

#### BILL—LOAN. £1,342,000.

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

#### QUESTION—LOCAL COURTS, KAN- OWNA ELECTORATE.

Mr. WALKER asked the Minister for Mines: J. Has his attention been drawn to the following paragraph appearing in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*?—"Economy in Administration.—Departmental heads, as well as the Public Service Commissioner, Mr. Jull, have under consideration the question of closing the local courts, wardens' courts, and offices pertaining to them at an early date at Kanowna, Broad Arrow, Davyhurst, Kookynie, and Morgans. The business of these courts will, it is proposed, be transacted at Kalgoorlie in the case of Kanowna and Broad Arrow, at Menzies in the case of Davyhurst and Kookynie, and at Laverton in the case of Morgans. If the local and wardens' courts be abolished at the places indicated, provision will be made for deputy appointees there to receive applications in respect of mining tenements. Dependence will be placed on the services of local justices of the peace to try offenders for venal breaches of the law, and upon deputies to take the papers for the registration of births, marriages, and deaths to be forwarded to the chief centre of each district. When the Public

Service Commissioner recently paid a visit to Boulder to inquire into the advisability of transferring the court work from there to Kalgoorlie, he took the opportunity of visiting both Kanowna and Broad Arrow, to assist him in determining whether it would be advisable to transact local and wardens' court work arising in those districts, in Kalgoorlie." 2, Will the Minister inform the House what truth there is in the paragraph, and if the proposals alluded to have the approval of the Minister or the Government?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, (a.) The paragraph in question is probably based on the fact that the special Public Service Board has been recently making inquiries as to the amount of business transacted at the Government offices throughout the State. (b.) No proposals concerning the above have yet been made to the Government by the special board.

#### BILL—BOYUP-KOJONUP RAILWAY. *Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. F. Wilson): In moving the second reading of the Boyup-Kojonup Railway Bill there is no need for me to refer members back to four years ago, to the time when I had the honour of inaugurating the agricultural railway policy of the Government by submitting several Bills to authorise construction. The wisdom of that policy, which was supported, I am happy to say, by all sections of Parliament, must be admitted to-day to be undoubted. It commenced on that occasion, hon. members who were then in Parliament will remember, by the passage of three measures for the construction of agricultural lines from Katanning to Kojonup, Goomalling to Dowerin, and Wagin to Dumbleyung. Those lines were constructed very rapidly and at a very cheap price per mile. I am right in saying that they were constructed more cheaply than any other railways of a similar kind in Australia.

Member: Cheap but nasty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: An hon. member interjects "cheap but nasty."

I do not know about the lines being nasty, but I know that they were cheap, and they are answering the purpose to-day for which they were constructed. They are carrying the traffic in a way which is wholly satisfactory to the people who use them. At that time the whole of the railway system of the State comprised some 1,605 miles open for traffic. Since then the construction of railways, not only in the agricultural areas but also on our gold-fields has been pushed on apace, and to-day we have some 2,101 miles of railway open for traffic, in addition to which we have 318 miles now under construction; and if Parliament approves of the three measures which I propose to introduce this afternoon it will mean a further 184 miles when they are completed or a total of 2,603 miles. This means that we have constructed these railways at the rate of 200 miles per annum, and that when these three lines are completed, if the measures are passed and approved, we shall have increased our mileage by nearly 1,000 since the first three agricultural railways, to which I referred just now, were put in hand. The benefit of this railway construction must be apparent to everyone. It must be admitted that this policy is of enormous benefit to the settlers, for without the railways they could not possibly cultivate their lands with profit, and market their produce, and it is also a decided benefit to the State inasmuch as it has resulted in peopling our lands, developing the country, and increasing the wealth of the people generally. There are men who started on the land a few years ago with nothing, and who are to-day comfortably off; their financial position is thus assured, and what is better still to my mind is the fact that the permanent stability of the State is also assured, and financial progress and prosperity will come with it. The wisdom of our policy, which is also the policy of this Parliament generally, because we have received liberal support from members—

Mr. Angwin: We initiated the policy, so we are sure to support it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I thought we initiated the policy at the time when we built the three railways, the mea-

tures for the construction of which I introduced four years ago. That, I think, was the initiation of this great developmental policy, which has done so much, and which is going to do much more for the State. I think the wisdom of this policy is proved beyond doubt by the fact that in 1905, the period I have referred to, we had only 182,000 acres of wheat under crop, yielding about two million bushels in that year, whereas this year the estimates go to show that we have 549,000 acres, yielding over six million bushels, more than treble the crop of that year, and that the total area under crop throughout the State has reached nearly one million acres, or to be correct 835,000 acres, an increase of 172,000 acres on last year, and more than double what we had under crop in the year 1905. It is gratifying to notice from the returns that this does not apply solely to wheat growing, but that oats, barley, and hay show equally as gratifying results and increases. Surely, then, it must be apparent to those who were somewhat sceptical of the policy of development in the days of depression, that they may now take heart, because their fears were groundless, and those who were timid and thought we were going too fast, may rejoice that this policy has been carried on rapidly, and with gratifying results. They may feel assured, as I do, that Western Australia is going to take the same prominent position with regard to agricultural produce as she has already taken in the Commonwealth with regard to the production of gold and other minerals. The result of the working of these district railways, as they are called by the Commissioner of Railways, hon. members will find in the report of the Commissioner on page 75. Without wearying the House with any repetition of figures, which hon. members can read, and no doubt have read for themselves, I think it must be considered that the result although it has not in every case covered the working expenses of the railways, in some cases interest has been paid and in other instances it has gone a long way towards paying interest. But although the aggregate result of these district railways shows a loss when interest is charged up against them, yet the result must be con-

sidered satisfactory notwithstanding that loss which is shown in the report.

Mr. Bath: Why should it be considered satisfactory?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will point out to the hon. member. When we consider that the proportion of railrage which is credited to these short lines is only in exact accordance with the mileage as compared with the whole journey run, plus 1s. terminal charge, it goes to show that, possibly, if a shorter distance rate had been charged a profit would have been shown. The reason why I say it is satisfactory is not only because of the enormous direct benefit the State derives from the settlement of the land, but also of the largely increased traffic these lines bring to the main railway system. That increased traffic must be a considerable factor in the prosperity of our whole railway system. See what it means: Wheat produced along one of these spur lines is either carried to the coast for export, or else—and a great portion of it is disposed of in this way—it is conveyed to the mills to be gristed and turned into flour. In either case it is carried over our railway system and thus brings in revenue. Again, that flour is sent forth to the consumer, and so produces further revenue to the railways generally. Then we have all the hundred and one requirements of the settlers—the food they consume, the implements they use, the phosphates which are to be produced in our own State very shortly—all carried here, there, and everywhere where a settler is improving the land. Then there is building material for the farmers, and other traffic, all of which tends to increase the returns of the main railway system. For these reasons I say that notwithstanding some small loss in the first years of their construction, our district railways are a decided success, and result in increased prosperity to the main railway system. The Wagin-Wickepin line, during the eight months ending 30th September last, conveyed 2,671 tons. Over the Goomalling-Dowerin line, during the 15 months ended on the same date, 8,748 tons were conveyed; while over the Greenhills-Quairading line, for the 15 months end-

ing on the same date. 7,975 tons were conveyed. And this tonnage, while just being in its initiatory stage, is bound to go on increasing, and in a short time these district railways will be profit-producing in the strictest sense of the term. I cannot, of course, propose the construction of new railways without touching briefly upon the question of cost. The cost of our light railways which were constructed four years ago, as hon. members will remember, averaged £1,135 per mile. This low rate was obtained by the fact that we merely put down the lines in the cheapest possible manner, omitting everything but the barest necessities to allow the locomotives to run with a reasonable degree of safety. The lines were experimental, and although equal to carrying ordinary traffic in summer weather, it was found they cost considerably more for maintenance during wet weather when, owing to absence of ballast—the lines were earth-packed—there were considerable washaways which had to be repaired at increased maintenance cost.

Mr. George: Could that not have been foreseen?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; it was foreseen, but at that time we were called upon to construct the cheapest railways man could conceive.

Mr. George: By whom?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: By Parliament and the people. These railways were constructed, and not only that, but the extra cost of maintenance, so far as figures I have got to show, has not been excessive after all. The cost of replacing any damage done—it is only on a few lines that any damage worth mentioning has occurred—has not been excessive. From that time to this the working railways have been bringing pressure to bear on the Works Department to have a little extra expenditure on the railways when in course of construction in order to reduce the maintenance expenses and allow of security against these washaways, more especially on the Kojonup line. In addition to that, they have asked not only that ballasting shall be done, but that certain accommodation shall be provided in the way of fencing station yards, pro-

viding loading ramps and also small shelter sheds and cattle and sheep yards. Where the traffic demands these things we have endeavoured to meet the requirements as far as possible. At the same time we have kept a strict eye on the economical construction of these lines, and wherever it has been deemed that something demanded could be done without, even for 12 months or two years, it has not been granted; but wherever it is shown that little works of the description I have mentioned can be done with benefit to the settlers, and a saving in the ultimate maintenance, they have been provided, and this, to some extent, accounts for the extra cost of construction which hon. members will see in the schedule that has been handed round.

Mr. George: What was the other cost?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The average was £1,135. Then, again, in constructing those early lines we resorted to the use of local timber for sleepers, bridges, culverts, and telephone poles; and although it is yet early to say whether this class of timber is suitable for the work to which it was put, I can say this much, that the reports we have in regard to the use of local timber, more especially salmon gum, are very encouraging. Unfortunately, on the lines we now propose to construct, even if we wished to use the local timber, it is not procurable in sufficient quantities nor in the correct sizes; so we have been obliged to provide for jarrah timber to be used not only for sleepers but also in the construction of culverts, bridges, and other works. The sleepers we have used locally are half-round, split sleepers. These were split rather than sawn and in consequence many of them are in winding in the split and do not get a firm bed in the earth ballast. Thus they serve to involve extra expenditure in the way of maintenance.

Mr. Taylor: Did you say round-back sleepers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; round back, and being split they are apt to wind, when, of course, they rock on the packing. Fencing on these earlier lines was not necessary, or only in exceptional

cases, and we had no expenditure in that connection. It has since been found that we were obliged to fence some station yards to prevent the inroad of horses and cattle which made for goods that had been put off the train, and helped themselves. Railways when they are going through settled districts cost considerably more for crossings and cattle stops, and quite a large amount has had to be provided on this account in the construction of the new lines. It has been found necessary, owing to settlement in advance, to provide these crossings and cattle stops. The result has been an increased cost, more especially due to sleepers and timber being of jarrah instead of local timber which is not procurable in sufficient quantities. The cost of rails has increased somewhat, and then there is the extra ballasting which we have been obliged to consent to perform in order to overcome certain soft places in the route. The extra cost of labour, which has gone up 10 or 12 per cent. during the last four years, is another factor. Other items, such as ramps, make up the increased cost which hon. members will see in the estimated expenditure on these lines. The nature of the country passed through has a great bearing on this also, and accounts for a considerable extra cost in construction. For instance, on the Goomalling-Dowerin line was only surface formation, whereas, as the line is extended through rougher country, there are earthworks, cuttings, and bridges to provide which were not provided on the original line. In regard to the Bill of which I am moving the second reading, namely, that to authorise the construction of a railway from Boyup to Kojonup, hon. members will see from the maps on the wall the route and nature of the line. It is to traverse the country immediately to the north of Bridgetown, and join up the existing railway at Boyup with the existing railway at Kojonup to the eastward. It runs pretty well in an easterly direction, and passes through country which is partly timbered with jarrah, wandoo, swamp, and red gum, interspersed with blackboy throughout. The line, of course, will afford another through connection between the Great Southern system and that of

the South-Western. It must prove, I think, a very great advantage, and will open up an immense district which otherwise would be impracticable so far as agricultural pursuits are concerned, owing to its distance from the two points to which the railways are to-day constructed. It also has the advantage that it will open up the Preston forest areas to the Great Southern and to Albany, and eventually, I hope, when the Wickepin railway is extended, it will also open up this area to the goldfields. I can see my hon. friend, the member for Albany, smiling. He thinks this is a direct hit at Albany. He will pardon me for dissenting from that opinion.

Mr. W. Price: This railway is of no use to Albany.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Albany is 36 miles nearer to Katanning than is Bunbury, so how Albany can suffer by this railway being looped up with Boyup I cannot see. It appears to me that when a port has railway communication into the interior of a country, it does not matter what cross-railways are put in, that port is going to get the trade to which it is entitled within the zone of its influence. Producers will send their produce to the nearest port which gives equal facilities with other ports, and the farmer who has wheat lands or any other produce to ship is not going to pay a little extra railage to send it to Bunbury if he can get it to that magnificent harbour at Albany. The hon. member may allay his fears; he may rest assured they are groundless, and that Albany will survive any railway construction—I do not care how many are put in—between the west coast and the Great Southern Railway. Because of its natural position it will attract the trade for which it is the natural port. The line will be 52 miles long, and will be of the ordinary gauge, and the rails will be of the weight that we have previously constructed these railways with. The cost of construction as compared with the cost on the Preston River line from Donnybrook to Boyup, 47 miles in length, which was completed last year, is about £69 per mile higher; but this increase is due principally to the increased cost of sleepers, and the increased cost in connection with bridges through

the country being rougher in that respect than with the previous construction. There are two bridges of considerable length in connection with the Boyup-Kojonup line which are required to cross the Blackwood River, and I understand the bridge on the Preston Valley line was very much lighter as compared with these two. The earthworks on the two railways are somewhat similar, but the timber for construction will not be so accessible as it was on the Donnybrook-Boyup line. The land the railway will open up and pass through has been classified, and it is reported that some 40 per cent. of the land to be served is first-class. Of course portions of it are very rich, and other portions are not so good, but it is reported that of the 40 per cent. it is all very suitable for the growth of cereals and root crops, and for dairying generally. In other places there are rich swamps equal to anything, I am informed, in the South-West of the State. A large percentage—40 per cent. of the country to be served—is considered second-class land, which with manuring, and the abundant rainfall this district always seems to be assured of, is calculated to produce very fair crops indeed. Moreover, it is well-known it is capital grazing country.

Mr. Angwin: Is there much difficulty with poison?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is a fair amount of poison, I believe, but I am assured by those who have land in the district that there is no difficulty with the poison whatever if care and determination are used in eradicating it. That accounts for 80 per cent. of the country. The balance of 20 per cent. is considered to be third-class land consisting principally of ironstone rises of sandy country timbered with stunted jarrah and banksia, but it is stated this land will prove good rough grazing country, and for this purpose it has already been looked for.

Mr. Underwood: Sheep are very fond of ironstone.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well, the hon. member is an expert, and I am quite willing to accept his statement; but already in this district there are 65,000 sheep, and they are increasing yearly, so that if they

are fond of ironstone it shows they are multiplying on that country. There is one very pleasing aspect in connection with the district. Hon. members will see from the schedule that there are 600 resident occupiers occupying 280,000 acres, and this goes to show that the average for each occupier is something under 500 acres.

Mr. Underwood: These figures include the babies, of course.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The figures include the resident occupiers, the farmers, and landowners; and they go to show there is a great number of small owners in the district, which is, to my mind, without being an expert of these matters, conclusive proof that the land is good and well worthy of settlement and developing, and that those who go on the land in such numbers, and on small areas, are worthy of our attention in the shape of granting them the railway facilities they so much desire. The land on either side of the proposed route has been reserved for two miles temporarily since the line was first surveyed, and there is no doubt when that land is thrown open it will be very readily selected. Up to the present, mixed farming, I am informed, has been principally indulged in; but with railway facilities it is anticipated that the production of wheat and other cereals will enable the farmer to compete with other localities. The townsites are, as hon. members know, at Kojonup, where there are some lots for cultivation still open, and at Boyup Brook where there are about 60 vacant town lots. It is also proposed, although it has not been definitely decided, that a townsite may be surveyed in the Dinninup area. This is an area of about 41,000 acres which was acquired by the Government through the forfeiting of some poison leases because the conditions of eradication had not been complied with. Of course these townsites will provide a certain income which will all go to help the revenue, and act as a set-off against the expenditure it is now proposed to incur. Of the land available for selection, 401,000 acres, there are 130,000 acres surveyed in advance of selection. To revert to the question of the maintenance of those earlier agricultural railways which the member for Murray

seems to be very sceptical about, I want to point out that the figures I have been able to acquire from the Railway Department as the result of the report of the Commissioner of Railways, where he stated that "the road on the Kojonup line had become so worked up after the first rains that packing was for the time being rendered quite impossible, and though the lightest class of locomotive was permitted to run a third of the rails were crippled," go to show that, so far as that railway is concerned, since it was handed over to the Working Railways Department, they have expended £1,053 in improvements, such as fencing, sheds, yards, ramps, loops and other facilities of that description, and £395 in ballasting, which it is alleged should have been done by the Works Department before the railway was handed over. There is here a total of £1,448 which included the replacement of the damage through the heavy rains two years ago when a good deal of packing was washed away. I do not think that is a startling amount for a railway 32 miles in length. On the Goomalling-Dowerin Railway, constructed in the same way, I find £800 has been expended by the Working Railways for facilities, and £117 for ballasting, a total of £917.

Mr. George: That is not all they would spend if they could.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On the Dumbleyung Railway £700 has been spent by the Working Railways in facilities, and £132 for ballasting, a total of £832. I quite agree with the member for Murray that if they had the money or permission they would have spent very much more, yet we must remember that the railways had been working satisfactorily, and it is a bad system to get into to grant all the money the Working Railways demand after construction. It stands to reason. Parliament understood, and the people of the country understood through the Press that we were going to build cheap railways at that time, and they sanctioned the proposal for cheap railways. The lines were constructed cheaply. They were constructed for slow traffic. They have carried out the work well, and I venture to say that with the little additional expenditure I have

pointed out on this line—it does not amount to very much, though it will be more than on the other two railways—with this little additional expenditure we should have a line that is capable of doing the work required of it. I have much pleasure in moving—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

On motion by Mr. Bath debate adjourned.

## BILL—GOOMALLING-WONGAN HILLS.

### *Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. Frank Wilson) in moving the second reading said: This is the second of these railways Bills. The proposal is to construct this railway to run through Goomalling in a northerly direction to the Wongan Hills, a distance of about 40 miles, with a view to opening up and accommodating the fertile country between these two areas. Of course, the line will no doubt some day be extended further North, and may possibly at a later date junction with the Geraldton-Cue railway, but we are not considering that at the present time. The opening up of this area, it is said, assures facilities for a very extensive stretch of good wheat country which is most favourable for what is known as the dry-farming process of agriculture. The railway is to be constructed in a similar manner to the Boyup-Kojonup line, and the remarks I have made generally in connection with that railway apply to this railway as well. The cost of construction is estimated to be £30,000, exclusive of rails and fastenings, and the rails and fastenings will cost £25,200 making a total cost of £55,200. The extra cost as compared with the Goomalling-Dowerin line is made up principally by the fact that the earthworks are heavier, and that, owing to the land being settled, considerable cattle stops and fencing are required, and that there is a considerable amount of cutting, and, of course, the corresponding banks, owing to the undulating character of the country. Bridges and culverts, not apparent on the Goomalling-Dowerin railway, owing to larger waterways, will entail a considerable

amount of expenditure in addition. The plate-laying will cost considerably more per mile, for wages, as I previously intimated, have advanced some 10 or 12 per cent. The extra facilities I have referred to in station buildings and connections reach something like £30 a mile. These include ramps, loading banks, and "out-of" sheds. The increase in the cost of sleepers amounts to about £100 a mile; this unfortunately is due to the fact that we cannot get suitable local timber, and sleepers will have to be obtained from our jarrah forests and sent up to Goomalling. The sleepers will cost from one shilling each more than the locally supplied sleepers for the construction of the Goomalling-Dowerin line. There is a little extra allowance for maintenance amounting to £10 per mile, owing to the working railways asking that maintenance shall be extended for six months and not three months as heretofore. The total expenditure on this line will come to £1,380 per mile. Notwithstanding that this is considerably in excess of the cost of the line built four years ago comprising the early section of the railway, I am bound to say that the work will be one of remarkably cheap construction. I have had a conversation with one of the inspectors who has travelled through the district, and he tells me that for 40 miles north of Wongan Hills, which will be the terminus of the railway, he has seen country which is very much above the average. That is from Wongan Hills northward. He has travelled all over the country, and he says that between Wongan Hills and Goomalling there is some of the best country he has ever seen, taking it all round. There is a fair quantity of sand plain, as we have in every other portion of the State, but 50 per cent. of the land is very good indeed; the balance is not so good. The present settlement consists, so he informs me, in works of ringbarking, clearing, fencing and stock raising to some extent, together with the provision of water supplies. He saw no signs in all his travels of poison. I am not going to argue there is not poison there, but his statement shows it is scarce and I hope it may be found there is none. Around the Wongan Hills itself to the south and

east the country is excellent. Of course there is some plain which is poor, but the major portion is cultivable. The crops around Wongan Hills he said are very good, and to the east equal to anything he has seen before. It was very encouraging to me to hear such a report. The country has been reported upon by Surveyors Terry, Lewis, and Camm, and a classification has been made of the land to about 40 miles from Goomalling. Their reports state that of the land classified 25 per cent. is good forest country, the timber consisting of gimlet, salmon gum, and morrel. All that land is suitable for heavy crops. Twenty-five per cent. of the land is second-class, the timber consisting of jam, York and salmon gum. There is a fair amount of rocky country, and in many places owing to that fact the land is unsuitable for cultivation; but the report goes on to say that this land is splendid for grazing purposes. The balance of the land is third class. The soil of the first-class land is, as is usual in those districts, of the richest description, it being rich loam carrying splendid grass where the forests have been burned out. The rainfall is estimated right through this district at from 10 to 15 inches, and the conclusion arrived at is that the country is very good for wheat growing. The rainfall at Wongan Hills itself is 15 inches, but further east it becomes less. Anyhow if there is a guarantee of 10 inches at the right time of the year, there is no fear so far as wheat production is concerned. It has been pointed out that there are available town lots at Goomalling which will bring in about £2,000. At Wongan Hills there is a townsite which will be surveyed later on, and the lots should realise several hundreds of pounds. From what I can gather from the reports I have read I am sure the district generally is an exceedingly likely one, and will result in great profit to those who settle there. If the people are granted this railway facility I am satisfied we will be adding another enormous tract of country to the many we have opened up in the last three or four years. I beg to move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*



On motion by Mr. Bath, debate adjourned.

### BILL.—DOWERIN-MERREDIN RAILWAY.

#### *Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. Frank Wilson) in moving the second reading said: This railway is designed with a view to tapping the area outside of the present goldfields railway 30 miles distant from that line. The survey has been carried out almost parallel to the goldfields line on the recommendation of a board consisting of Mr. Paterson, manager of the Agricultural Bank, Professor Lowrie, Director of Agriculture, Mr. Johnston, Surveyor General, Mr. Muir, Inspector of Engineering Surveys, and Mr. Terry a licensed surveyor. These gentlemen reported on the proposition, and as a result the survey has been carried out in accordance with their recommendation. The line runs from Dowerin to Merredin and junctions at the latter place with the Eastern railway. This is considered to be the most suitable place, not only in the view of those who formed the board, but also of the Commissioner of Railways and his officers. The line will loop up the railway system from Northam right through to Merredin. This will be of inestimable value as empties from the fields can be diverted at Merredin, and the traffic will be able to make a through journey whichever way it goes. The distance from Northam to Merredin is 101 miles or about one-third the distance from Northam to Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Taylor: What is the distance on the loop?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Somewhere between 130 and 140 miles. The distance from Northam to Goomalling is I believe about 30 miles—I am just speaking from memory—from Goomalling to Dowerin 12 miles, and from Dowerin to Merredin 92 miles; that is speaking roughly. The board strongly recommended this route, and they also made some comments on the possibilities of the line as a wheat growing proposition. There will be a similar class of construction as in the other two lines I

have referred to this afternoon. The cost of construction is estimated to be £1,430 per mile. The earthworks on the continuation are somewhat heavier than those on the Goomalling-Dowerin line, and there is again here the old question of the timber, sleepers being especially expensive as they cannot be obtained locally as was the case when the line from Goomalling to Dowerin was built. The additional facilities which I referred to in connection with the two previous railways have to be granted here also as the land is being rapidly settled. The total cost has increased to £1,430 a mile as compared with £1,138 which the original portion of the railway cost. It is a very cheap construction notwithstanding the fact that there is an increase as compared with the railway built four years ago. I need not weary the House by repeating the differences between this railway line and that from Goomalling to Dowerin, for the same remarks I made previously, apply even in a greater degree so far as this line is concerned. The productiveness of this portion of the country is shown by the fact that we have had numbers of letters from different settlers in which they say that they are all satisfied with their prospects, and with what they have been able to do in a very few years. There are letters at the Lands Department from settlers who will be influenced by this railway construction, and they show that the rainfall has been pretty steady for many years in that district. That is in the major portion of the district, although perhaps smaller in some portions than in others. The country lies a good distance out east as members will realise when I tell them that the distance from Northam to Merredin is one-third of that from Northam to Kalgoorlie. The rainfall at Mangowine for the last 20 years has been 11 inches, of which 8<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches fell between April and October, inclusive. Mangowine is nine miles to the north of the 70-mile peg, and is pretty well on the extreme point of this proposed railway extension. At Kellerberrin the rainfall for the past 14 years has been 11.8 inches, of which 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches fell between April

and October. At Burracoppin the average recorded for the same period is 10 inches, at Merredin 10.3 inches, and at Tammin, which is further west, 12.57 inches. It will be readily seen that so far as the rainfall is concerned the whole of this immense area comes within a reasonable downfall, and one which arrives at the right time of the year. At York-rakine there is a special settlement of 50 settlers. It is situated midway between the Eastern Goldfields line, and this proposed line, and about midway between Dowerin and Merredin, and the results obtained there may be taken generally as the result of the whole district. The settlers have got portions of their land under crop this season and most of them have expressed themselves as quite satisfied with their prospects. It is reported that the water supplies there are assured. Water can easily be obtained by sinking and the ground is excellent for tanks to conserve the rainfall, to which I referred just now. On this line also there is the civil servants' settlement scheme; it is placed around Kununoppin and to the eastward, and it is pleasing to note that fifteen single men and forty-one married men, with their wives and children, representing 165 souls, have already settled there.

Mr. Underwood: How far are they from this line??

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are some six or seven miles to the south of this proposed line. It is expected that before Christmas the remainder of the civil servants, consisting of 17 single men and 25 married men, with 55 children, or a total of 122, will be settled in this locality. It is pretty evident that this is very good country, not only because civil servants have agreed to go there, but also because others are anxiously awaiting the Government to throw open the land.

Mr. Angwin: I can find for you hundreds of outsiders on the same terms.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No doubt the hon. member would find them on similar terms, but I do not know whether the Treasury could stand the strain. The land within seven miles on either side of the proposed railway route has been temporarily reserved and is be-

ing classified and subdivided. There are to be townsites surveyed and marked out at different points on the route. At Merredin there are to be a good many lots, some of which have already been sold, but there is a large area in the townsite which still remains to be cut up, and it is expected that Merredin will become an important junction in connection with the agricultural centres. There can be no doubt that not only will it be the junction of this loop, but probably later on it will be the junction, at least I think it will be, of the loop which will come up from Wickepin to join with the Eastern railway. The Commissioner of Railways is emphatic in his recommendation that this should be made the junction point because of the facilities given to him in working his through traffic. There is a big dam there with a capacity of some seven million gallons, and the water is used largely by the railways. Of the land available for selection, which hon. members will see is a large area indeed, consisting of 1,311,000 acres within the 15-mile mark on either side of the line, 303,000 acres have already been surveyed and will be put on the market almost immediately. The member for East Fremantle will be able to put some of his friends on this land. The other subdivisions are being pushed on as quickly as the surveyors can do the work. Mr. Hewby saw me with regard to this land and he gave me some brief information. He said it was excellent country as far as the 75 miles, but this is pretty well the whole of the distance. The civil servants, Mr. Hewby stated, are just commencing operations. Many thousands of acres were surveyed and thrown open for selection and ringbarked 18 months ago, and this he reckoned would assist in the quick development of this portion of the State. Tanks are being put down by the Agricultural Department about 8 miles apart, so that there will be no fear as far as the water supply is concerned. Road clearing is also being done by the department and Mr. Hewby concluded by saying that there can be little doubt that there will be a good and sufficient water supply. There are two or three copies of letters that I might draw attention to

with regard to this area, and which I look upon as being a great factor in the agricultural development of the State. There is one written in June, 1908, by a Mr. Harris. I need not read the whole letter but merely state that Mr. Harris writes—

"I came here from the Gouldburn Valley where we thought we could grow wheat to perfection and am a bit surprised to find that it does better here with less labour and cultivating. I came here in 1907 and cleared about 15 acres of green timber, and only harrowed it in, and it averaged 25 bushels per acre, which I think was very good. You can get room out here for hundreds of families."

Mr. Harris concludes by saying that he thinks the Government is a bit slow in opening up the country, and that he would be glad to give any further information if it was desired. This man's farm is situated about eight miles to the north of the 20-mile peg in the Coweowing district. Another farmer writes from Ejangding. He says—

"It is now close on four years since I selected in this district, as I came down from the goldfields and had no experience on the land in any of the other States. I cleared last year 75 acres and it went on an average 13 bushels, off land which had been run 18 months. I just cultivated the seed in with a spring tooth harrow after sowing it broadcast. As I have a rain gauge here I find it has averaged over eight inches from July to December, 1907, and eight inches from January to date, so that I am very well satisfied with the district for farming."

This letter was written on the 9th June, 1908. Another farmer named Gerard Lamond writes from Yarragin that he has had a good rainfall and satisfactory results. Yarragin is about five miles to the north of the 60-mile peg. That is all the information I have been able to acquire with regard to this line and it goes to show that the people who are there are satisfied that there are enormous possibilities in the large area that we have at our disposal in that part of the State, and that we can settle many thousands of

people there with a fair prospect of all doing well for themselves and well for the country. It also goes to show that the route selected on the recommendation of the board is the proper route for this railway, and that the junction at Merrediu will facilitate the working of the existing lines. Without wearying the House any longer I commend this Bill to their kindly consideration and beg to move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): This is one of the railway Bills which are being submitted to the House this year, upon which I can speak with a certain amount of knowledge as far as the district is concerned. I can bear out a great deal of what has been said by the Minister for Works in introducing the measure. As far as the proposal is concerned, the only objection that I have is that the amount of deviation which the Minister proposes to allow, and which is embodied in the Bill, is altogether too great, and the information available to the Minister, or available to those who prepared the information for the Minister, should have enabled them to determine upon the route with a greater accuracy, or with less need for the 15 miles deviation, as provided for in the Bill.

The Minister for Works: It is not necessary, we can reduce that.

Mr. BATH: The point about this proposition which commends itself to me is that as far as this area, which will be served by the railway, is concerned, there are few holders of large areas along the route. There certainly were pastoral leases in that country but many of these to my knowledge have been resumed by the Minister and have been cut up and surveyed for selection, and have been, or will be, made available when the railway is constructed. Another factor which influences me to give this particular proposal my support is that a large number of settlers have been induced to go there and settle on the area by reason of the promised railway. They are men who have taken up what might be termed moderately sized holdings, and without the railway

they have no possible hope of success. As a matter of fact they have no hope, I am led to believe, of even getting assistance from the Agricultural Bank, that is for moderately sized holdings, owing to the fact they are too far away from the existing railway. Hon. members who wish to get an idea of the capabilities of these different districts will see that this proposal compares more than favourably with either of the two other proposals which have been submitted, and this notwithstanding the fact that many of the holdings taken up are a considerable distance from the line. The holders have no chance of developing them to a great extent without railway communication, and yet in this district the production has been much greater than in any other district in the State, as far as wheat, barley, oats, and hay are concerned. Unfortunately, and probably the Minister for Lands, if he were in his place, would be able to supply me with the information, the districts are not sufficiently separated in order to point out the production along this route of railway, but if members will turn to the forecast for the ensuing year they will find that as far as the northern district is concerned the estimate of the production of wheat is: Avon 965,372, and Meckering 882,097. I would like to know what this district of Meckering embraces. Does it embrace Tammin and Kellerberrin?

The Minister for Lands: Yes, it must.

Mr. BATH: This production, which almost equals that of Avon, is coming from North and South of the line, and there is country equally as good beyond where this wheat is coming from. It will be brought under cultivation, and it will yield equally as well when the railway is constructed. Then the Doodlakine district is estimated to yield 193,105 bushels, while the estimate for Burracoppin is 1,900 bushels. In oats we find that the estimated yield for this district is higher than that of any other district. In the Northam district the estimate is:—Avon, 206,977 bushels, Meckering, 63,312 bushels, Burracoppin, 17,018 bushels, or a total of 277,407 bushels, which is greater than

that of any other individual district contained in the list here submitted. Then in barley, the Northam district—that is including Avon, Meckering, Doodlakine and Burracoppin, all country to be served by this railway—is higher than any other district, the next to it being the Victoria district, with an estimated yield of 37,814 bushels. And so on in connection with hay, which stamps this district, not only Northam but the district to the eastward, as being the best wheat growing district in Western Australia, or, rather, the largest area. I do not say it is the best quality of land, or likely to yield higher results per acre than any other district; but for extent of area it is the best in the State. Of course I realise that in the Victoria district, that is the Chapman and Northampton areas, they have lands equal and, perhaps, superior to much of that in the area of which I am speaking; but they have not so large an area available. And I am satisfied that so far as this proposition is concerned it is going to add an equally large area to that which is now yielding wheat of the estimated production here set forth. I am inclined to regard this forecast as a bit optimistic. People talk glibly about 20 bushels and 25 bushels, but when the stripper or harvester goes over it it is very often found that the actual yield is much less.

Mr. Jacoby: Twenty-five bushels was the actual result at Dowerin this season.

Mr. BATH: In individual instances we get higher results but people are prone to exaggerate in these matters. I started out to estimate that mine would yield 15 bushels, but later on I reduced the estimate to 12 bushels, and I shall be perfectly satisfied if I get that. But even making allowance for optimism, this forecast as to the probable yield this season places Northam district, that is from Northam out to Doodlakine, in a very prominent position. If hon. members will consult the return supplied to us it will be found that so far as this proposition is concerned there are no large holdings within 15 miles of the line or, practically none, except grazing leases totalling 30,000 acres. I think that ought to al-

ways be the first consideration in any proposal for railway construction, namely, to serve those areas having a possibility of closer settlement, and not to construct railways to give a speculative value to land held in large areas which will be disposed of at enhanced prices to the Government, or failing that, to private people. I have just one fear in regard to this proposition, and that is that the Eastern end of the railway will tap an area where the rainfall entails a certain amount of risk. We are told that it is quite easy and quite safe to go in for wheat growing where you have an average rainfall of 10 inches. But unless the settlers are able to adopt up-to-date methods of cultivation, and to farm on thoroughly sound lines there is always a risk that the settler will get left in a season in which even that 10 inches of rain may not fall to suit the crop. We know that the Agricultural Department and those who take upon themselves to advise the farmer, are always urging that sound methods of farming should be pursued; but along this proposed route there are settlers making a beginning under adverse circumstances, without money to purchase that machinery necessary to adopt these up-to-date methods which they are advised by the Agricultural Department to adopt. Later on, if they meet with success in their earlier years they may be able to do this, but a bad return for a year or two means, perhaps, that they are unable to carry on the struggle any further. And I am rather inclined to think that to induce settlers to take up land on the Eastern extremity of this proposed railway is asking them to run a certain risk, and perhaps, to involve themselves in disaster. Now, so far as the country to the north of Doodlakine, or even Baandee is concerned, I think it is within the safe limit of rainfall. I know that two years ago I visited Mr. Leake's place at Mouranoppin, and he told me that they had cropped land there for the past 30 years; only in small areas in the earlier years; but that they had had nothing that could be called a failure until 1902, and that in that year they had a return of 7 bushels.

Mr. Jacoby : Was that from fallow ?

Mr. BATH : I cannot say, but he told me that in 1902 the rainfall was not a good one for crops—

Mr. Jacoby : It was six inches.

Mr. BATH : And that he had a failure, getting no more than seven bushels.

Mr. Gill : Has he had any failures since ?

Mr. BATH : No ; not up to the time I was there in 1907.

Mr. Gill : But he had no rain in 1905.

Mr. Jacoby : He had a good crop.

Mr. BATH : That is the information Mr. Leake supplied to me, and he is not a man to exaggerate ; he is a sober-minded sort of gentleman, not given to exaggeration.

Mr. Walker : He had very good crops last year.

Mr. BATH : Yes ; and they also had good crops everywhere where they were able to fallow the land and crop under better conditions. There were others not able to do this, and they suffered accordingly. So far as the country to the North of Tammin is concerned—that is, the Yorkrakine area, which, if the line were to take the Northern deviation, would be practically left in the mud, or, rather, in the dust, so far as this railway proposition is concerned—those settlers who are on the special settlement, and some who have taken up land independently of that settlement, are in an area which I think with reasonable care and success is assured. But we have to remember that so far as the rainfall is concerned, it comes diagonally to the North of Geraldton, and that the land which is covered by the 10 inch fall gradually widens as it extends towards the Southern coast ; so that, where on the Eastern Goldfields railway land might be in the 10 inch rainfall, as you went due North it would probably be outside it. That is the only point about this proposition of which I am doubtful, namely, that the railway will be extended too far East, and that settlers induced to settle to the extreme Eastward may be led into disaster. I intend to support this railway, because I think that where we have the land available, where we can place the settlers under conditions of close settlement, our railway policy is a wise one.

In Canada, the Canadian-Pacific Company—which has large areas of land, but whose only anxiety is to settle them in order that they may produce traffic for the railways—pursues the policy of extending railways, sometimes in advance of settlement, but never later than right on the heels of settlement; and this has resulted in an enormous increase in the production of cereals in Canada this year. The four northern provinces, Manitoba, and those to the West of it, are returning 168,000,000 bushels this year, or an increase of 40,000,000 bushels on the output of last year. There they have cut the land up, not into thousand acre blocks, for the average holding is a half section of 320 acres, and there are many thousands of quarter sections of 160 acres, from which men are earning very good livings. They have a much higher return than we have in Western Australia, but where we have the right class of land to deal with, closer settlement is a good policy to pursue. We are not helping large owners to get speculative values, but are helping the legitimate settlers, and for that reason I am supporting the Bill.

On motion by Mr. Taylor, debate adjourned.

## BILL—REGISTRATION OF DEEDS.

### *Second Reading.*

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. J. L. Nanson) in moving the second reading said: Section 11 of the Transfer of Land Act empowers the Governor to appoint an assistant Registrar of Titles, and under that section there has been an assistant registrar for many years past, and any things required to be done under the Transfer of Land Act by the Registrar of Titles may also be done by his assistant. Under the Act, 19 Victoria No. 14, relating to the registration of instruments affecting land that has not been brought under the Transfer of Land Act, no similar provision has been made for the appointment of an assistant for the registration of deeds under that Act, except that in the event of the registrar's being temporarily disabled by illness or being absent on leave the Governor may appoint some other person to act in his

place. The direct consequence of this is that if the registrar, who is also Registrar of Titles, is temporarily absent from his office, or is otherwise engaged, there is no assistant registrar by whom instruments, under this Act for the registration of instruments affecting land, not under the Transfer of Land Act, may forthwith be registered, as is possible in the case of instruments required to be registered under the Transfer of Land Act. The object of the amending measure is to enable an assistant registrar to be appointed, and to give to the public the same facility in securing the immediate registration that is at present enjoyed in the case of instruments required to be registered under the Transfer of Land Act. It is, therefore, provided by the single clause in this Bill that every assistant registrar who has been appointed under the Transfer of Land Act 1893, shall by virtue of his office be appointed as assistant registrar under 19 Victoria, No. 14, dealing with the registration of instruments affecting land that has not been brought under the Transfer of Land Act. The appointment, I may say, will not involve any additional charge on the revenue, as, in the event of the Bill passing, the duty of acting as assistant registrar under the principal Act will be entrusted to an officer already in the department, and without additional salary. I move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

Mr. HUDSON (Dundas): This is a Bill that provides for the appointment of an assistant registrar in connection with the registration of deeds under what is commonly known among the profession as the old system, and I think that perhaps we should not give too great facilities to those people who choose to keep their titles under the old system. Those holders of land who have titles under the Ordinance that is sought to be amended ought to be induced, if possible, to bring them under our simple, inexpensive and secure method of dealing with the transfer of land. That is what I conceive ought to be the policy of the Government; but I must confess there is no opposition that can be offered to the Bill

except in that direction. It is true, as has been explained by the Attorney General, that under the present system the registrar is the only person authorised to sign memorials of the registration of documents, and an assistant is not provided for, and that the appointment of someone to assist is essential to the carrying out of the provisions of the Ordinance sought to be amended, unless people are to be delayed in getting effective registration of their documents. There are provisions in the Ordinance relating to wills, and other documents not dealing with land, I admit; and it would be better that this Bill should pass so that no inconvenience might be caused to the public; but of course, as I premised, the public ought to be induced, if possible, to bring their land under our simple system, which is known as the Transfer of Land Act, or the Torrens Act—it was initiated in South Australia as the Torrens Act; because under the old system it means piling up a multiplicity of deeds. Certainly, this means excellent fees for lawyers who have to investigate these titles. Even in England they are doing their best to overcome the difficulty of this piling up of titles, and to overcome the excessive cost in connection with obtaining extracts of titles and of knowing what really is a title, and what security the purchaser has when he accepts a title. I think our Transfer of Land Act, which has been copied from South Australia and Victoria, ought not only to be encouraged but really to be enforced as far as possible upon the people of Western Australia, because it would really be to their own advantage. If I remember rightly, the preamble to the Transfer of Land Act is that it is an Act for the purpose of facilitating transfers and giving greater security of title. That being so, I think it is the duty of Parliament not to encourage the registration of deeds under this obsolete system of registration. If we look back we find it is an Ordinance dated 1856. We should not encourage people to hold their titles under ancient statutes such as this, really far behind the times. It causes a great deal of confusion in the transaction of business relating to land.

I have known cases where one has had to go through piles of titles and has had to be engaged for a week going through those papers, and at the end not knowing whether he has a good title or not. On the other hand, under the present system the person gets from the State, under the Transfer of Land Act, security of title, because he gets an assurance that the certificate issued is a good title. Certainly, Ministers, are in a position to-day to wear smiles upon their faces such as they have not worn before. The Spencer case had been decided by the Privy Council, and had saved £26,000.

Mr. Walker: That was the High Court.

Mr. HUDSON: Certainly it was the High Court that saved it, but by the decision of the Privy Council it is settled now that the Attorney General will credit his department in his files, and will be able to come up smiling with something like £26,000 saved to the revenue. Of course, that is no excuse to the Attorney General for having lost £20,000 or £30,000—but that is another story. It shows, however, the necessity for having a proper system of titles, because once the State gives a title it protects the individual holding that title; the individual knows where he stands. Of course, in the Spencer case circumstances arose which necessitated litigation, which has been very fine indeed for the lawyers, and I regret exceedingly I was not concerned in it, not altogether from any notice of gain. However, as to the point as to whether we should have an assistant registrar, I think I can do no more than support the measure before us as it stands.

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna): I think we require considerably more information than we have had before we can give our warrant to the second reading of this Bill. As the member for Dundas has said, it is really giving our sanction to it, and making easier the perpetuation of the old form of titles, and practically—I will not say discouraging the use of the Transfer of Land Act of 1893, but at all events of continuing the system which is admittedly obsolete, since the Torrens Act, which was passed in

South Australia, has become law in every State of the Commonwealth, and, moreover, has become the law in England itself, where naturally changes affecting a special law relating to property are slow. It is true it is not universal, but it is daily—I was going to say hourly—increasing in popularity, this law we have on our statute-book enabling a simple title to convey without inquiries beyond the State, as it were, guaranteeing the validity of the title. However, in place of that simplicity we have in the old country, as has been said by the member for Dundas, a system whereby it is necessary to search titles sometimes 40 years back with all kinds of complications and difficulties connected with them. We have that old system taken over by the State when it became a colony. It was the law before the Torrens Act was passed in South Australia and adopted in this State, but it is about time we brought some compulsion, some inducement upon those who are holders of land, under whatsoever title they are, if they are not registered under the Transfer of Land Act, to register under that Act and not to hold these titles under a complicated form as is evidenced by this amendment to an Ordinance so many years old.

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

Mr. WALKER: The principal object of this Bill is to relieve the Registrar of Titles of the work that devolves on him in consequence of the Ordinance of 19 Vic., No. 14, in the way of registration. Apart altogether from the fact that it is time we got beyond this Ordinance, I have an objection to the course taken at present by the Government in having a Commissioner of Titles who cannot attend to the work entirely. That it to say, the officer has so many duties to perform that he must leave to others the work that requires his professional knowledge and attention. I may have mistaken the object of the Bill, but I believe I am right in saying that it is really to delegate powers.

The Attorney General: Only in the absence of the registrar. It is to adopt

the same form as with regard to the Registrar of Titles under the Transfer of Land Act.

Mr. WALKER: It in no way affects the supervision of the Commissioner.

The Attorney General: Oh no!

Mr. WALKER: I believe that as a matter of fact they do it now.

The Attorney General: Under the Transfer of Land Act, but they have no power in regard to instruments affecting lands not under that Act.

Mr. WALKER: It would be advisable for the Attorney General to take into consideration a scheme which will, more or less, incorporate the work done under this Ordinance with the work done under the Transfer of Land Act. That is certainly required. I do not intend to oppose the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1909-10.

*In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day;

Mr. Daglish in the Chair.

Department of Railways (Hon. H. Gregory, Minister):

Vote—*Railways*, £1,029,967:

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In connection with the Railway Estimates the leader of the Opposition had made a request that the discussion should be postponed in order to enable the consideration of other divisions to be taken in their place. To that request he had agreed, although he was sorry he had not been asked a little sooner as he had a very important engagement at Kalgoorlie, and had to wire to-day stating he would be unable to keep it on account of his Estimates coming on. He was afraid that now it might be thought he had been quibbling with the people up there? He moved—

*That the consideration of this division be postponed.*

Motion passed.



Lands Department (Hon. J. Mitchell, Minister):

Vote—*Lands and surveys*, £79,046:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. Mitchell) said: In introducing these Estimates I venture to think members will find very little new in them, for the same old items appear year after year. When I took over control of the department I first instructed that we should endeavour to satisfy the public and break down the cause for the many complaints levelled at the department. One of the first things I did was to appoint three assistants to the under secretary. Reference to these officers will be found on the Estimates, and I would like to explain that the men who have been promoted to these responsible offices held positions in the office when I went there. Before my time they were known as the chief clerk, the chief land agent, and the officer in charge of the lands selection branch respectively. I determined to increase the responsibility of those officers, so it was necessary that they should receive some new title, and I appointed them, with the concurrence of the Public Service Commissioner, to the positions of three assistants to the under secretary. It seems to me that the old method of pushing files on from one officer to another had little to recommend it, and I was convinced that these officers were quite capable of dealing with many questions that came before the under secretary. I determined in the interests of the public to expedite the business, and that the officers of the department should have some responsibility, and they are charged to-day with the duty of managing the affairs of the office just as the under secretary did before. To-day there are four officers in the department who approach the Minister, whereas previously no one could approach the Minister except the under secretary. Considerable advantage must follow by this system, and it will be interesting to know that the change has not cost a penny to bring about. This alteration has resulted in great good in connection with the management of this important department. It is true that the work of the Lands Department is not very exciting. We deal simply with the business of selling land; it is

distinct from the business of the Agricultural Department. There is a good deal of detail to be attended to, and the public wish to be satisfied. There are 40,000 people who own land in this State, and they all desire to reach the Minister in the shortest possible way. To-day if a customer of the department desires to have something attended to, he can go direct to the under secretary and his file goes on to the Minister and the matter is dealt with with the least possible delay. The previous system meant that the file remained a day with each officer, through whose hands it had to pass. The altered system has resulted in the reorganisation of the department to such an extent that the public should now be satisfied. I admit freely it is not possible to satisfy everybody. Some of course will have cause for complaint. Only to-day I dare say hon. members saw in the paper a letter from a selector who complained that he had been kept waiting six weeks for his C.P. lease. Of course these complaints come in, and when they do I deal with the officer at fault. I realise that it is important there should be as little delay as possible. When a man takes up a selection he wants his lease right away. It has been the custom in the past to issue leases on application, with the result that there has been a tremendous accumulation. That accumulation, however, is gradually being decreased. The work of reorganisation was entrusted to those three assistants of the under secretary, and all the officers of the department have responded to the call which has been made upon them. We have increased the survey staff considerably and in four and a-half months we have surveyed 1,030,000 acres, including 348,746 acres before selection. It is no mean thing to have to survey this enormous area in such a short space of time. It took a considerable time to get the system under way. Hon. members know well that when we send a surveyor out we must indicate where he has to go, and what he has to do. I have issued instructions also that these surveyors should cut up the country into areas which would be sufficiently large for a man to live on in comfort. Under the old system it often happened that a farm of 1,000 acres con-

sisted of three or four blocks. To-day with the system of survey before selection, as far as possible, we make these blocks at least 1,000 acres each. Then, too, we found there were many complaints caused by the delays in connection with the advances made by the Agricultural Bank. I know the Agricultural Bank has little to do with these Estimates, but it has a good deal to do with the settlement of the country. It is impossible to develop the country with the aid of rich men; you must get the men who are willing to work, and the men who are capable of becoming useful and expert farmers, and we have to find the money for these people. Recognising that the whole system of land selection should be made as simple as possible, I arranged that the Agricultural Bank inspection should be made before the land was sold. Complaints were often made after selection that the bank would not advance against the land. Hon. members know that the bank is managed by business men, and they are not going to advance unless the security is good. Under this system there can be no disappointment because the selector knows what he is going to get, and to-day he pays his money over the counter, gets his approval, and then proceeds to the bank to secure his money. In connection with the drier districts it was recognised that it was necessary to provide water supplies. It was not possible to put a dam on every block, but the department constructed dams at distances of eight miles so that every selector should be brought within at least four miles of that necessary adjunct, a dam or well. We know, of course, that this water supply is only needed temporarily, and we know that the farmers themselves will put in their dams as soon as they get time to do so. But the preparatory work must go on, and so we have done these things.

Mr. Hudson: You have made the distance a hundred miles in my district.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I daresay we have done that in goldfields districts, but I hope the time will come when we will be justified in sinking wells at closer distances. I have determined too that roads in these areas shall be cleared. We know that roads are neces-

sary to the new selector, that it is impossible for him to wander through the bush with his trap, so we are clearing the roads almost in a wholesale fashion throughout these areas which have been subdivided. With the Agricultural Bank advance, with water supplies assured, and with roads cleared, it goes without saying that the public are becoming daily more satisfied. It is true that it has not been possible to put down a great many dams, still a considerable number have been constructed, and the early rains of next year should fill them all up. I found it was much better to construct these roads than to keep on the land guides. I hold that the farmer who cannot find his block is not fit to become a farmer. The land guide system cost this State something like £5,000 a year, and we were not getting value for it.

Mr. Butcher: The land guides were doing well.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I took the opportunity of issuing instructions that this method of attending to selectors should cease. The economy practised in this way was sufficient to permit of the clearing of roads that are necessary to open up the areas, in fact it was sufficient for the area that was selected last year. Notwithstanding that the work of the department is on the increase, the staff is being gradually reduced. This is explained by the fact that we are surveying before selection, and by the fact that we have determined to survey the country into farms, and not into small blocks which will necessitate the putting of two or three together in order to make up one decent farm. The result of this work has been that 273,000 acres were inspected and passed in the office in October, and 250,000 acres in November. Six and a half million acres were dealt with by the staff who do the work of checking in the office in 12 months. Hon. members will realise that that means an enormous area every year. We sold two million acres last year, which was a record for the State. By these means we hope to have an area of at least one million acres ahead of requirements at the end of the present financial year. I realise that when a man desires

to select land in this great State of ours with its millions of acres, he should be able to have it allotted to him and get upon it in the quickest possible time. My desire is that we should avoid a maze in this connection, so I have instituted the system I have mentioned to the Committee to-night. It goes without saying that the cost of this work of surveying now going on will be enormous, I do not know that I need refer to this expenditure, because it was discussed in connection with the amendment to the Land Act a few months ago. The Estimates show a saving in the department of £33,000, but it is important to tell the Committee that this is due to the transfer of the survey fees to loan. Last year we spent from revenue £41,000 on surveys. This year we propose to spend £7,500 and we shall also spend £60,000 from loan money in this connection.

**Mr. Angwin:** Are you not transferring the inspection branch?

**The MINISTER FOR LANDS:** We are not doing that. This money which will be spent in connection with surveys and the preparation of the land for the selector will be repaid to loan account over a period of 20 years. We collect from the settlers at 40 half-yearly instalments, and we propose at the end of each year to make a calculation showing exactly the amount of loan money expended by the Lands Department and that will be refunded by debit to revenue each half year until the whole amount so expended is wiped off. The leader of the Opposition was good enough to say that he approved of this method of finance. I think it is evidence that we desire to do what is right with this borrowed money which we are bound to use in connection with the preparation of the land. We also hope the revenue will be at least £20,000 more than it was last year. I want to say here that the land selection last year totalled two million acres, which was a record for the State. For the first five months 839,173 acres were selected as against 591,145 during the current year. This falling off is entirely due to the fact that we are not at the moment selling our third-class lands. I thought it better to

suspend the operation of the clause which permits persons to select third-class land until we could get certain areas classified and surveyed. In connection with the plantation at Hamel, we have there 200 acres under pine trees and we propose to continue planting at the rate of 100 acres per annum. It is calculated that this plantation of soft woods will be sufficient for some time to come to supply the fruit cases needed in connection with our increasing fruit industry. I would like to say that it is anticipated these trees will each be worth at least twenty shillings at the end of twenty years, so the plantation is a commercial proposition and one which will result in increasing revenue to the Woods and Forests Department. In value the export of timber reached the huge total of £833,000 and I am given to understand that 4,600 men have found work in that industry. I do not think it is necessary for me to say very much more in connection with the Lands Department. It is entirely a department that should deal with the subdivision and sale of lands, a great land agency if you like. By preparing the land in the manner I have indicated, we are endeavouring to provide for the people who desire to become selectors. There are complaints of course, and some of the complaints are found, upon inquiry, to be fully justified; but as a rule very few people who complain complain with just cause. Hon. members know that under the system of free selection, which has applied until now, it was impossible to have the blocks surveyed and classified, and the whole business of disposing of them carried on without delays; and delays of course always mean disappointments. Hon. members will accept my assurance that matters in connection with the sale of land have improved considerably during the last few weeks, and that, as Minister, I have had very few complaints indeed from the selectors. The whole of the staff have worked most creditably. In the past I have heard considerable criticism of the work of the officers of the department, but I find them not only hard working and intelligent, but most obliging, and willing at all times to

meet the wishes of the public. In fact it seemed to me when I went into the Lands Department that a good deal of the trouble which had fallen upon these officers had been brought upon them by reason of the fact that they endeavoured to do more for the selectors than the statutes required. My time in the department has been spent in straightening out the trouble that has existed in the past. If it is found that I do not know quite as much about the department as my predecessor, hon. members will remember that I have been there but a very short time, and that that short time has been devoted largely to the organising of the department, and the satisfying of the many requests that come to me from the selectors.

Mr. BATH : From the explanation given by the Minister in respect to his Estimates and his work since taking control of the department, members of the Committee would at once form the conclusion that everything in the garden was looking lovely. As a matter of fact there were one or two thorns amongst the flowers blooming in the garden controlled by the Minister for Lands. These were largely in the shape of complaints respecting delays in the administration of the department. He realised that this had been a feature of lands administration ever since the impetus was given to land selection in the State. The change which the Minister had made in the direction of appointing assistants to the Under Secretary for Lands, if it involved, as stated, the sending of the files direct from that officer to the Minister, would undoubtedly tend to the better working of the department, and to greater expedition in dealing with the requirements of clients. The fact that in previous years these officers had been invested with a certain amount of responsibility, as heads of what might be termed sub-departments, and also paid an additional salary covering that added responsibility, had resulted in an increase of expenditure without any increase of expedition in the carrying on of the work of the department; simply because it had merely involved the creation of additional channels of red tape through which the business had to filter. Each additional officer who had to handle that file, and

afterwards to transmit it to the under-secretary's office, involved a delay of at least an extra day or two, and if this was now obviated, and the work could go immediately from those officers to the Minister for his final approval, it would undoubtedly result in a considerable saving of time. In connection with the work of survey before selection, while perhaps the individual selectors would not be able to carve out their holdings by taking up the choice spots to the exclusion of those less desirable, as under the process of free selection, still, carried out on a proper basis, it should result in increased satisfaction to the great body of selectors. The Minister had assured the Committee that he was working in conjunction with the Agricultural Bank by obtaining from that institution, prior to the selection of these surveyed areas, the amount which the bank was willing to advance upon that particular area. He (Mr. Bath) was in receipt of information from a gentleman who had left a department of the State, with the idea of going on the land, and who had gone to an area already surveyed for selection.

The Minister for Lands: When did he select?

Mr. BATH: The area had been thrown open on Tuesday last. However, the selector had found that, although the area had been surveyed, and the price of the land fixed by the department—in his case 12s. 6d. an acre—the Agricultural Bank had stated that it could not lend money on some of the blocks contained within the surveyed area.

The Minister for Lands: They do state that when they will not lend money, of course.

Mr. BATH: How had such a situation been brought about? If the officers of the Survey Department had known their business and were working in conjunction with the Agricultural Bank, they should have surveyed on that location no areas so small that the Agricultural Bank would refuse to lend money on them.

The Minister for Lands: Where was the area?

Mr. BATH: The area was somewhere south-east of Dumbleyung, the name, he thought, was Diabelling.

The Minister for Lands: Can you give me the selector's name?

Mr. BATH: The name would be furnished to the Minister. The questions he (Mr. Bath) had put this afternoon related to this particular case. The selector had stated that there were areas in that location which had been surveyed, but upon which the Agricultural Bank would not lend money. If the Lands Department had thrown these areas open to selectors they were deceiving them; because what was the use of a man who was relying on securing the assistance of the bank, taking up one of these blocks?

The Minister for Lands: He was probably told before hand that he would have to select that particular block and another block to get his advance.

Mr. BATH: That may have been so, but his correspondent apparently was not aware of it. There should be such co-operation between the two departments that when the selector took up land there would be an assurance implied in the granting of that land that on going to the bank for assistance he would get it. That was the least guarantee of good faith the department could give to those who had dealings with it. When the question of paying for surveys by means of loan money had first been discussed by the Premier, he (Mr. Bath) had taken exception to it because at that time the Premier did not state that it was the intention to recoup. Since then, however, it had been found that the department intended, by a provision made in a Bill we had recently passed, to recoup loan funds of this expenditure, as it came in in the form of payments from the settlers. He would also like to know whether the expenditure on roads, water supply, and other improvements which the department would make on these areas prior to their being selected, was also to be added to the value of the land, and paid for by the settlers in half-yearly instalments. Were the whole of these improvements to be added to the price of the land?

The Minister for Lands: That will be part of the purchase money, yes.

Mr. BATH: Provision has been made in the case of prices higher than 10s. for the ordinary payment based on 10s. to be paid for the first three years; but he had come to the conclusion that we should go even further, and for three years give the settler the opportunity of using all the cash he had available for the improvement of his land. Then, after the termination of the three years period, the price of the land with these improvements on it, could be spread over the other 17 years or 20 years, as the case might be. It would, perhaps, mean that for the time being we would not have so much revenue from this source. The revenue would suffer but we would gain in that the settlers would have a bigger area under production, they would be able to get to work sooner to produce from their land, and the State would derive benefit in other directions. Another matter was in regard to the promised visit of the Minister to the Eastern Goldfields. Along with other members he had endeavoured at different times to obtain information as to the areas of land available for persons on the goldfields desirous of settling on the land, and to get the information in such a way that these men would not have to expend a considerable amount of money and time in going round the State in order to find these areas. It was very difficult to get direct explicit information of the kind. These people were anxious to see the Minister in his own flesh in order that he might give them accurate information as to where those areas available were. There were those who were beginning to feel the inroads of miners' complaint. The President of the Kalgoorlie and Boulder branch of the miners' union had recently resigned his position as head of the union, and given up his employment as a miner and had taken up an area in the Denmark district, owing to the fact that he had contracted miners' complaint, and there were those who, before it got too far, and before they were too much worn down by the disease, thought it would be a good thing if they could get on the land. A scheme which he had in his mind was that an area sufficient for 20

or 50 settlers should be made available, so that these people could select in one block, as it were, or on contiguous blocks. If they could do that it would mean that, without leaving their employment for the time being, they could still go on earning money and provide for a certain amount of ringbarking and clearing work to be carried out by contract or by the Government, and when this preparatory work was carried out, they would reach the stage when they could cultivate the land and secure a crop. Thus time would be saved and money also to the settlers. The contractor might clear so much of each block, or the Government could undertake the work of ringbarking and clearing and providing water supplies, the cost to be afterwards paid by these men, who could then go on themselves and continue the working of their holdings. But the principal point was that these people were anxious that the Minister should go along and at one or two meetings let them know where these areas were available and what prospects there were so that their minds could be set at rest in that particular, and so that if they took up land they would not be involved in expenditure, and in the risk of losing their jobs and not being able to get the land in the long run. While we boasted of the large area made available for selection, and the very large area taken up during the past year, and the selection now going on, we had still to bear in mind that the area under cultivation, although it was increasing, bore a very small ratio to the total amount alienated or in process of alienation. Our efforts should be directed just as strenuously towards seeing that the area already alienated was utilised, as to seeing how much land we could get rid of in each year. There were no difficulties as far as one could see about getting rid of the land. The great point Parliament and officers of the Lands Department should see to was that the land of the State was utilised to the fullest possible extent in order that the whole State might profit by the cultivation of it.

Mr. JACOBY congratulated the Minister upon the distinct improvement in the organisation of the department. The

wise decision of the Government to vary largely utilise the system of survey before selection was to a great degree responsible for this, in conjunction with the new system adopted whereby settlers might know exactly where land was available, the class of land in each block, and the amount of money that would be lent upon it by the Agricultural Bank, if the bank was prepared to lend money on it at all. The member for Brown Hill complained that the Agricultural Bank would not lend money on some of the blocks; but when large areas were cut up it must necessarily follow that certain portions of it were not suitable for cultivation, though perhaps eminently suitable for grazing purposes. It was a wise decision on the part of the Agricultural Bank that they did not encourage people to take up land unless they could utilise it for something more valuable than grazing. The leader of the Opposition said the disorganisation of the department was caused through a sudden rush in the rate of selection; but this disorganisation, this dissatisfaction had been a feature of the department ever since Responsible Government was established, and only now, it appeared, had we succeeded in finding some sort of system, or management, that would alleviate the trouble of the past. The steps taken to systemise the work of selection might be carried considerably further. When opening new districts provision should be made not only for railway facilities, but for roads and water supplies. This was done to some extent, but the only attempt of any consequence was that provided in Clause 17 of the Land Act Amendment Bill now before Parliament, whereby new settlers were to bear the burden of supporting the railways, while the older settlers were allowed to go seat free. He had previously pointed out what appeared to him to be the iniquity of the system, and he hoped the Minister would see the need there was for making all the lands served by railways, whether new areas or old, contribute their share towards making those lines pay. Apparently the only practical method by which we could reach that would be by the imposition of an improvement tax

that would leave the maximum authorised on lands undeveloped to a certain capacity and would decrease or, perhaps, be abolished altogether when a reasonable amount of improvement was done. The matter would have to be seriously taken in hand, because when the Minister attempted to put the clause into operation he would find that the clause would not work, and he would have to take up some more comprehensive and equitable scheme. Those who had watched the work done by the present Director of Agriculture could not refrain from expressing their satisfaction at it. It was fortunate, indeed, Professor Lowrie had that prestige among the cultivators of the State that when he but spoke he was listened to with great respect by the farmers and good results followed; but it appeared that the system of getting first-class experts, the best men who could be secured in connection with the department, should be extended. We were badly in need of an officer to look after the pathological work of the department.

The Minister for Lands: You are dealing with the agricultural vote now.

Mr. JACOBY: Could not members discuss agriculture generally?

The CHAIRMAN: The department of the Minister for Agriculture is a separate division.

Mr. JACOBY: It was regrettable the Government had not seriously taken in hand the question of extending the pine plantations. The only proposition now before the country was to plant another 100 acres, making in all 200 acres.

The Minister for Lands: We are putting in 100 acres a year.

Mr. JACOBY: It was pleasing even that small area was planted, but it was just a drop in the ocean to our future requirements. If the trees were now available for cutting they would not be sufficient to supply our present requirements, and in face of the demonstration in the Eastern States, where in every instance these plantations had proved profitable, one failed to understand the hesitancy of the Minister in this regard. We now imported from Europe every year an enormous amount of softwood, and something

like half a million fruit cases each year. The demand for fruit cases was growing enormously, and in ten years' time it would be half a million cases. Surely we should, with the natural conditions of the State, make some serious attempt to provide our own softwoods. Members opposite had frequently made suggestions regarding the direction in which prison labour might be utilised so that it would not come into contact with the ordinary labour of the State. Possibly prison stations might be established in some of our districts suitable for pine growing and the energies of the prisoners directed in this way. Even if it were decided that prisoners should not do that work it was work where ordinary labour could be profitably utilised. It was to be hoped the Minister would come forward with something more adequate for our needs in this direction than now existed. The whole question of forest conservation would require to be gone into very thoroughly by the Government and this House. There were statements made by experienced officers of the Forestry Department that in ten years time there would be no jarrah in this country fit to cut. The men who made that statement were both experienced. In face of that no attempt was made in the direction of jarrah conservation. It was extraordinary that we should sit down calmly and allow this great asset to be depreciated in this manner without attempting to conserve the forests for future use. Had the Minister received any reports from the Forestry Department as to what was the actual life of our jarrah forests? The position was a very serious one, and in the circumstance it was to be hoped some effort would be made to put the department under the control of a capable conservator. There was no claim that Mr. Richardson, the acting officer, was doing anything more than carrying out the ordinary routine work, for no attempt in the direction of real forestry work had been made. We had been dallying about year after year with this subject. He had heard members raise this question for many years past. The Government looked

serious and expressed a number of good intentions, but nothing was done.

Mr. Taylor: You still continue to support them.

Mr. JACOBY: It was to be feared that less would be done if the hon. member were in the Ministry. He was taking the lesser of two evils.

Mr. Angwin: Perhaps you think it would be an improvement if you were there.

Mr. JACOBY: At all events, he had responsibilities as a member of Parliament, and he would not be content to sit down and do nothing in this direction. He would be lacking in his duty as a private member if he did not express his fears on the subject.

Mr. W. PRICE: The Minister for Lands should be brought down to the actualities of his department from the clouds of optimism in which he soared when addressing the House on introducing his Estimates. The Minister was pleased to say that when he took charge of the department he at once set about brushing away the causes of complaint that existed between the public and the officers of the department. It was to be regretted that the Minister had not succeeded more effectually in brushing away those causes of complaint, for despite what he had said that evening there was, in his (Mr. Price's) possession information which showed there was very great dissatisfaction and discontent to-day between numbers of the public and the department. We were told that three assistant under secretaries had been appointed so as to expedite business in connection with the department.

Mr. Heitmann: A bigger tangle than ever.

Mr. W. PRICE: An illustration which came under his notice a few days ago would probably satisfy members as to the correctness of the interjection of the member for Cue. To show the disgraceful organisation, or laxity or maladministration which existed in connection with the department, he would quote one definite case.

The Minister for Lands: One out of forty thousand.

Mr. W. PRICE: This case came under his notice during his last trip on the Great-Southern line. On that occasion he met 12 people, three of whom were settlers, and one of these settlers had a serious complaint to make against the department. He could, therefore, reasonably assume that if one in three met by him had a serious complaint there were pretty general complaints about the department. He had not associated with the 40,000 people the Minister referred to but only three, and of those one made the complaint. Early last year an application was made for a grazing lease, and the necessary fees were lodged with the application. On the 1st July a notice was received by the applicant, and on the 10th August he paid up all his dues and his rent until the end of this year, receiving a notice that the next rent would be due on the 1st March next. Believing everything was all right he went away out to the bush 82 miles from the railway line, where the grazing lease was located. On the 18th November he received a notice that unless certain money, £2 7s. 6d., rent due, was paid forthwith the lease would be forfeited. That notice was sent from Perth. This man had some time previously a bitter experience with the department, and his actions on the present occasion were prompted by that experience. On that first occasion he had selected land, paid all the fees due, was told by the land agent that everything was correct, so he went away, got married, and left for a three months' trip. While he was away notice of forfeiture was served on the land where he was supposed to be residing, and before he returned the land was forfeited. That had not come under the present Minister but was an experience this unfortunate man had already gained.

The Minister for Lands: What is his name?

Mr. W. PRICE: Hassell. When this man received the recent notice he immediately left his work where he was harvesting and travelled in the 82 miles to Cranbrook, from there he went to Albany and immediately called on the land agent, asking him what was the



meaning of the threat of forfeiture. The land agent said he had no idea to what it referred and that evidently the Lands Department had made a mistake. It was clear that the man's papers were all correct; the list of rents due were turned up, and Hassell's name did not appear. He was assured by the land agent that everything was correct and that he could return to his property. This notice of forfeiture had been sent from the place where the Minister had three assistant under secretaries and where everything was working like clockwork. Hassell, after travelling 82 miles from the bush and then by train from Cranbrook to Albany, returned home after spending five days in setting right a mistake made by the department in Perth. The whole of this waste of time, worry, loss sustained through having to leave his work at a critical time of the year when harvesting was on, was due to the maladministration of the department. This was an example of the splendid administration the Minister had referred to. Whoever was responsible the Minister should see that he was placed in such a position that in the future he would not be able to so unduly harass the settlers. Another matter he desired to refer to was the laxity displayed in issuing leases and Crown grants. Information had reached him where lands had been purchased over two years, and repeated application had been made for the Crown grant, and it could not be procured. The Minister knew well that it was no good a man applying for a loan from the bank unless he was able to produce the lease instrument. There were cases in which men had waited for over two years for documents which should have been theirs immediately after the issue of the approval notice. The leader of the Opposition had referred to the manner of aggregating selections with the desire of aiding miners and others who wished to settle on the land, and suggested that the Government might, under certain circumstances, carry out a scheme of ringbarking and water supply. If the leader of the Opposition desired ocular demonstration of the

inability of the Government to carry out such a claim, he should pay a visit to a locality in the Albany electorate, and the experience gained then would prevent him from again suggesting that the Government should do such a thing.

The Minister for Lands: I thought you were a socialist.

Mr. W. PRICE: That was true under certain circumstances, but not under circumstances controlled by the Minister for Lands. As a matter of fact the Government carried out an extensive scheme of ringbarking and clearing at Denmark. There was in that particular locality, some of the finest, if not the finest, land in the State. Unfortunately, however, the district was being hampered through this very scheme which the leader of the Opposition suggested ought to be adopted in some other centre. Despite the amount of work which had been done in that district, and despite the undoubted value of the land there, from a producing standpoint, it was not being taken up so rapidly as members would like to see.

Mr. Taylor: Has the cost of ringbarking been too expensive?

Mr. W. PRICE: The trouble in connection with clearing was not that the work had not been well done, but the expenses had been too heavy, and he felt sure that the Minister would agree that the price placed on the lands there was too high, and that before the Denmark settlement could be made successful, the prices would have to be readjusted. There was cleared land at Denmark valued at as much as £21 per acre.

Mr. Heitmann: Some of it cost nearly £20 an acre to clear.

Mr. W. PRICE: So it was understood. Despite the fertility of the soil, it was unreasonable to expect that men could go on the land and make a living, and pay the enormous price the Government had placed upon it. The fertility of the soil and the suitability of the district for closer settlement might be brought well under the notice of the public, or that section which desired to go in for closer settlement. At present those who desired to learn anything of this locality had to travel several hundreds of miles, and it was not everyone who could bear the

expenses which were associated with a visit to the district. He (Mr. Price) had met twenty or more individuals who had travelled to that district, but all had declined to seriously consider the question of settlement there because of the high prices. It was to be hoped that the Minister would cease always talking in such an optimistic strain and do more actual work. The Minister was always assuring members of the splendid work which was being done by his department. It would be admitted that the department were doing good work, but they were not doing all the good work which it was possible to do, and the Minister should drop his optimistic oratory, such as he had indulged in that evening, and show that he was doing a little more actual work.

MR. PIESSE: The Minister and the officers of his department were to be congratulated upon the success which had followed their efforts during the past year. The scheme of re-organisation brought about by the Minister, some five or six months ago, had met with great satisfaction throughout the State. The methods of survey before selection and of providing water supplies in the outlying districts, and the increase in the amount to be advanced by the Agricultural Bank were all doing a great deal to expedite settlement. The method adopted by the Minister of clearing roads in new areas which had been sub-divided and surveyed before selection was also to be commended. From experience he knew that the Minister could not spend the money in a more judicious manner than in that direction. Great difficulties had been experienced in the past in that direction, and they had been brought about by the fact that the selector, during the first few years of his occupation of the land, had had to face serious difficulties in this regard. The clearing of these roads was a step in the right direction. He had listened with interest to the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, and to the suggestion with regard to exemptions in certain cases for a period of three years in connection with the payment of rent. If the finances of the State would allow this to be done the suggestion might well

be taken into consideration. It was in the the first few years of occupation that the settler experienced his hardest time. Of course in the present state of the finances it would not be possible to apply the suggestion to all the lands. At the same time the Minister should take the question into consideration and see how far it could be applied to the poorer class land; and in that direction we would not be losing the same amount of revenue as might possibly be the case if the exemption were applied to first-class land. The leader of the Opposition touched upon a matter which had come under his (Mr. Piesse's) notice, namely, the values placed upon certain lands, and had brought before the notice of the Committee the fact that in some instances the Agricultural Bank had refused to lend money on these particular lands. Certain difficulties would assuredly arise in this connection. The leader of the Opposition had said it was inadvisable that the State should go to the expense of surveying lands on which the Agricultural Bank would not lend money. However there would be a difficulty in carrying that theory into effect. As hon. members knew, the lands of the State varied very considerably, and in cutting up an area it would be found that one part would be of first class land while other parts adjoining would be of somewhat inferior quality. Consequently it would not be judicious to cut out the poorer areas, because very often the entire locality could be surveyed by running two lines between two patches of land and working from those lines. However, the Minister might reasonably take the matter into consideration and see if it were possible to devise some means by which those blocks on which the Agricultural Bank would not lend money might be reserved, or at least that it might be made clear that money would not be lent upon them. As for the exemptions referred to, he thought perhaps this system might be applied to the poorer land, and particularly where those lands were taken up in limited areas and brought under cultivation. The member for Swan had referred to the contribution which he thought should be made by the land

holders adjacent to existing railways or proposed railways. He (Mr. Piesse) might not be altogether in order in discussing this matter fully just now, but he intended to have something to say on the point when the railway proposals were before the Committee. Some hon. member had made a suggestion that the surplus prison labour should be used in clearing certain areas. This system had been tried in New Zealand with very great success. The leader of the Opposition had complained that the area of land under cultivation was very small as compared with the area alienated. The reason for this was, in the first place, that so much of the land had been only recently selected, while in the second place the isolated position of much of the land had deterred the settlers from carrying out their improvements more expeditiously. Now that agricultural railways had been extended in many directions, and that there was a prospect of further new railways, he fully expected to see a large increase in the cleared land of the State. He desired to pay a tribute to the work done by the officers of the Lands Department; this too, notwithstanding the fact that certain complaints had been made. It was only to be expected that in a large department with such a vast area of land under its control, mistakes should be made. During the past few years, before the reorganisation scheme was brought into force, complaints had been numerous, and from his own knowledge he could say that the department was ever willing and anxious to rectify any mistakes made. Hon members should not forget the services rendered by the officers of the department, and particularly those officers who resided in the country districts and who were taking a deep interest in their work. The member for Albany had referred to the optimism of the Minister. He (Mr. Piesse) was pleased indeed that we had an optimistic Minister. We wanted men of optimism, men with faith in the country, at the head of affairs. If it were not for the optimism of the Minister and others in the settlement of the land of our State it was certain that we would not have had nearly so large an area taken up

and developed. In conclusion he would again offer his congratulations to the Minister and his officers for the eminently satisfactory work of the past year.

*[Mr. Taylor took the Chair.]*

Mr. ANGWIN : A promise was desired from the Minister. Notwithstanding the incredulous smiles of hon. members, he could say that whenever the Minister had made a promise to him it had been carried out. The promise he wanted was in regard to the special settlement at Yorkrakine. During last recess he had seen and spoken to some 40 or 50 of the settlers in that area, and all were satisfied with their positions. Unfortunately there were others who had not been selected for that settlement and who still wished to go on the land. They were very much dissatisfied, and they wanted to know if the Minister intended to extend the settlement in that area or to open another similar settlement in some other part of the State. When it was remembered that along 92 miles of one of the proposed new railways there were only 85 occupied farms, and that of these 85 farms 50 were in the area of special settlement at Yorkrakine, it would be clearly seen that the system instituted by the present Minister for Lands of settling people on the land and advancing money to put them there and to assist them in clearing and bringing the land under cultivation, was far better than keeping the officers of the department engaged in making transfers of land to people who did not propose to use it. The advantage gained by the State from such a settlement as this would be vastly increased if the Minister would take more funds and assist on to this or another special settlement the hundreds of others anxious to go on the land. For the agricultural railways built, all credit was due to the Labour party of 1904 who had initiated the policy. Of the railways proposed by that Government and described by the then leader of the Opposition as representing a reckless gallop, all had now been built. The policy of opening up the agricultural areas was the policy initiated by the Labour party. The

Labour party had built the foundation of that policy.

The Minister for Lands: And we have built the railways.

Mr. ANGWIN: At all events the Labour party had provided the inspiration for the work. Some of the people at Yorkrakine would have a little difficulty, because the money advanced to clear the land was just sufficient to keep them while they worked. Some of them were working very hard, and putting in long hours, and the asset to the State had been vastly increased in consequence. The security held by the Agricultural Bank would be very great indeed, and seeing the amount of work which had been carried out, the Minister might reasonably go a little further and assist settlers in providing seed wheat and fertilisers. If this were done we would have at Yorkrakine one of the most flourishing settlements existing in the State. In 1907 the Minister promised that if the Yorkrakine settlement was a success he would extend it. The Minister told the men it all depended on them, that if they worked and made the settlement a success he would offer others similar terms, and on several occasions the Minister had eulogised the work done, and even the Minister for Mines at Kalgoorlie had said that the Minister for Lands should go to Kalgoorlie and tell the men there of the success of the work done at the settlement. Therefore, one could now claim that the Minister should redeem his promise and extend the settlement. Not only should he give to those in the civil service facilities to settle on the land, but also to men outside the service. Almost every day he (Mr. Angwin) received letters asking when the settlement was to be extended, and whether there was a possibility of applying for some land under the same conditions. In reply to an interjection the Minister had said that he, no doubt, could settle hundreds of men on the land in the same way, but the Treasurer could not finance it. As a matter of fact the financing part of it would be very small. To the men at Yorkrakine the Minister advanced £50, and a portion of that went towards

paying the survey fees and the first year's rent, but the men went to work so successfully that, out of the money advanced to them by the Agricultural Bank for the work they did, most of them had repaid the £50 within 12 months. There would be no difficulty in financing, at least, another 50 men. The Minister could get 250 men who were anxious to go on the land; and they were not single men. Among those who settled at Yorkrakine were one or two families with 14 children, and they averaged throughout five children a family. That was the class of settlers we wanted, and there was no necessity to pay steamship companies to bring people to the State. The Minister could get dozens of men to-morrow if the settlement on the Yorkrakine lines was extended. It was to be hoped it would be extended before the end of the year.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN had no desire to take up time in dealing with the Lands Department. He wished to refer principally to the Woods and Forests Department, and intended to put before the Minister a few suggestions and to remind him that the Government were not doing too much towards fostering the timber industry. The member for Swan had pointed out the neglect of the Government in regard to the establishment of softwood plantations. He (Mr. O'Loghlen) would refer particularly to hardwoods, and to the probable scarcity of timber supplies in the near future. Our forests were rapidly becoming depleted. It was only last session he had urged on the present Premier, who was then the Minister for Lands, to get a classification of the timber areas now existing so as to get some accurate idea of the acreage of marketable timber and so that there would be something reliable to guide us. However, nothing had been done to the present, and he could not hope for anything in the near future, because while the new Minister for Lands was optimistic in regard to land settlement and enthusiastic in anything relating to the development of agriculture, rather than go under the shade of a jarrah tree the Minister would walk a mile further to see a stalk of wheat. In dealing with the question of the scarcity of timber it was

necessary to look further afield than our own State to see what the supplies were and how long they were likely to last. He had been looking up the position in other countries to find out the timber supply of the world; and in order to ascertain the position of Western Australia he had perused the reports submitted from time to time as far as he possibly could. The member for Swan had already referred to the fact that two competent inspectors in the State had ventured the opinion that the hardwood supply of the State was only sufficient for the next 10 years. It was difficult to get an accurate estimate of how long our supplies would last, and the Minister should take note of the suggestion made and set to work immediately to get the necessary information. The United States provided the biggest area of forest lands. There were 405 million acres of forest lands in the United States, but there the position was viewed with alarm. Inspectors, experts, men at the top of the tree, men who, so to speak, had worked in the forestry lands of the States from their infancy, or had been connected with forestry for long years, had submitted reports on the prospects. Mr. Hall, Mr. Kellog, Dr. Fernow, and Giffard Pinchot, who had gone into the position exhaustively, pointed out that the white pine, the most valuable for building purposes, was entirely gone. Seeing what a large industry the lumber trade was to the United States, this report must be viewed with some alarm. These officers pointed out that the figures concerning the timber supplies were not exaggerated. Statistics bore out the reports of these experts, the salaried experts of the Federal Forestry Service. They stated, that the United States had already crossed the verge of a timber famine so severe that its blighting effects would be felt in every household in the land. And further, they said that owing to the waning supply of hardwood the price had risen from 25 per cent. to 65 per cent. Having been to some trouble to get these figures verified, he found they were absolutely correct. The officers pointed out that the supplies of hardwood at present in sight would not last more than 16 years. We should

waken up in Western Australia and try to do something for re-afforestation. The only solution pointed out in the reports of these United States officers was that they considered they should start planting immediately in the United States and do everything possible, even to the expenditure of millions of money, to try to get the forests into their former position. Professor Bailey Balfour, described in the technical journals as one of the great experts in forestry, pointed out that forestry was "a division of rural economy that should be the basis of a large national industry in every country." Getting away from the United States, where the supplies we were told on reliable authority could not last more than 16 years, we came to the position of Germany, a country that was doing more in connection with forestry than any country in the world, owing to the fact that they had adopted a system of forest management. They protected the young trees. He (Mr. O'Loughlen) had a vivid recollection of working among jarrah trees a few years ago, and he knew that in order to bring the whim to a tree he would rather cut a dozen juicy young jarrahs than deal with a scraggy jarrah that stood in the road. That was how our forests were destroyed, though possibly it was good to cut out some of the young trees where they were getting too thick. In Germany there was a vigorous policy of forestry management, and for every tree slaughtered there were three planted, and that, with the protection of young trees, meant that the timber trade in Germany was assured for all time. Every acre of timber country in Germany last year, whether State, municipal, or private, returned in revenue over two dollars. In Western Australia our timber areas, so far as good timber was concerned, were in private hands. Years ago, when the industry was to be established and some inducement was necessary to see the industry developed, we gave away large areas of our best timber country on the fringe of the seaboard. But this should make us pause, and take steps in regard to conserving the little timber country we still had, while we should endeavour to take steps towards

bringing to profitable use again all the timber country that might be cut out. If we looked at some countries, supposed to be a long way behind us in the matter of forestry and conserving timber supplies, we found that they, at least, had not parted with this asset which was so valuable to every country. Even in Japan, which had been rather backward until recently, we found a total forest area of 58 million acres, but of that only 15 million acres were privately owned, the State holding the balance. The result was that the net revenue in Japan during 1908 from the timber industry was £1,600,000, an increase of 16 per cent. during the past 20 years. If we had a revenue not of millions but of thousands we might, perhaps, devote a little more attention to this industry than we had in the past. The small revenue we derived from forests, together with the lack of funds and other disadvantages, were not sufficient reasons why the Government should sit idle and see the forests rapidly cut out. He had in his possession also other reports which he did not intend to weary the Committee with. One was by Mr. Deane, the Engineer-in-Chief of New South Wales, who was known to a good many here as a very high officer in that State and a very capable man. He had gone exhaustively into the question and brought suggestions before his Government in providing information for a Royal Commission that sat on forestry. He reported that he viewed with alarm an ever-increasing scarcity of hardwoods, and said that New South Wales was being drained of one of her most valuable assets owing to the fact that no steps were being taken at re-forestation. He said he looked to the very near future when the supplies would be so cut out that they would have to substitute steel sleepers for hardwoods in New South Wales. In that State a Royal Commission had gone exhaustively into the question, and they had even gone the length of recommending the stoppage of all exportation of hardwoods from the State as they saw that in the near future they would require all they possessed for their own use. It had been forced on us

on more than one occasion, forced on those who were taking any interest in forestry, that forests would have to be cultivated like any other crop. That would have to be done in this State or else there would be no supplies for the big undertakings looming up in the future. As a solution of the difficulty he would not suggest altogether a big scheme of planting at the present time, he would suggest a system by which the forests would be able to recover themselves. He had obtained the acreage of the timber lands which had reverted to the Crown, those areas having been cut out by the companies who had gone through the forests, slaughtering the timber, but leaving the young trees and the old and scraggy ones. He was going to warn the Minister that night that if steps were not taken in the direction of bringing about a better state of affairs in connection with the industry he would hear a good deal more about it in the near future. There had reverted to the Crown 102,568 acres of country once held by the timber companies. That acreage was scattered through various parts of the South-West, large areas being at Waroona, Collie, and other places. That area should at once be reserved for forestry purposes. A portion of it would be suitable probably for agriculture, and if it were possible to get settlers to take it up it would be a wise policy to adopt, especially seeing that bush railway lines had been through the areas. If settlers could be found willing to take up the areas along the gullies and tracks they should receive every encouragement, but as regards the larger portion of the area he would advocate a system of re-forestation. It was to be regretted that the Royal Commission that sat some time ago on this question had not thrown much light on the future working of the industry. They made suggestions, and a few individuals gave their opinions, which were the result of their experience, as to the growth of the timber and so forth, but nothing in the way of practical knowledge was gained. We must recognise that the greatest enemy to the forests were bush fires. They went through the forests every year, and owing to the bark of the jarrah being of a fibrous nature it

lent itself to the flames, with the result that thousands of trees were annually destroyed, or at least so damaged that they were not marketable later on. Those who had been through the timber country must have seen what magnificent trees grew in the ironstone country. There were belts of trees of sound grain, with splendid barrels, and there were fine, straight trees which were absolutely the best for the market. He had made inquiries from practical men as to the reason why all the best of the trees should grow in this ironstone country, and from them he had learned that the reason was that the thick undergrowth and scrub did not grow there, and, therefore, there was nothing to feed the flames of the bush fires which did so much damage in other parts of the country. Undergrowth existed along the gullies and slopes and did nothing but add fuel to the flames. Some revenue might be obtained from the 100,000 acres which had reverted to the Crown, by the grazing of sheep, and encouragement might be given in this direction. The jarrah was an exception to all other trees, because its true home was in the rough ironstone country. The only way by which we could bring the forests back to their former state was by this system of self-afforestation. There would be found in the ironstone country, trees which were, perhaps, scraggy and useless from a marketable point of view but which would provide sufficient seed. This seed would be blown into the cavities of the rocks, with the result that before long we would have trees growing that would develop into an exceptionally fine forest. It was 30 years since the first operations took place in the Jarrahdale district. That forest was cut out, but the young trees were left and they had now developed, with the result that to-day there was a very fair forest there. Reverting again to the bush fires, it was found that sad havoc was done by them in the country where there was a heavy undergrowth, because the flames came along, fed on the undergrowth, and then attacked the bark of the jarrah, with the result that as the trees grew they developed swellings, gum veins and hollows appeared, and the trees

became unmarketable. By these bush fires very frequently 50 per cent. of the trees which would have been marketable were destroyed. The way out of the difficulty was by the destruction of the undergrowth, and by the cutting-down or ring-barking of the useless trees. If the Government were to employ a few men in clearing up the dead timber around promising trees, and in putting the axe to the scraggy timber which was never likely to be of use and only hampered the growth of the marketable trees, the difficulty would be solved to a very great extent without much expense. There were now six men employed by the Government in work of this character in the Waroona district, and he intended soon to ask the Minister which department they were working under. The result of the work of these men would be good although not much result had been achieved so far, but the scheme should be enlarged. If this principle were extended and the Minister would give authority to send practical men to clear up the dead wood that caused such destruction to the forests, in all likelihood the 100,000 acres which had reverted to the Crown would in a few years be in a fair way to grow sufficient supplies for any undertaking such as the Trans-continental railway, and other railway projects likely to be brought forward in the future. It was too late now to criticise the Government for their action in giving away areas as they had done in the past. One company alone held three-quarters of a million acres, along the seaboard, of the finest timber country in the State, and they only paid £5,206 for it. Less than two years ago a company secured over 100,000 acres in the Nannup area. Timber areas had been given away with a lavish hand, but it was time this was put a stop to so that the few remaining acres of first-class timber lands should be preserved. We should do our utmost with the areas which had reverted to the Crown to get a good forest again. He did not know whether the Minister would be as optimistic about the timber as the agricultural industry, but it was to be hoped he would apply himself to the subject. It was to be feared that when the Premier went to London the Minister for Works

would be the only man in the Cabinet who had had experience of timber and he would, therefore be the man to whom members would have to look for the carrying out in the future of the project he had outlined. He would take up no time in dealing with the soft woods. He regretted the report of the Acting Conservator of Forests was not before members now that the department was being discussed. He had applied for that report for the past fortnight, but had ascertained it was only now in the hands of the printer, and was not yet ready to be issued. If that report had been ready members would have been able to see what the work of the last year had been and what scheme had been outlined for the general control of the industry. Also we could have learned what would be the probable result of the working of the industry during the next 12 months. However, as the report was not here members were not in a position to speak at any length or to devote much time to the question. He only wished to say he heartily approved of the policy inaugurated in the State of laying down some of the waste lands with pine. If the proposal of the member for Albany to establish an experimental farm were seriously taken up by the Government and the very large areas surrounding Albany planted with pine trees, the result would be excellent. There were now thousands of acres of waste lands in Albany which were an eyesore to the people who got off the boats for a few hours at that port and inspected the country. At present they were nothing but sand plains, but they were plains that would grow all sorts of undergrowth and vegetation. They could be put to most profitable use if that country and areas in other parts of the State, particularly in the South-West, were utilised for the purpose of establishing pine forests. If the Government undertook that work they would promote a scheme they would never regret. Two or three months ago he had gone through some of the forests established by the Government of South Australia a few years ago. He referred particularly to Bundaleer, where there was a very large area of country planted with pines. In a few years to

come those pine forests would probably mean considerable revenue to the State of South Australia. Some of the pine trees which had been put on the market in Victoria had been worth pounds. Those trees had grown in that State, and he believed that the experiment in the two States he had mentioned was proof of the success that could be achieved by establishing pine plantations in Australia. There was nothing to prevent the Government here from going forward with the scheme of planting pines. A few acres had been planted at Hamel, Ludlow, and, perhaps, Northampton, but to make a success of the scheme hundreds of acres and, if necessary, thousands of acres, should be planted. The member for Swan had referred to the large import of softwoods for fruit cases. Australia, unfortunately, did not grow too much of this softwood, and it was necessary while we were paying attention to the supply of hardwoods, that we should do our utmost to establish softwood plantations as had been done in South Australia.

The Minister for Lands: How many acres have they planted there?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Speaking from memory, the area was 20,000 acres, but the South Australian authorities had been planting every year and the trees were growing towards maturity, and it was expected in the near future that some revenue would be derived from them. The member for Swan had a knowledge of these districts, and knew that in these areas the pine forests would be a considerable source of revenue to the State. Was there any reason why the Minister for Lands, in this State, should go along in the present slipshod fashion of planting a few acres this year, and a few acres next year? Was there any reason why the large areas at Albany, Busselton, Wannoneroo, and other parts of the State should not be put to some use in connection with pine plantation, and the forests of which would grow into money while the Minister slept? These forests would bring in a considerable revenue, and he (Mr. O'Loughlen) would persist in his advocacy of this policy until something more practical was done. With regard to the Woods and Forests Department, it was



his intention to ask for a little information. Like the member for Swan it was his opinion that the time had arrived when a practical man should be appointed at the head of the Forestry Department; but he would make no complaint against the present occupant of the office. That officer did not claim to have that wide knowledge of forestry, which it was necessary that the head of the department in this State should have. The officer in charge might have had some experience in this work, but the Government should move in the direction of establishing the industry, and putting it on a better footing than it was at the present time, and this could only be done by securing the services of a conservator with a wide knowledge of the forest timbers of the world, so that he could apply himself to bringing into profitable use those thousands of acres of sand plains in the districts which had already been mentioned, and which to-day were lying worthless and idle. He had before him the report of the conservator of forests in Queensland. That State had one of the best men in Australia in Mr. McMahon, who had given considerable attention to the forests of Queensland, which, at the present time, were in their infancy. They had a larger variety of timbers in that State than any other State could boast of, and it was only by conserving them, and paying attention to them that they could hope to be assured of supplies in the future. That was the course which should be followed in this State. Queensland might have a little for export, but the fact remained that all over Australia, the supplies were growing less, while the demand was growing larger. The system of powellising might be of some service, but it was not anticipated that it would make a material difference so far as the supply of timber was concerned. We should look at the markets of the world and the supplies to get an accurate idea of our own safety in this matter, and our requirements in the future. The industry, at the present time, was fairly flourishing, and large profits were being made. Last year Millars' made a profit of £136,000, and it was not unlikely that during the next twelve months, at the

present rate of progress, their profit would run into a quarter of a million sterling. He was convinced also of the fact that if the destruction of our forests went on much longer at the rate that it was proceeding to-day, it would not be many years before the last stick of jarrah would be swept away. When we recognised that only a few wears ago we had thousands of acres of virgin forests which we had given away with a lavish hand, and that we had reports from two competent men that the industry would not last for more than ten years, it was time that we paid a little more attention to it and tried to win back those acres, which had reverted to the Crown, and which were useless to-day. If we put sufficient men on these areas to clear them of the dead wood to prevent bush fires from taking place, we could be quite satisfied that after a few years of this policy, both in protecting and winning back to its natural state the hardwood forests, by spending a few more pounds on softwood plantations, we would have nothing to fear for the future. If the Minister did not pay more attention to this industry than had been paid in the past, if he did not recognise the serious decline by reason of the large exportation, and the large number of men who were at present slaughtering the forests in every direction, and nothing being done to bring them back to profitable use, it could be said that during the next Estimates the Government would come in for a very warm time.

The Minister for Lands: If the timber hewers get hold of you they will give you a warm time too.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There was nothing to fear, and if it came to getting a warm time, he would be satisfied to abide by the result. It had to be admitted that while such a large body of men were engaged in the industry, it certainly brought money into circulation, and meant additional employment, when we saw, not hundreds, but thousands of the finest axemen in the world engaged in our forests; and it was a pleasing sight to look upon. There were 3,000 or 4,000 in the Forrest electorate getting their livelihood through the timber industry, and there was no wish to stop

the exportation of timber or take the livelihood of these men away ; but he did not desire to see the export of timber increased. He was prepared to advocate such a policy that would secure a livelihood for the men engaged in the industry, and at the same time make the industry a continuous one, bringing profit to the State, bringing profit to the people, and providing for our requirements. This we would have some difficulty in doing unless we took speedy steps to bring about the recovery of our forests.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (in reply) : If no other members desired to speak he would make a few remarks on the comments which had been passed by hon. members. The leader of the Opposition had read a letter from some disappointed settler. All that could be said with regard to that was that the department endeavoured to do everything that was perfectly fair in connection with land settlement. The Agricultural Department inspected these areas, and if there was a block which they determined was not valuable enough to advance against, they said so, and the applicant was so informed. He (the Minister) could claim to have introduced a system which was in advance of anything that had applied in the State before, and an advance of anything that was in force in Australia to-day. A man could select land at a low price and get an advance against the property with the least trouble. He agreed with the leader of the Opposition that if it were possible to relieve selectors in the first years of settlement, it would be a good business. The financial position of the State was such, however, that that could not be done. He was certain if members would test the feeling of the people, it would be found that they agreed that all the measures which had been introduced had been liberal, and for the benefit of the settler. It was true also that he had not been able to find time to visit the goldfields, but he promised that during the next recess he would take the opportunity of going there in the hope of inducing some of the miners to become settlers on the land. At the present time one of the senior officers of the depart-

ment was in Kalgoorlie and he was also visiting Boulder with the object of telling the people there what they could expect to find in the agricultural districts in the way of land for selection. This officer had been instructed to tell the people that the Minister was willing to set aside areas for selection at Kalgoorlie if they were desired. In connection with repurchased estates the leader of the Opposition would find that provision had been made for sale under non-resident conditions. This was entirely in the interests of the people to whom the leader of the Opposition referred. It was known that in the early stages of settlement men could not leave their work in order to improve their own land. The member for Swan had referred to the pine plantations. There were 200 acres planted at Hamel, and 100 acres planted at Ludlow, and only on the previous day a contract was signed for something like £1,000 for the clearing of 100 acres for a pine plantation.

Mr. O'Loughlen : Why not try a plantation in country that does not require clearing ?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : Information had been sought as to whether this could be done at Albany, and the matter was being looked into now. At any rate the subject was receiving attention. When it was remembered that 100 acres of pine trees would produce 3 million fruit cases in 20 years time, it would be agreed that the planting of 100 acres would be sufficient for our requirements.

Mr. O'Loughlen : We want more than fruit cases ; we cannot live on fruit.

Mr. Jacoby : Is that a good proposition ?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : Certainly it was a good proposition, and he would be glad to get more like it. He had talked this project over with the member for Forrest, who knew far more about it than he did himself. He entirely agreed with the hon. member that the timber areas should be protected, and that a jarrah forest should remain a jarrah forest. He had signed the order to put these men in operation at Waroona, and if that project were to prove a success the work of protecting the young trees would be gone on with.

Hon. members must recognise with the member for Forrest that the mature timber should be marketed. The member for Forrest had referred to powelising. If this proved a success the karri forest would be brought into requisition for sleepers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The timber is not costing anything while it stands, and you will want it later on.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The question would be thoroughly looked into with a view to devising the best means of protecting the forests. There were thousands of acres of this karri on the very best of our lands in the South-West, and he looked forward to the time when the hewer would be there preparing sleepers. The member for Albany had complained that the land sold at Denmark at £20 an acre was not worth the price. It was to be remembered that that was for cleared land, and that the terms were spread over 20 years.

Mr. W. Price: It is not all cleared. The stumps are there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He ventured to say that the work done at Denmark had been economically done and thoroughly well done too. The selectors who acquired that land on 20 years' terms with the price set against it were getting something at very much less than its value. If the same land were in Victoria it would bring £50 an acre cleared, but because it was in Western Australia the hon. member classed it as no good.

Mr. W. Price: Because you will not let them have a market.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There was no objection to the hon. member taking up his residence in Albany and so increasing the local market. The ideal small farm of the State was at Denmark. This was Mr. Knapp's place. As a matter of fact it was at Torbay, which however was very near to Denmark.

Mr. W. Price: No; it is 20 miles away.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Mr. Knapp had 30 acres from which he was getting a return of about £400 per annum. Of the 30 acres, 9 acres were under English grass, 5 acres were devoted

to potatoes—which by the way were second to nothing in Australia—5 acres were under apples, and a few acres were producing oats and vegetables. The owner was living an ideal life amid most beautiful surroundings, and as a result of his own labour was making £400 per annum. Yet the member for Albany would say that land capable of this result was no good. Something had been said of the settlement at Yorkrakine. This really should come under the Agricultural Department, but since it had been mentioned he would like to show what had been done in a little over 12 months by 320 odd people who had settled out there as the result of the allotment of 50 blocks to 50 people with an advance of £50 to each. In the aggregate these people had now received advances from the bank to the extent of £8,242. They had cleared 2,350 acres, had partially cleared 1,224 acres, had ringbarked 18,000 acres, had erected 1,200 chains of fencing, had scrubbed 17,689 acres, and had provided a water supply of the value of £160.

Mr. Angwin: That is better than selling land and not having it utilised.

*[Mr. Daghish resumed the Chair.]*

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No-body would venture to differ from that view. It was a very excellent proposition, and it might well be extended. The public service land settlement scheme was working satisfactorily, and the following had just been received from the officer in charge:—

"I beg to report that I have just completed a trip through the settlement, calling on every man and inspecting his block and arranging the bank loans. I found every man (with one exception) doing good work, and quite contented with their lot. A better lot of settlers it would be impossible to get together. They are working like tigers, and doing their work in a good, systematic manner. They are a contrast to what they were a few weeks back. They came here with high collars, walking sticks, and pale faces; and now you see them with bare flannels, dungarres,

, and complexions like South Sea Islanders."

He (the Minister) would be very glad if we could settle more people under similar conditions. He had nothing more to say except to express the hope that the Estimates would pass without trouble.

General debate concluded; Votes and Items discussed.

Lands, Salaries—£31,795 :

Item—Clerks (Land Selection Branch), £5,672 :

Mr. BATH : Last year provision had been made for 35 clerks. This year the number was reduced to 34, yet there was an increase of over £1,000 in the item.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : This was due to the fact that temporary officers had been employed last year, whereas this year the work was being done by permanent officers.

Mr. W. PRICE : The position was that last year £4,478 had been spent in providing for 35 officers. This year the number was reduced to 34, yet the Minister was asking for £5,672. Would the Minister still further explain.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : The explanation would be found in a reduction in the item for extra clerical assistance.

Surveys—£21,416 :

Item, Clerks (Preparation of Deeds), £840 :

Mr. W. PRICE : Two years ago a block of land had been purchased at Cranbrook, and the payment completed within a short time, yet up to the present no deed had issued. If it took two years for a man to secure a deed for a small block, what were these clerks engaged in doing ?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : In January last there were 3,400 leases not issued, but that number had been reduced by about 900 during the last six months. The system had been to allow all the leases to accumulate, and not to be issued until applied for ; but he had now instructed that all leases were to be issued at once. The work of the previous day had to be attended to and the leases issued at once. One officer had just been suspended for delaying the issue of a lease for six weeks, and any officer in the Lands Depart-

ment would meet with a like fate for transgressing in the same way. He intended to have these leases brought up to date.

Contingencies—(Lands) £13,425 :

Item, Margaret, Yallingup, and Yanchep Caves, grant to board, £800 :

Mr. BATH : How came this item to be under the control of the Lands Department ? It should be under the Treasurer, under the heading of "Miscellaneous Grants."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : This item was always under the Lands vote. It was the annual grant to the Caves Board. If no grant was given to the board the Lands Department would simply have to control the Caves. There had to be caretakers, and an engineer at Yallingup for the electric light plant.

Mr. Angwin : Are they getting rent from the premises ?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : Not recently ; the board had to take possession and put out the man who was in charge of the accommodation house.

Mr. Johnson : A wise step to take.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : This item was formerly £1,000, but it had been reduced by £200.

Mr. W. PRICE : In the present state of the finances we were not justified in passing £800 for the Caves that were nothing but a luxury for a small section of the community and monied visitors. Probably much of the money went into the numerous coloured illustrations in the annual report of the board. Certainly the Caves had to be advertised, but not at the expense of the general taxpayers of the State. The visitors to the Caves had been reduced in number by 400 for the last three years. If this was owing to the depression, it was a very good reason why expenditure should be reduced. We had rigid economy and retrenchment on all hands, except when it affected the leisured section of the community who wanted to visit these beauty spots. No doubt the beauty spots should be kept up and kept in proper repair and attended to, but the board should do their duty. The member of the House represented on the board did not attend the meetings.

The Minister for Works : Who is that ?

Mr. W. PRICE : The Hon. F. Wilson.

The Minister for Works : You must know the Minister never sits on a board of that sort.

Mr. W. PRICE : To test the feeling of the Committee he moved—

*That the item be reduced by £250.*

Mr. ANGWIN : Some assistance should be given to the Caves, but why should not the Caves Board be dealt with as other boards were dealt with by the Government this year. The revenue of the Caves Board last year was £1,246, of which the principal items were, £800 from the Government, £100 from the accommodation house, £100 from coupons, and £170 from admission money. The principal items of expenditure were £810 for salaries, £260 for electric lighting, £43 for improvements, £78 for advertising, and £70 for travelling expenses. Seeing the salaries were so high in comparison with the receipts more efforts should be made to make the Caves more popular. An effort should be made to reduce the expenditure. A few years ago several thousands of pounds were spent on the Caves, and on one occasion the works were carried out before the money was voted. The Minister should have reduced the sum this year by £50 or £100.

Mr. TROY : While none recognised more than he the advantage of the Caves to the State, and the necessity for spending a certain sum of money in enhancing their beauty so as to make them attractive for visitors, it must be recognised that the people engaged in developing the State in many districts were being deprived of urgent wants, and that therefore, their claims should receive attention before what might be described as luxuries. He knew of a population of 200 people who were in dire extremity for need of a water supply. He knew of people labouring under great disadvantages while doing the pioneering work of the State, and money should be found to meet their wants before it was voted for beautifying the Caves. How did the Attorney General feel with regard to this vote ? It would be interesting to have some remarks from him in view of what he said 12 months ago when he did not

happen to be a member of the Government. Those remarks were creditable to him, as he was of opinion then that the money could be spent to much better advantage. It was to be hoped he would vote against the item to-night. On that occasion the present Attorney General said, "The amendment for the reduction of the item by £500 was one which should meet with the Premier's cordial support, because, when speaking on the Address-in-reply, the leader of the Government said that Ministers would set their face against any advance other than for purposes that were absolutely necessary." Surely the Attorney General would not be found voting to-night in opposition to his remarks on that occasion. The amendment for the reduction of the vote would receive his (Mr. Troy's) support, not because he did not recognise the benefit of the Caves to the State, but because the money could be spent better in other directions. When the country was in a sounder financial state he would consent to vote for luxuries, but while people were in need of bare necessities he would not support an extravagant item.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : It was to be hoped the Committee would not decrease the vote. How were the Caves to be kept open to the public unless some money was provided for them ? We must not shut our eyes to the fact that the people of the State were going to the East for their holidays because there were no attractions here. The beauty spots of the Caves should be protected and money provided so that the people might have an opportunity of visiting that place and inspecting the Caves in some degree of comfort. After all, it was but a small amount. Last year the 2,400 people who went to the Caves spent a considerable sum of money in the way of railway fares and in other directions. In no other State would the people cavil at a vote of £800 for such a purpose as this, and if members had visited the Jenolan Caves in New South Wales, they would have found that the expenditure was undertaken on a very lavish scale. A few years ago, £11,000 was spent in building an accommodation house. People from

all parts of the world went to those Caves, which were a great advertisement to the State in addition to being a most attractive holiday resort.

Mr. W. Price: They are practically self-supporting now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Seven years ago they must have cost the country a great deal more than they returned. Our Caves were self-supporting if the railway fares, especially from the people of the fields, were credited to them. It had been said that only the wealthy people visited our Caves, but that was wrong, for all sorts of people went there and participated in the beauties of the place. It was a resort of the very best description and was a beauty spot second to none in Western Australia. There were other beauty spots which should also be made attractive, among them being the Serpentine Falls. We were given to talking too much about boards and municipalities, let us now and then turn to some pleasant matters. Unless sufficient money was voted to manage the Caves decently they should be closed up altogether.

Mr. BATH: If we were to retain the Caves as an attraction of the State, and attempt to compete with the other States it would be necessary to vote the money to carry that out. It was not so much the amount as the question of administration that members should turn their attention to. In New South Wales they voted higher sums than we did for the control of the Jenolan caves, but in return they had an enormous traffic, and the traffic of Western Australia compared to it was a mere flea-bite. We got hundreds where they got tens of thousands. More attention should be devoted to the administration of the Caves Department, and we should see that the money was wisely expended, and that facilities were provided, not only for those who were well-to-do, but for others of moderate means. The proposal to reduce the amount by £250 was too drastic. At the same time the board could suffer reduction just as others had done, and if the member for Albany had moved to reduce the

item by £50 to bring it into line with the others, that would have been sufficient.

Mr. KEENAN: It was a pity that a vote of this character should be included in the Lands Estimates. The obvious intention of the item was to provide recreation, and to include it in a set of Estimates dealing with the development of land, was to include it among items which were wholly foreign to it. If it were properly included in the Treasury Estimates, it would then have been open for comparison with other similar grants. No one wanted to waste the State's money already spent in opening up these Caves, and making the accommodation house there, but it was desirable that this grant should be compared with other similar grants especially others which had suffered a reduction. It was not economy to apply reductions to only one particular locality, or a particular class of vote; they should be applied to all funds alike.

Mr. DRAPER: The question before the Committee was really whether there should be a caves board or not. It had been urged that the item should be reduced by £250, and the leader of the Opposition suggested that the reduction should be £50. The leader of the Opposition, however, made the statement with which he agreed that the amount voted at the present time practically prevented the financial strain to which the Caves Board was put, reaching a breaking point. Then it was obvious that we could not reduce the grant any lower than it was at the present time. If £800 was the minimum which would keep the Caves Board alive, the only question to decide was whether the Caves Board should be abolished or whether the whole subsidy should be done away with. At this early stage of providing inducements to people in this State to spend their holidays in the State, it was not his intention to vote for the reduction of the amount, if it would mean reducing the Caves Board to a position of uselessness. He was in possession of pamphlets issued

by the Tourist Departments of New Zealand, New South Wales, and Tasmania.

Mr. JOHNSON: Every State except Western Australia has a tourist department.

Mr. DRAPER: In each of these States it was found that endeavours were made by the Government and by others interested in the prosperity of those States, to provide amusements and recreation, not only for the people residing in the State, but also to induce visitors to go to those States and increase the circulation of money in those communities. Possibly, we could not hope by inducements of this nature to get visitors to come here from the other States. We might, however, induce visitors passing our shores to break their journey here. Seeing what the policy of the States was it would be taking a backward step, if we were to reduce the vote.

Mr. Walker: Are they not publishing pamphlets here?

Mr. DRAPER: Possibly they were in existence, but he had not seen them. It would not be merely a question of economy, because the Committee had been told that £800 was the breaking strain, and that to refuse the vote would be to abolish the board.

Mr. JOHNSON: It would be very false economy to reduce the vote. The State had spent thousands of pounds in developing this beauty spot. Not only had the entrances to the Caves been opened up, but an accommodation house had been built and, like the main cave, installed with electric light. In time it would be possible to make these caves self-supporting, and the best way of accomplishing this would be to extend the operations of the board on the lines suggested by the member for West Perth. We badly wanted a tourist department in Western Australia. The trouble was that the West Australians of the metropolitan area and of the goldfields did not know Western Australia. He had visited the Caves last year and had been very much struck by their magnificence and beauty. The Caves

were well worth a visit, and the improvements effected by the board were highly creditable. So impressed was he that he had since recommended many of his friends to go and see the Caves. On one occasion he had found three friends down from the goldfields for a holiday in Perth, and although there was still a week of their holiday to run they had tired of their surroundings and were about to return to the goldfields. However he had taken them off to the office of the secretary of the Caves Board where in a few minutes they had been definitely informed as to what it would cost to take them from the secretary's office to the Caves and back to the secretary's office, and the time that would be necessary for the trip. In consequence of these facilities and on his recommendation, these men from the goldfields had gone off to the Caves and on their return had spoken in high terms of praise of what they had seen. It would be easy to point to hundreds of such illustrations if the goldfields people but knew of the possibilities of a trip to the Caves. Nor were the Caves the only beauty spot in Western Australia. The trouble was that here we had not any informative guides to these places as provided in the other States. This was due to the fact that we had no tourist department. When the Colonial Secretary's Estimates should come before the Committee he would make an appeal to the Government to institute in Western Australia a tourist department.

Mr. ANGWIN: If the carrying of the amendment would mean the wiping out of the board, he would certainly vote for it. The Government should do away with the board and take over the secretary as a Government officer. If the Government would take control of the caves and expend the money themselves the time would not be far distant when, instead of having to come to the Committee year after year for a sum of money, they would be paying into the consolidated revenue a substantial amount as the result of the popularity of the Caves.

Mr. W. PRICE: It was no use comparing the State in regard to a tourist department with the Eastern States that contained towns with populations greater than we had in this State. It was all very well for members living in the City with tramcars and motor busses at their convenience to say in a lordly manner, "Oh, let the vote pass." It was equally surprising that members who knew the difficulties under which the settlers were struggling supported the item. He had no desire to wipe out the vote. A large amount was already spent on the Caves, and a certain sum must be provided for the necessary upkeep; but when the Government deemed it desirable to reduce the votes of municipalities, roads boards, libraries, institutes, and hospitals, we should reduce the votes for luxuries. It was regrettable there were not sufficient members who would protest against such a wasteful expenditure of money on these Caves. Some of the money should be spent on roads for settlers.

Mr. TROY: It appeared from the report of the board that a great deal of work had been done, so much so, in fact, as to place matters in a healthy position so far as equipment generally was concerned. That being so, there was no necessity this year for so large a sum being voted. Why not hold over the expenditure for a year or two until times were better? His only objection to the item was that money was so badly needed for the immediate wants of the people that a large sum like this should not be spent on the Caves.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	23

Majority against .. 13

# AYES.

Mr. Bolton	Mr. Swan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Troy
Mr. Heilmann	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Walker
Mr. W. Price	Mr. Gourley

(Teller).

# NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Monger
Mr. Davies	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Gill	Mr. O'Loghlin
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. J. Price
Mr. Johnson	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Layman
Mr. Male	(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. ANGWIN moved a further amendment—

*That the vote be reduced by £75.*

Had it not been for the fact that the balance sheet showed a debit of £30 for last year he would have moved to reduce the item by £100. Every other board in the State had been reduced, and this item should be curtailed proportionately with the others.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	17

Majority against .. 2

# AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. O'Loghlin
Mr. Bolton	Mr. W. Price
Mr. Gill	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Troy
Mr. Heilmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Keenan	(Teller).

# NOES.

Mr. Davies	Mr. Monger
Mr. Draper	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. J. Price
Mr. Johnson	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Male	Mr. Layman
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Item, Melbourne Agency, £1,100:

Mr. JACOBY: This agency had an excellent display of the products of the State, and it was situated in a very fine position, but unfortunately it lost a good deal of its value for advertising purposes, owing to the fact that there was



no display window opening on to the street whereby the exhibits sent from the State could be shown. The other States adopted a different method of displaying their exhibits. All had large windows opening out on to the street—the result was a most attractive display. As we paid a high rent, why should we not make arrangements to get a place where the display might be made. Thousands of people passed this agency, and were unaware of its existence because of the absence of a display window.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The matter was important and would receive attention. The desire of the Government was that the agency should be as useful as possible. There was no doubt that if the window were made attractive the advantage to the agency would be considerably increased.

Mr. TROY: Having had an opportunity of visiting the agency last year, and on several other occasions, and having seen the other agencies as well, he had come to the conclusion that the Western Australian agency was the most attractive.

Mr. Jacoby: Yes; inside.

Mr. TROY: No one could fail to find out where it was. Almost the first thing that struck one when going down Collins-street was to see the huge notice and the swan on the window, but if there were means of making the window more attractive they should be availed of.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was not a question of making the window attractive, it was a question of making Western Australia attractive. The window in Collins-street did not matter. It was necessary first to make Western Australia a good place to live in. Very few agriculturists came down Collins-street at all, and to get the immigrants we required from Victoria it was necessary that we should go out of Melbourne altogether. While we continued to waste this money on the office in Collins-street, Melbourne, we were robbing the State of £1,000 which might otherwise be spent on making Western Australia more attractive than it was. He would oppose this item on precisely the same grounds on which he opposed the advertising in

London, and indeed, the whole immigration policy of the Government, namely, that it was hopelessly ineffective. What we should rely upon was the providing in Western Australia greater opportunities for the desirable settler than were to be found in any other Australian State. The lecturing tour through Victoria only resulted in "three stalwart Gippslanders." At this late hour it was impossible to do justice to the items.

Item, Freight and fares advanced to new settlers, £400:

Mr. HEITMANN: Was the treatment meted out to settlers among our own people different to that meted out to immigrants desiring land?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The immigrant was given one fare to one district in the State. Our own people were refunded the cost of their fares after selecting. Under the old system it was possible for immigrants to get three or four railway passes, but that was discontinued. The immigrant only got the same advantage extended to our own people. It was the custom to advance the fare to would-be selectors, but the system was abused. People travelled but had no intention of selecting. Subsequently, it was arranged that the man would have his fare refunded when he selected an area, but it did not pay to do this in the case of a man taking up a homestead farm. It was unreasonable. Now we adopted the system of refunding the fare to the man on taking up a selection, but no more was done to the newcomer than was done to our own people.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In answer to the leader of the Opposition the Minister had said some time ago that residents of Western Australia had been refused passes which were granted to immigrants. Would the Minister give an assurance that our own people would be treated as well as the new arrivals in the State? That promise had been given by the Minister previously, but it was to be hoped it would be fulfilled this time.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Immigrants received one pass to a district while our own people were refunded their railway fares after they had taken up

land. He had written a minute shortly after taking office stopping the issue of more than one pass to one person. He would be glad to do away with the system altogether. No more was done for immigrants than for our own people.

Mr. HEITMANN : Some time ago the Minister declared there was no difference between the treatment meted out to immigrants and that to our own people. It appeared that the policy of the Government was to assist those who came from outside. When the Minister said previously that no difference was made he made an untrue statement.

The CHAIRMAN : The member must withdraw that.

Mr. HEITMANN would withdraw it, but he knew it was true.

The CHAIRMAN : The member must withdraw without qualification.

The Minister for Lands : That is just what one would expect from him.

Mr. HEITMANN withdrew without qualification. The policy of the Minister and of Ministers before him was to look after the foreigner at the expense of our own people. It was time the Minister altered his policy in this direction, and remembered that there were any amount of people in this country who desired to go on the land.

*12 o'clock, midnight.*

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Woods and Forests*, £9,656 :

Item, Acting Inspector General of Forests, £300 :

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : Was it known to the Government whether the officer filling the position was qualified for it. If he was, why did he not receive the salary which was formerly paid in connection with the position ? The time had arrived when we should have a man with practical knowledge of the industry in charge of this department. If, however, the Government thought that the officer at present there was carrying out his duties well they should pay him the salary which belonged to the position. It should be borne in mind, however, that we did not want an acting inspector to fill this post. What the State wanted was an inspector-general.

Mr. JACOBY : It was to be hoped that a definite assurance would be made that this department would be placed in a satisfactory position, with a properly qualified conservator at its head. The speech of the member for Forrest that evening had shown that the time had arrived for the department to be placed on a satisfactory basis. It would be criminal on the part of the Government in view of the statements made by people who were qualified to speak, by managers of companies, and others, that the jarrah forests had only a ten years' life, if something definite was not done in connection with this very important branch of the Lands Department.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : As far as the Woods and Forests Branch was concerned he was prepared to give an assurance that the matters which had been referred to would receive the earnest consideration of the Government at the earliest possible moment. He realised it was necessary that something should be done in connection with the forests of the State.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : Why is the man in charge not receiving the full salary ?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : The officer at present in charge had held the acting appointment for some years. The whole question would be seriously considered by Cabinet at the earliest possible moment. The speech of the member for Forrest had led him (the Minister) to the conclusion that a great deal remained to be done in connection with this department, and he was perfectly willing to give an assurance that everything possible would be done.

Mr. JACOBY : Would the Minister give an assurance that he would be prepared to recommend Cabinet to appoint a Conservator of Forests. The Minister's convictions should take him to the extent of making such a recommendation to Cabinet.

The Minister for Lands : I will promise to make that recommendation to Cabinet.

Item, Inspectors and Labourers, occasionally employed, £2,400 :

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : Was the Minister prepared to give an assurance with regard to this item that more regular em-

ployment would be found for the inspectors. The question was raised last session. These inspectors, who were only occasionally employed, were obliged to have years of experience before they could be employed and their work was intermittent; they remained engaged for four or six weeks and then, perhaps, for a similar period they might be disengaged. Their full earnings did not run to more than £2 10s. a week, and these were the men who had spent 15 or 20 years of their lives in acquiring experience which would enable them to get this kind of employment. Would the Minister give an assurance that the men occasionally employed would be found other employment when their own work was intermittent? They would be prepared to do anything, so long as they were not idle.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** With regard to these inspectors, who were only occasionally employed, he was perfectly willing to give the assurance the hon. member had asked him for. At the present time, however, it was understood that they were fairly constantly employed.

**Mr. O'Loughlen:** Lately they have had about two months continuous work.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** They were likely to be fairly well employed now, because there was a greater amount of work to be done. He would promise, however, to look into the matter.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 12.10 a.m*

## Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 7th December, 1909.

Obituary—Hon. R. F. Sholl ... .. Page 18

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

### OBITUARY—Hon. R. F. SHOLL.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** (Hon. J. D. Connolly): I regret to state that since we last met death has removed one of our members. I refer to the Hon. Robert Frederick Sholl. It is my intention to move that the House adjourn out of respect to the memory of the late hon. member. I have known the late hon. member for a great many years. Certainly there are those in the House who knew him probably many years longer than I knew him, more particularly as he was a native of the State; but I knew him sufficiently long to appreciate his value to the State, not only as a member of this House, but also as a citizen of Western Australia. I move—

*That out of respect to the memory of the late Hon. Robert Frederick Sholl a member for the North Province in this House, the House do now adjourn and that a message of condolence be sent by the Hon. the President to his widow and family.*

**Hon. J. W. HACKETT** (South-West): Sir, you will perhaps allow me to take precedence of others who wish to address you on this subject, not because I happen to be the senior member of the House, but because the late hon. member and I were on peculiar terms of intimacy for a period extending over a quarter of a century. Our late friend was of a strong and distinct individuality. He had a big frame, a big heart, and a big will. He was a man who held tenaciously by his own convictions, but as I often experienced, when a mistake was pointed out to him and he perceived he was in error, there was no man more ready to confess and acknowledge the mistake. As a politician his work is known to most of us. He should be called rather an earnest