

our Ministers. Look at the position of the leader of the House. Some time ago we had him taking an affectionate farewell of the Council through the columns of the Press because he was going to assume a position of authority in another Chamber. If it had not been for a fear of the electors, that change would have been made. Now we are asked to wipe out that safeguard. I am not prepared to support such a proposal. Regarding the amendment to give women the privilege of becoming candidates for Parliament, I was in the members' gallery of the New Zealand Parliament when the first franchise Bill for women was put through, and I had an opportunity to discuss it with many people who voted for this great innovation, including the Hon. W. P. Reeves; and I could never see from that day to this how anyone, having conceded the franchise to women, could possibly or logically deny their right to stand as candidates for the Chamber. We see how admirably the British Constitution has worked in the Mother land. After that gigantic change of giving the women the franchise, it almost went without saying that they had permission to become candidates for the House, and I believe there are some women sitting in the House of Commons now. I have finished my remarks on the Bill. I would put in one plea to the Government to ignore the Bill altogether. We shall pass the second reading no doubt, and there will be a long discussion in Committee. We look to the Government to make some attempt to deal with our internal finances. We know perfectly well that, without dealing with a big constitutional affair with the Federal Government we cannot handle our State finances satisfactorily. There are two big issues before the public, and it is very much to be regretted that we are absolutely deprived of the services of the leader of the House because he is a member of the present Government. Whether it will be possible to amend the Bill to provide for elective ministries, I do not know, but I am very well satisfied that as things are going in this country, and remembering the refusal of the one big party which used to be called the Liberal party, and which I believe is now called the National party, the absolute refusal of that party I say to be guided by any principle at all, we should take refuge in the direct responsibility of an elective ministry. Let us elect the leader of the House responsible to no one else but the House, absolutely regardless of colleagues outside and of Cabinet, responsible only to us; and then let us have the benefit from him of his wide knowledge and experience of affairs and his extraordinary ability to make the worse appear the better cause.

On motion by Hon. J. J. Holmes debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.54 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 26th November, 1919.

	Page
Questions: Pastoral leases, resumption	1697
Arbitration Court Agent	1697
Apples, export	1697
Hospital for Insane, inquiry	1698
Loan Estimates, 1919-20	1698
Leave of absence	1698
Motions: Pastoral leases and closer settlement	1698
Meat Exporters and Producers	1704
State Smelting Works, treatment of ores	1711
Bills: Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Ltd. (Private), 3R.	1704
Electoral Amendment, 3R.	1704
Constitution Act Amendment (No. 2), dis- charged	1704
Kalgoorlie Friendly Societies Investment Validation, Council's amendment	1704
Divorce Act Amendment, 2R., Com., report	1705
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, Com., report	1711
Sale of Chaff, discharged	1713
Annual Estimates: Votes and Items discussed	1713

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

QUESTION—PASTORAL LEASES, RESUMPTION.

Mr. MALEY asked the Premier: 1, Does any Act give power to resume pastoral leasehold outside the South-West division for uses of a similar nature? 2, Does he intend to make any provision to satisfy the demands of the Returned Soldiers' Association branch at Geraldton for closer pastoral settlement in the Murchison district? 3, Will he consider the question of acquiring the leaseholds of the late Francis Pearce, who is supposed to have died intestate, as a beginning of some definite scheme in this direction?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2 and 3, The matter is receiving consideration.

QUESTION—ARBITRATION COURT AGENT.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Premier: 1, What public departments have retained Mr. Alecock during the past two years as agent or advocate before the Arbitration Court? 2, What amount has been paid to Mr. Alecock during that period?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, The information required is being obtained from departments and will be supplied at a later date.

Mr. O'Loghlen: To-morrow?

The PREMIER: If possible.

QUESTION—APPLES, EXPORT.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Premier: 1, In view of the small price received by fruit growers for apples exported to England during last season, consequent upon the

fixing of prices by the British Government, excessive freights, and other costs, will he communicate with the Agent General with a view to obtaining an open market for the fruit growers, seeing that the price to the consumer reached as high as £4 10s. per case, thus evading the intention of the British Government? 2, Will he take steps to secure sufficient space for the coming harvest, which is estimated to exceed one million cases?

The PREMIER replied: 1, This has been done and the Agent General has undertaken to follow the matter up. 2, The Prime Minister has been written to, and the matter is receiving further attention.

QUESTION—HOSPITAL FOR INSANE, INQUIRY.

Mr. JONES asked the Colonial Secretary: Is he aware that it has been stated that a system of petty persecution and false accusation is at present in vogue against those attendants who gave evidence before the Select Committee on the Claremont Hospital for the Insane?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: No.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1919-20.

Message from the Governor received transmitting the Loan Estimates for the year 1919-20 and recommending appropriation.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Stubbs, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Thomson (Katanning) on the ground of ill-health.

MOTION—PASTORAL LEASES AND CLOSER SETTLEMENT.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [4.4]: I move—

That, in the opinion of this House, in order to increase the population and productivity of the State, the time has arrived for the resumption of all pastoral leases within a radius of 50 miles of existing railways and of seaport towns, for the purpose of closer settlement.

My purpose in moving this motion is to impress upon the House and upon the country what in my opinion is a practical form of land settlement, and a scheme of land settlement which has more attractive possibilities and more chances of success than any proposition yet submitted to this House. The area desired to be resumed is more particularly the pastoral leases adjoining the Murchison railways, stretching from Pindar, near Mullewa, to Meekatharra and Sandstone, a distance of from 255 to 300 miles, and also the areas adjacent to ports such as Carnarvon. According to a return laid on the Table yesterday, at the instance of the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock), the total

area comprises 22 million acres, of which 21,300,000 acres is held under pastoral lease. This large, fertile, and well watered area—and in saying "well watered" I mean that nature has provided an ample water supply at a shallow depth—is to-day held in the form of from 70 to 80 stations, of an average of from 260,000 to 300,000 acres. I do not, of course, assert that each of the stations comprises from 260,000 to 300,000 acres. Some of the stations are less than that, but some contain over one million acres. I have struck the average of the 70 or 80 proprietors at from 260,000 to 300,000 acres. The improvements effected on these stations are valued at approximately £499,500, and the areas which are stocked carry 755,000 sheep, 25,000 cattle, and 3,500 horses. All the country is by no means fully stocked, or even improved for stocking, although I admit that during the last 10 years a very marked advance in that connection has taken place. Still, a number of areas are held without improvement, because the Land Act, as it stands to-day, provides that within the same division a squatter may hold an area entirely unimproved for any length of time provided another area he holds there is occupied and carries stock. As a result, some very choice stretches of country, to my own knowledge, within a proximity of 10 or 20 miles of the railways in the Murchison district, are held under conditions of that nature, not one pennyworth of improvements having been effected, while the people who particularly want the land cannot avail themselves of it.

The Premier: Is the land not stocked?

Mr. TROY: Not stocked, and not improved. Yesterday I took an applicant into the office of the assistant Under Secretary for Lands, and he pointed to one large area, held by a gentleman who recently died, which has been leased for a number of years, and is a very choice bit of property. The applicant spoke with knowledge, because before going to the war he had held an adjoining area. He is prepared to swear that no improvement whatever has taken place upon the large area in question. That land is being held from settlement because the holder has had an improved area within the same division. The Murchison railways run right through all this country, providing easy means of communication with the coastal districts and the metropolitan and other markets. The railway revenue is largely augmented by the carriage of stock. Last year on a station between Meekatharra and Mullewa, the railways handled no less than 240,000 sheep and 11,000 head of cattle, which is evidence of the extent of the stock traffic on the Murchison railways. In the opinion of the Murchison people, an opinion gained as the result of 30 years' experience, the time has come when these pastoral areas should be resumed and should be cut into much smaller acreages. Already there are in the Murchison a number of people making a very comfortable livelihood, earning incomes during the last few years of from £600

to £1,000 per annum, from areas approximately 30,000 acres. I do not wish to infer that 20,000 or 30,000 acres is by any means sufficient throughout the whole of these pastoral areas for the maintenance of a settler and his family. I want to see the land classified. I am satisfied that in some areas 30,000 to 40,000 acres is sufficient. In other areas the acreage requires to be larger because the country is not so fertile or so well watered. I am of opinion, from observations made during my long experience and residence in that part of the State, that this country, if cut into 40,000 acre blocks, instead of carrying 70 to 80 families would carry 500 to 600 families; and I am convinced that these families would not be struggling as are settlers in the agricultural areas at the present time, but would be able to carry 2,000 or 3,000 sheep and a few head of horses and cattle and would be able to make comfortable livelihoods. I am satisfied that with 3,000 sheep they could make up to £1,000 a year. Let members observe the returns which have been received for wool during the last few years.

The Attorney General: They may not continue.

Mr. TROY: Perhaps not, but taking existing circumstances, 1,000 sheep and their progeny will return from £500 to £600 worth of wool. I know it. My personal knowledge this year is that 600 sheep with 200 lambs returned £250 worth of wool, and it must be remembered that lambs do not cut very much wool and that it is worth only 6d. or 8d. a lb. Then we have to consider the value of the increase, especially as the railways are so convenient and the stock can be loaded one day and landed in the Perth markets on the following day or put into the freezing works as required. If my suggestion were adopted, the carrying capacity of these leases would be increased; and as it follows that the smaller we make the areas the greater will be the improvements, the greater also will be the attention given to flocks and herds and a much larger community will be carried, a community which will be exceedingly prosperous. The efforts of such a community would result in a very large increase of railway traffic leading to greatly increased railway earnings and the development of the State would proceed on sound and legitimate lines. When these areas are settled, development will extend still further afield, because 50 miles is no distance in which to travel stock or to carry the product of stock to the railways. Thus, when these areas are settled, the development of the State will proceed apace consequent on the experience gained from the settlement of the areas to which I am now referring. Prior to the Land Act of 1917 coming into operation, these leases would have expired in 1928; that is, nine years hence these pastoral leases would have reverted to the Crown. They are Crown lands still, but in 1928 by effluxion of time they would have been returned to the Crown with

their improvements upon them. In 1917, however, whilst the people of this country were engrossed with the anxieties and conditions consequent upon the war, the Government introduced a Bill—11 years before the Bill was necessary—in order to extend the time of the occupation of these squatters until 1948. The people who looked forward in expectation to the resumption of the leases have become very incensed since they have understood the purpose of the Government's action on that occasion. I have strongly objected to the Government continuing the leases under the existing arrangements to the present holders. I have not objected to the squatter having his share under any new system of settlement, but I claim he is entitled to the same share as anyone else, but no more. People who understand the capacity of this country are greatly incensed because of the action of the Government on that occasion.

The Premier: The squatters have had some pretty rotten times up there.

Mr. TROY: We in the agricultural districts have had some pretty rotten times, too.

The Premier: I know that. You tell us so every time you speak.

Mr. TROY: And I am going to tell the Premier again.

The Premier: Yes, but up in the North they have had rotten times.

Mr. TROY: I know it and so have the pastoralists in New South Wales. I admit all that, but though they have had a rotten time there are men with 30,000 acres who, beginning operations in the rotten times, have made incomes up to £700 a year. Some of these men have not confined themselves to the operations of their leaseholds but have given attention to mining and prospecting, because the leases they hold are small and do not require much management. In my opinion, the action of the Government in continuing the leases was most discreditable; by it they robbed the people of their heritage. It is not in the interests of the country that any body of men, no matter how deserving they may be—and I do not say the squatters are undeserving—should for all time hold the land and that posterity should be shut out. That is what the Government did in 1917 when they posed as patriots; they filched from the people their heritage and the heritage of posterity. I admit that Section 4 of the Land Act Amendment Act, 1906, gives power to resume these areas, but it is very doubtful indeed whether these areas can be legally resumed for pastoral purposes. Section 4 reads—

The Governor may, from time to time, resume, enter upon, and dispose of the whole or any part of the land comprised in any pastoral lease, for agricultural or horticultural settlement, or for mining or any other purpose as in the public interest he may think fit: But the provisions of section one hundred and nine and one hundred and forty-six of the prin-

cial Act shall apply, so far as the same are applicable, to resumptions under this section.

Under these sections, the lessees are entitled to full compensation for improvements.

The Premier: That is all right. If you resume the leases you have to pay for the improvements.

Mr. TROY: That provides that the Government may resume leases for agricultural or horticultural purposes or for other purposes, but it is very doubtful whether they can be resumed for further use as pastoral leases.

Mr. Maley: In the South-West division only.

Mr. TROY: The Government at present are engaged in an action taken by Connor, Doherty & Duraek, at Wyndham, because they resumed such land for pastoral purposes. Provision was made for payment for the improvements, but an action has been brought for compensation for loss and damage sustained. That action is still pending.

Hon. P. Collier: No, they won the action.

The Attorney General: No, it is subject to appeal.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, but they won on the first hearing.

Mr. TROY: This shows that under the Act it is very doubtful whether those areas can be resumed. When the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Bill was before another place Mr. Hickey moved an amendment to provide that the conditions applicable to the purchase of agricultural lands for the purpose of soldier settlers should apply to pastoral lands. Under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act the Government can enter upon any agricultural land and resume it, fixing the valuation, and all Mr. Hickey desired by his amendment which was carried in another place was that the same conditions should apply to the pastoral areas. When the amendment came down to this House, carried as it was on the casting vote of the Chairman in another place, it met with a very different reception. Opposition was organised in this House and the late Attorney General (Mr. Robinson) moved an amendment.

Hon. P. Collier: Hands off the pastoralists!

Mr. TROY: The amendment provided that if these pastoral leases were resumed for grazing or pastoral purposes, the pastoral lessee should be entitled to compensation for loss or damage sustained thereby. This is a very different matter from merely paying compensation. The leaseholders would be entitled not only to compensation, but to loss and damage sustained in consequence of the resumption.

Mr. Maley: But there is no power to resume under the Act.

Mr. TROY: If the leases could be resumed under the Act, the pastoral lessee is entitled to compensation and to claim for loss and damage. He could claim for loss for having been deprived of his livelihood, in that the Land Act Amendment Act of 1917 gave him

the right of his lease until 1948, and he could also claim damages for having been deprived of possible profits during the whole of that term. I warned the members of the Country party and other members on that side of the House when they supported the Minister that they were doing a very great injury to the State. The position to-day is that under the Land Act it is possible in the the South-West Division to resume leases for the ordinary settler on paying compensation, but if leases are to be resumed for the soldier settler, not only has compensation to be paid, but loss and damage as well.

Mr. Maley: There is no power to resume.

Mr. TROY: I do not know whether there is or is not power. The patriotic Government have imposed conditions on the soldier settler which are not imposed upon the ordinary settler. The ordinary settler may obtain resumed land by paying for the improvements and compensation, but the soldier must pay in addition for the loss and damage sustained. That is an extraordinary position, but it was designed by the Government to safeguard the interests of their particular friends, the pastoralists. It is remarkable what influence the pastoralists wield not only in this House, but in this State. In this Parliament there are no representatives of the pastoralists, but a body of men who pretend to represent the best interests of the country and who pose as the highest patriots, agree to an amendment which imposes on the soldier settler much worse conditions than have to be complied with by any ordinary settler.

The Premier: When was that Act passed?

Mr. TROY: Last year, in 1918. The Discharged Soldiers Settlement Bill was introduced last year and assented to in January last. It provides that the power of resumption conferred on the Government by Section 4 of the amending Act of 1906 may be exercised to enable the land so resumed to be disposed of to discharged soldiers for agricultural, grazing or pastoral purposes, whereupon the pastoral lessee shall be entitled to compensation for loss or damage sustained thereby. I warned the other House at the time what we were doing, and moved an amendment to give the pastoralists full compensation for all improvements and 10 per cent. of the value of the improvements for disturbance. The Attorney General of that day would not however agree, and the present Attorney General was one of the most active members in opposition to it. My proposal was just to these men and to the State as well as to the returned soldier or any other settler. The Government now imposes upon the returned soldier settler more harsh conditions than are imposed on any other settler in the country. Parliament must at the first opportunity undo the great wrong that has been done, not only to the soldier settler but to other intending settlers. I am not appealing particularly for the soldier settler but am including any other set-

tlar who desires to obtain a livelihood from the lands of this State.

The Attorney General: You think the present holders have no rights at all

Mr. TROY: I am not out to do any injury to the present holders of land. Many of the present holders are personal friends of mine and I should be sorry to do them an injury. My friendship for some of them would, if I did not consider the best interests of the State, induce me to withhold my hand in this matter. I admit that many of them have borne the heat and burden of the day. They have gone out into the areas and developed them and proved their capabilities, but the time has come when in the interests of the State and after compensating them for the improvements they have made, and for the trials they have borne, we have to throw open the areas to a larger number of settlers who can give greater service to this country than the present holders. If it is wrong to resume these pastoral areas, was it not equally wrong to resume the agricultural areas? I have a lively recollection of a speech delivered by Mr. William Burges at the Bowes Station after that area was resumed by the Government. It was on the occasion of a visit by Governor Strickland. At the banquet Mr. Burges took the opportunity of rebuking me because I had urged that this particular area would be of greater advantage to the State if it were cut up into agricultural areas. He said, "We came out here in the old days; my father fought the blacks, and bore the heat and burden of the day; we ought to be entitled to what we have." I said, "That is all very well, but if that sort of thing held good for all time we would as a State make very little progress and do very little development." The older settlers got their land in large areas at low prices and easy conditions and they think their heirs and successors are entitled to hold it for all time, and shut out the rest of the community. How can the State be developed or prosper under such a policy? My opinion is best expressed in the words of the American poet Lowell—

New occasions teach new duties; present evil makes ancient good uncouth.

It was a good thing in the old times to give large areas of cheap land to the original settlers in order that they might take up the country and improve it. What was a good thing in the old days became an evil as the country developed and a larger number of people desired to make better use of the land. The same thing holds good with the pastoral, as well as with the agricultural areas. New occasions have arisen and new occasions teach new duties. If we are going to assist in the development of this country we have to see that the land which in the old days was capable of maintaining one person and is now capable of maintaining ten, is put to the best possible use.

The Attorney General: If you do that, do you not think you ought to pay the man from whom you take it?

Mr. TROY: I am prepared to give these people full compensation for all their improvements as well as to give them 10 per cent. for disturbance.

The Attorney General: Do you think that is a sufficient compensation?

Mr. TROY: That is the compensation allowed in New Zealand in the case of the repurchase of large estates. The improvements are paid for and compensation is given for disturbance. I have no objection to that. The present holders of large areas have the opportunity of holding a smaller area and we do not shut them out from that alternative. We say to them "We will compensate you for your improvements and we will allow you to hold smaller areas." I have no objection to this choice being given to them provided the land is put to a legitimate use and the State is developed. My object is to see that all that country lying close to our existing railways is made to carry all the population that it can carry. That is the only sound way of developing the State. What I have said in regard to the Murchison district applies equally to the Gascoyne district. I saw the Gascoyne River country some time ago and was greatly impressed by its possibilities. I know of no better pastoral country in this State and I know of no country where the soil is so good and the water supply from the river so abundant as is the case with the Gascoyne. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) has frequently urged in this House that soldier settlers should be sent up there and small areas resumed for irrigation purposes. For my part I have urged that these large stations, which run almost into the town of Carnarvon, should be cut up into areas of 20,000 acres and soldier settlers placed upon them with 1,000 sheep to start with. This number of sheep would give every settler something from which to gain a livelihood and he could then determine what his land was capable of from the irrigation standpoint. If the settlers depends entirely on irrigation he will go behind year after year, just as wheat farmers do when they are not in the position to carry stock. When the settler has gained some experience of his land, having 1,000 sheep with which he can maintain his family, he can then plant his gardens and undertake irrigation experiments. This alone will be the manner in which he will succeed on these areas. It is the only sound expedient for any settler in the Gascoyne district. With a bountiful water supply and soil of excellent quality available, the soldier settler should be able to make good provided he has a sufficiently large area to enable him to carry 1,000 sheep from the very beginning. The soldier settler on pastoral areas will thus have a greater possibility of success, and this represents a far more practical endeavour to settle our lands than any other scheme of land settlement that has been put forward. Let us compare the conditions existing in the pastoral areas and the agricultural areas. The settler who takes up 1,000 acres of land in an agricultural area must first clear it before he can grow wheat on it or subse-

quently grow grass upon it. In 99 cases out of 100 in this country the water the agriculturist secures by sinking is salt. He has to spend a large sum of money in sinking dams and in providing an ample water supply. The grass follows in the train of the cultivation of the soil and the ringbarking of the trees. The agricultural settler has to wait three or four years before he gets sufficient grass with which to feed his stock. Then in order to grow wheat he has to invest in nearly £1,000 worth of machinery. He must have a much larger plant than his fellow settler in the pastoral area. When he does clear his country it carries very few more sheep per acre for a number of years than the pastoralist can carry on his acreage. I discussed this matter some time ago with a gentleman employed by Elder, Shenton & Co. I pointed to a piece of agricultural country which had been worked for six years and I said, "Do you think that country even now has the carrying capacity of the Murchison country," and I was answered in the negative. The settler in the agricultural area has no water except that which is impounded in his dams from the rains. In the pastoral areas the settler on a 35,000 acre block requires only a homestead and a small plant, including a shearing shed. Water is secured at shallow depth at a small cost comparatively. A few horses and saddles complete the outfit and the pastoralist has all the plant that he requires.

The Attorney General: What about the price of wire for fencing?

Mr. TROY: I have not mentioned the price of wire with regard to the agriculturist. I was merely talking about the plant. The agriculturist has to pay for his wire as well as the squatter. Whereas he has also to buy a lot of expensive machinery and other things, the pastoralist requires only a very little in the way of plant as I have shown.

Mr. Pickering: What about windmills?

Mr. TROY: The chief expenditure of the pastoralist comes about at shearing time and that is not a very great expenditure after all. When he has got through his shearing for the year he is finished. The agriculturist, however, has to buy machinery, manure and bags and numerous other things. His expenditure never ceases.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He is always in trouble.

Mr. TROY: Yes, and he is always working. In case of bad seasons the agriculturist is really worse off than the pastoralist in most cases because he has to sacrifice the few sheep he possesses as his area of country is not sufficient to enable him to carry them. If a man gets one bad season in the agricultural areas he cannot carry any stock unless he has made ample provision for fodder supplies which very few can afford to do. In the Murchison there has been no rain to speak of for going on for two years and yet the pastoralists are carrying on because they have available a large quantity of top feed. There is no top feed in the agricultural country with which to feed stock. My opin-

ion, and I contend that I am in a position to make a comparison with a knowledge of the facts, is that a squatter running 2,000 to 3,000 sheep in the Murchison is in a far better position than a man engaged in the agricultural industry in the South-West. For my part I would change positions with him any day, because I know the possibilities of the country and the prospects ahead of the settler. Men in the agricultural districts are confronted with the possibility of losing their crops by drought, fire, pests, hail, and storm, whereas the pastoralist stands in a far better position. He is not affected by storms or rains, and his wool is growing all the time, and if a drought comes he is still able to continue without disaster providing he does not overstock.

Hon. P. Collier: You almost persuaded me to become a pastoralist.

Mr. TROY: As I say, I would change my occupation with the pastoralist any day.

The Attorney General: You are forgetting that your pastoralist has to keep large area in reserve for the stock.

Mr. TROY: I grant that, but I know the country well, and it is capable of carrying the stock.

The Attorney General: It does not matter what you carry; the fact remains that the pastoralist has to provide for changing the sheep on to other property.

Mr. TROY: The farmer has to do much the same thing, but the pastoralist is in a far better position; he has the top feed.

The Premier: You never knew of sheep dying on a farm from drought.

Mr. TROY: I do not know about that, but I do know that my neighbour had to sell his sheep at a sacrifice because he had not got sufficient water for them, and could not afford to pay for supplies. In the Murchison there is an abundance of water, and with the top feed the pastoralist can last for 12 months. It is true that I have not, as an hon. member interjected, taken part in the pastoral industry, but that is my misfortune. I should have done so and I would do so now if I could. I would not engage in farming, in view of my experiences if I could engage in the pastoral industry. I tried to induce several of my friends in the pastoral areas to come down south. Some did so, and compared the expenditure and the operations in the agricultural industry with the pastoral industry and were satisfied, saying, as one man put it, "This is not my game; I am a grazier" and "the expense in plant is too great." If the pastoral industry is not better than that of agriculture, why did the pioneers in the early days of this State go to the North-West from the South-West.

The Premier: Why did people leave New South Wales and come to Western Australia?

Mr. TROY: They did so because land was not available, and because the inducements then were greater here. Why did people in the South-West go to the Kimberley and brave the dangers of the blacks and

climatic scourges? Obviously it was because of the great possibilities ahead of the pastoral industry, and it has to be remembered that these men have made good.

The Premier: Not all.

Mr. TROY: Those who stuck have made good. That is the remarkable thing. It is also remarkable that the men who made good there are doing much towards the development of the South-West.

Mr. Pickering: They made their money there, but they knew where to come afterwards.

Mr. TROY: They knew that the North-West was the place of magnificent opportunities, though, perhaps, the south is the place to live in, and spend their money. The Premier will not deny the fact that people in the old days went north because of the opportunities there. Those who stayed behind upon agricultural settlements did not do one-tenth as well as the men who went to the North-West.

Hon. P. Collier: When does the next boat go north?

Mr. TROY: If the hon. member wants proof to bear out the statement I have made, there is a train which leaves for the Murchison on Thursday. If he catches that I will see that he gets sufficient proof and sufficient information to bring before this House to convince members that what I am saying is true. Now take the South-West.

The Premier: That is not this motion.

Mr. TROY: I am comparing the possibilities of land settlement, and am contending that there are more prospects of lucrative operations in the pastoral areas than in the south. So far as the South-West is concerned, a soldier settlement is in operation there. The settlers will have to strive for many years there before they can win their way out. That will not be denied. If the pastoral areas were to be resumed in the north and the country thrown open for settlers and the settlers start with 1,000 sheep apiece, they would never look back from the day they went on the land.

Mr. Pickering: And you think the only reason that this is not done is because they cannot get the land.

Mr. TROY: That is the position. A settler desiring land in these areas cannot get it, and that is the burning question there. Some squatters are candid enough to admit that the present position cannot last, and they know that the country must be resumed one day. People who have lived there for 25 years, and the children who have been born and bred there, all know of its possibilities. There is a great future ahead of grazing, particularly in view of the fact that propositions have been put forward for the establishment of freezing works at Geraldton, Carnarvon, and Fremantle.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is one at Fremantle now.

Mr. TROY: When all these are in operation this country will carry more sheep than it does to-day, for the simple reason that pastoralists will be able to get rid of their

surplus stocks. At the present time when they stock up to their full capacity they lose their sheep when a dry season is encountered. With freezers in operation they will get rid of their stock and they will be encouraged to produce more.

The Attorney General: Would you only resume for pastoral lease purposes?

Mr. TROY: Yes, most decidedly, because I do not want for one moment to provide a condition of affairs which in 30 years' time may be the evil which existing conditions are to-day. If the squatters who are in possession to-day can control the position as they do, what would be the position if the numbers were greatly increased.

Hon. P. Collier: There are not many in the House, but they have power to move the Government.

Mr. TROY: When I was in the East five years ago I made inquiries as to what was being done in Queensland and in New South Wales, and I found that the Queensland Government were resuming large areas of pastoral lands and cutting them up into small areas capable of carrying big communities of successful graziers. That can be achieved here when a Government occupy the Treasury benches who recognise that a legitimate land settlement policy means and are not imbued with the idea of settling small communities here, there, and everywhere, and of building railways which will not pay.

The Premier: How do you know?

Mr. TROY: I do know. This country is carrying a small population and the railways are not paying. The increases which was announced recently through the Arbitration Court and which was well merited, means that the railways will be a much greater losing proposition to the State, and the only people who can make them pay are the people in the country. If we do not have large settlements in the country the railways will never pay. About 54 per cent. of the population of the State is centred in Perth and Fremantle districts.

The Premier: No, that is not so.

Mr. TROY: I think it is very near it, anyhow, as will be seen from the "Year Book." The present position is dangerous, where we have the rest of the community maintaining such a population in the metropolitan areas. It cannot go on indefinitely, and if the Premier wants to grapple with this question, and I wish him success in the unenviable task before him—he should not build another mile of railway until the land alongside the existing railways is adequately settled. A proposition has recently been put forward for the continuance of the Meekatharra railway through the north. That is one I will not support, even though I represent that country, until such time as members interested assist me in seeing that settlement is arranged along existing railways. When that is done then we can push on with such a proposition. When we have settled the Murchison country and it carries all the population that it can, then such a proposi-

tion can be proceeded with. I want to make it perfectly clear that I do not wish the Minister to infer that I would do an injury to the existing holder. I want the Government to give him full compensation for his improvements.

The Attorney General: What do you suggest should be done?

Mr. TROY: The holder should be compensated for the improvements he has put on his place. In the land settlement scheme the Government can purchase land from the agriculturist on their own terms.

The Attorney General: There is a difference.

Mr. TROY: The amount advanced through the Repatriation Department to-day is only sufficient to cover improvements. I know a property sold in the wheat area where the Repatriation Department advance is only sufficient to cover improvements, and yet there is no outcry.

The Attorney General: You say this Government have made purchases in the agricultural area, simply paying what amounts to the cost of improvements.

Hon. T. Walker: That is so. The Government may not have done so knowingly; it was through their officers.

Mr. TROY: That is the position, but it does not in the least take away from the facts I have put forward. It says a good deal for the pastoral areas when the Minister insists that the pastoral area is more valuable than the agricultural area.

The Attorney General: The agricultural land holder is getting as much as he wanted.

Mr. TROY: And he had to pay for improvements, anyhow. I emphasise the fact that a number of farms have been purchased by the Repatriation Department, and in my opinion the amount paid only covered the cost of improvements. If the Act gives power to the Government to resume freehold property on such conditions, why should it not apply to the pastoral land, which is only leasehold?

The Attorney General: Is that worth nothing?

Mr. TROY: Yes, it is, and the Government by extending the tenure from 1928 to 1948 have made it very much more valuable. I am prepared to give the present holders compensation for improvements, with an additional amount for disturbance, and moreover to give the holder, or his family, the right with any other settler to take up any area on the station cut up. But I am going to endeavour to see that those areas which are to-day capable of closer settlement—I speak of places within 50 miles of the railway—and capable of making our railways pay, shall hold and maintain all the people they possibly can as a prosperous community. That is the only way this country can be restored to prosperity.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Ltd. (private).

2, Electoral Amendment.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Order discharged.

Order of the Day read for the moving of the second reading.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, Order of the Day discharged.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

MOTION—MEAT EXPORTERS AND PRODUCERS' CONFERENCE.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from 15th October of the debate on the following motion by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo):—

“That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that one of the four representatives of meat exporters and producers to be appointed for this State to attend the forthcoming conference in Melbourne should be nominated by the meat works companies, which will shortly be operating outside the metropolitan area.”

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [5.37]: I am informed by the Government that no further news has been received from Sydney in connection with this conference and, further, I have an assurance from the Minister that before any appointments are made the claim I have set forward shall be considered. In those circumstances, I should like to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

BILL—KALGOORLIE FRIENDLY SOCI- ETIES INVESTMENT VALIDATION.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; Hon. P. Collier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—After “company,” in line two, insert the words, “to the extent of three hundred contributing shares and five hundred fully paid shares”:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to. I think it meets with the wishes of the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green), who has been responsible for the Bill, but who is at present absent.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly transmitted to the Council.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

BILL—DIVORCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Mr. HUDSON (Yilgarn) [5.43] in moving the second reading said: The Bill has been sent down to us from another place, and I have undertaken to conduct it through the House. In 1911 I had a somewhat similar experience, when I introduced a Bill to extend the grounds upon which divorce might be granted. An endeavour was then made to bring the law of this State into line with the law of some of the other States. Amongst the different grounds of divorce which were then added were those of desertion, drunkenness, conviction for crime, lunacy, and adultery by the husband. We have had experience of the operation of that measure for some years. It has worked satisfactorily to the community and has been the means of relieving a number of people of an unbearable yoke. The experience we have had justifies those responsible for this Bill in bringing it forward, in the hope that we may remove some of the anomalies which have been created by omissions made at the time of the introduction of the last measure, and in order that our divorce law might be brought as far up to date as is reasonably possible at the present time. One of the anomalies that has arisen is through the omission or the want of consideration of the position which then obtained with regard to conjugal rights. The Bill now proposes to rectify that anomaly and to bring the law of Western Australia into line, at any rate, with that of New South Wales and to permit of divorces being granted in the case of a respondent disobeying the order of the court for the restitution of conjugal rights. The Bill also deals with the question of domicile and it proposes to extend the ground of divorce in relation to insanity and it adds another ground for divorce, that of anti-nuptial incontinence. At the present time the Statute law of Western Australia dealing with this matter is included in an Act to deal first of all with the restitution of conjugal rights and the remedy for the disobedience of the order. The present law is contained in an Act passed in 1863 and under the provisions of that Act an order may be made for the restitution of conjugal rights where one of the parties through the marriage contract refuses to cohabit with the other without lawful cause. Under the law at present, the person aggrieved may apply to the court for an order for the restitution of conjugal rights. An order may be made in certain circumstances which the court thinks reasonable and proper, but we find his anomalous position in our Act, that the only manner of enforcing the order is by attachment and imprisonment of the of-

fender. That of course was palpably wrong. It was rectified in England in 1884 when it was then found that an order of that kind could not reasonably be enforced by attachment and imprisonment because that did not offer a remedy. A law was brought into force to enable the court to grant a judicial separation in such cases as those to which I have referred. In New South Wales that has been extended because of the fact that in that State, as in ours, desertion is a ground of itself for divorce, and we propose in this Bill to effect a remedy in connection with the refusal of conjugal rights by dissolving the marriage. That is contained in Clause 5 of the Bill which hon. members have had before them for some weeks, and I have no doubt they have made themselves familiar with the provisions of the measure. This provision will enable an applicant after having applied to the court for an order for restitution, and that order having been disobeyed, to then apply to the court for a dissolution of marriage without waiting for the expiration of five years as provided by the existing Act. I can safely commend this provision to the House because that form of desertion is one of the most irritating, and at any rate, the present system is one which leads only to confusion. I may say that the Bill is somewhat technical and that it may be more easily dealt with in Committee. I am, however, mentioning the outstanding provisions briefly so that hon. members may have a general idea of what it contains. With regard to domicile, it was provided in the 1911 Act that a wife could claim to have a domicile in this State, although her husband had removed from the State and had deserted her. It is not proposed to interfere with the law generally with regard to domicile, but to limit it only to matters of divorce, and to extend the provisions of 1911 to all cases where a wife is resident in Western Australia and whether her husband is here or not so long as a ground has been created giving her the right to apply for divorce so that she may apply here without following her husband to another country to which he might have gone. With regard to insanity, there is a provision in the Act of 1911 setting out the ground of divorce in this form, that the dissolution of marriage may be granted on the ground that the respondent is a lunatic or a person of unsound mind and has been confined as such in any asylum or other institution in accordance with the provisions of the Lunacy Act, 1903, for a period or periods not less in the aggregate than five years within six years immediately preceding the filing of the petition and is unlikely to recover from such lunacy or unsoundness of mind. That limits the ground of divorce to cases where a respondent might be confined in an institution in Western Australia. The Bill—although it may not be properly understood by hon. members on account of an error in the printing of the clause—will have the effect of extending this ground of divorce by making it apply

to cases where a respondent is confined in an institution outside Western Australia, and I think possibly that some of the things we have heard recently with regard to our own institution are sufficient justification for the inclusion of this clause. The other matter which constitutes a new ground for divorce is that of anti-nuptial incontinence. Provision is made that where a man marries a woman and he finds afterwards within the time specified by the Bill that she is pregnant to another man, he is then entitled to apply for a divorce. I do not think this needs elaboration because we allow divorce on the ground of adultery and this offence is one which should justify the granting of a divorce. The Bill goes a little beyond that because in another place, when the clause was under discussion, it was thought that the same rights should be granted to a woman as to a man and an amendment was inserted which will be seen in Clause 10 of the Bill that a wife will also have the right to apply for a divorce in the case of where a husband is responsible for the pregnancy of another woman immediately preceding his marriage to his existing wife. We shall be able to deal more effectively with the Bill in Committee and I commend it to the favourable consideration of hon. members. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; Mr. Hudson in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 23 of principal Act:

Mr. HUDSON: There is a misprint in this clause which I desire to rectify. I move an amendment—

That in lines 3, 4 and 5, the words "omitting the words 'in accordance with the provisions of the Lunacy Act, 1913,' in paragraph (d) thereof; and is further amended by" be struck out.

These words are unnecessary.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Will this clause or the amendment make it any easier to obtain a divorce from a person confined in an asylum? We cannot be too careful when we are dealing with divorce on those grounds.

Mr. HUDSON: At present there exists the ground of divorce which has been accepted in the case of the lunatic respondent being confined in an asylum in Western Australia under the provisions of the Lunacy Act 1903, for five years within six years immediately preceding the filing of the petition. In such circumstances the court has power to grant dissolution of marriage.

Hon. T. Walker: When the court is convinced that there is no hope of recovery.

Mr. HUDSON: That matter would be taken into account by the court. The clause merely seeks to extend that ground of divorce to cases where the respondent of unsound mind is an inmate of an institution in another State in accordance with the law of such other State as to detention of persons of unsound mind.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. HUDSON: I move a further amendment—

That, in line 6, the words "the said" be inserted before "section," and that, in lines 6 and 7, the words "two of the Divorce Amendment Act, 1911" be struck out.

This is really a consequential amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move an amendment—

That the following words be struck out:—"and also by inserting after the date '1903,' in fifth line of said subsection, the following words:—'or has been confined in any asylum or institution in any place outside of the State of Western Australia in accordance with the laws of such place relating to lunatics or insane persons.'"

I do not believe in making Western Australia a dumping-ground for divorcees. If these words remain, a person will be able to come to Western Australia from another State and live here for perhaps six months and then secure a divorce from an insane wife or husband confined in an institution outside Western Australia. I admit that a later clause of the Bill meets this objection to some extent, but it would not be a complete safeguard against all that might happen under the clause as it stands. No information has been given as to whether a similar provision obtains in any other portion of the British Empire. Advantage might be taken of these words to commit an injustice against an insane wife or husband. It would be difficult, for instance, to examine in the witness box here the doctor of an institution in another State. Divorce should not be made too easy.

Mr. Money: The patient might have been sent away from this State for special treatment elsewhere.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Possibly; but in my opinion this clause stretches the facilities for divorce too far.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I understand, though I am not sure, that in no Australian State except this one is lunacy a ground for divorce. It is not a ground in Victoria, where only a month or two ago a Bill for that purpose was introduced, but failed to pass. There is some ground for the fear expressed by the last speaker that people might come here from other States to ob-

tain relief which they cannot obtain elsewhere.

The Attorney General: But such persons would have to be domiciled here.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The lunatic asylums of the Eastern States must contain hundreds of patients who are married. When in Melbourne last year I was approached by a man who questioned me on this very point, his wife having been confined in a Victorian asylum for 10 years. He expressed his intention of coming here and remaining for the necessary period qualifying him to obtain relief under our divorce law. I found, of course, that our existing law would not give him relief. If this clause passes, people in that position might come here solely for the purpose of obtaining a divorce.

The Attorney General: But look at Clause 9.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that clause provides that no person shall be entitled to petition here who has resorted to this State for that purpose only. But how is that to be proved? It all comes back to this, that the divorce laws of the Australian States should be made uniform by the Commonwealth Parliament. That ought to have been done long ago. This is the second time during the past 10 years or so that amendments of our divorce laws have been proposed by private members, which is rather a pity.

Mr. HUDSON: That is mostly so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, the reason being that Governments as a rule have no policy on the subject of divorce.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. HUDSON: The member for North-East Fremantle is apprehensive of the possibility of someone from outside the State coming to Western Australia and taking advantage of our laws for the purpose of getting a divorce. He said he had no faith in the subsequent clause, which provides that no person shall be entitled to petition who shall have resorted to the State for that purpose only. In the Act of 1912, there was a somewhat similar provision, and the hon. member cannot sustain his argument fairly by stating that there has been any attempt by people outside to resort here to obtain the advantages of our divorce laws. It is no disadvantage to be in advance in legislation of this kind. This safeguard is a very strong one. A decision given in Victoria states—

The words (similar to those I have quoted) are words of absolute prohibition and prevent any person from obtaining a divorce under this section who comes to Victoria for that purpose only.

Hon. P. COLLIER: How could you prove that?

Mr. HUDSON: If a person came here for that purpose, he would first have to prove to the court that the other party had been detained in an institution in another State for a period of five years out of the last six years, and was not likely to recover. That

would immediately suggest the question, "How long have you been in the State?" and it would be seen whether the individual had come to the State for that purpose only. To get the Bill through, I am willing to meet the hon. member by consenting to the addition of a proviso "Provided always that this section shall apply only where the petitioner has resided in Western Australia for a period of three years immediately preceding the date of the petition." This will ensure that the petitioner has shown his bona fides.

Hon. T. WALKER: I can well understand the member for Yilgarn desiring to meet more than half-way the objection raised by the member for North-East Fremantle. The real issue has been missed. What is the object of the amending clause? The object is to grant relief. No matter where the person may have previously lived, or where the misfortune may have occurred, this State could grant relief. The first question is, is it wise to give relief in cases of misfortune of this sort?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The man might be a contributing cause.

Hon. T. WALKER: The man might be in gaol or next door—in the asylum.

Mr. Pilkington: Then the woman could not get a divorce because she would not be domiciled here.

Hon. T. WALKER: There is a possibility of her being here. The whole question is whether this is right. Is the principle as applied to society good? If it be good, I do not care where the suffering is, if this State can grant relief and no other can, in the name of common sense let this State grant relief. There is a good deal of rightful sympathy applied to those unfortunates who are helplessly incarcerated in a lunatic asylum. They should have some sympathy and care by those who have taken them in wedlock; but I do not say that the court should not grant divorce. So far as the duties of marital relations are concerned, a man or a woman helplessly in a lunatic asylum cannot fulfil the sacred functions of married life, and to compel them by refusing relief, if ever there was a lucid interval, to live together as man and wife and possibly procreate degenerate children, children liable to inherit the disease of one of the parents so afflicted, would be a gross wrong to the community.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How could they live together if one was in an asylum?

Hon. T. WALKER: In a lucid interval, one might be allowed out of the asylum. If there is never a possibility of their coming together as man and wife, and if they cannot fulfil the relations and functions of husband and wife again—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is not the argument you put up; you have changed around.

Hon. T. WALKER: I have not changed. If it be not possible that they can live together, we compel the man, if he has to live a normal life and exercise those qualities of manhood which Nature has endowed him with, to a course of immorality. It is a

fact that, in the State of the American Union where divorce is the most difficult to obtain, the illegitimacy and private immorality is greater than in the State of Washington where, of all places in the world, divorce is most easily obtainable. In the State of Washington, the percentage of those who resort to it is extremely small. Divorce only comes and is only necessary when the conditions of life are such as to make it an absolute wrong and cruelty to compel people to live together, an injury to the family life, an injury to future generations, to the individuals, bound not in holy but in unholy wedlock. That is the only time when divorce is of any value. Where love governs the marriage and where the sense of responsibility to the offspring of love—the children—rules, we could have all the divorce laws we pleased and we would have no divorce actions. It is only where the cruel wrong is such as to make it martyrdom, not home but an absolute hell to those compelled to live in these relationships, that divorce is of value. A man may have a family about him, a family who need a woman's care and watchfulness, because the wife was so unfortunately placed as to be unable to fulfil the duties of mother, parent or centre of the household, because she was incapable of doing anything to contribute to the family well-being or take upon herself any of her responsibilities. If it be good that one of the sufferers, coming to this State afterwards, and desirous of doing his duty to the family that they might be brought up as a family and desirous himself of being spared the temptations of immorality and illicit relationships with the opposite sex, if it be good for one, I say where does the principle vary in the other case? If this State has the merit, fame or the renown for giving relief in this direction, why should we prevent the State from giving justice and relief in a way that no other State in the Commonwealth would do to those who are suffering? It is an honour, not an inglorious act. I consider that we should pass this measure, which is for the benefit of the whole community, for the purpose of morality in our society, and for the purpose of rendering more congenial and more pleasant the surroundings of the home itself.

Mr. PILKINGTON: The question with which we are dealing is of considerable importance. The question is not merely whether it is desirable that in certain circumstances a divorce should be obtained here, but also whether the divorce which is granted in Western Australia will be recognised elsewhere. That is the point we have to consider. I protest against the casual introduction of so vitally important a measure, without the proper precautions which ought to be taken and the proper information which ought to be given to hon. members. I agree with the leader of the Opposition that a measure of this sort, if introduced at all, should be introduced by the Government, and that the subject should be dealt with by

the Federal Parliament. But this clause and the next clause deal not merely with the question of the law in Western Australia, but also with the vitally important question whether the divorce which we grant here is going to be recognised elsewhere. There are granted in Australia every year divorces which would not be recognised in any other country in the world, not even in the United States. They are granted without the basic essential of jurisdiction, and that is that the parties are domiciled within the territorial jurisdiction of the court. The carelessness which is exhibited in the introduction of this measure into Parliament is exhibited also in the manner in which divorces are granted in Australian courts. That is not a doubtful matter, but an unquestionable fact. In order that a court may have jurisdiction to grant a divorce, it is essential under municipal law—that is the internal law of Western Australia or of England—and also under international law, that the parties should be domiciled within the territorial jurisdiction of the court—that is, domiciled in Western Australia before a Western Australian court can grant a divorce. Of course, without that it may be that the divorce is lawful in Western Australia. But the point comes when we go outside Western Australia. Domicile is something which is very definite in the law. A man's domicile may mean that he is born in a particular country, and he holds that domicile his life through unless he determines to go to another country and take up his residence definitely and permanently there. Not long ago there died in England an American who had lived there for forty years, a man who was very well known indeed; and it was held that there was no evidence whatever that he had changed his domicile—his domicile was still not England. In this particular case the member for North East Fremantle is, I think, right in pointing out the danger of people coming here and asking for divorce. A man whose wife is confined in a lunatic asylum in England, or in another State, can come here and apply for a divorce. He has to prove that the court has jurisdiction. He says, "I have come here to stay, and am going to remain here for the rest of my life." He gets his divorce. But a woman could not get a divorce in similar circumstances at all, because her domicile is where her husband is.

The Attorney General: The husband would have to prove that he is domiciled here.

Mr. PILKINGTON: The only question is, what is his intention; and he is the only person who knows his intention. He may get his divorce one day, and go away the next day. The woman, on the other hand, cannot do that, so far as I see. If the husband is in an asylum somewhere else, and the woman comes here for a divorce, she is at once met with the objection, "You cannot get a divorce here because you are not domiciled here."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Except in cases of desertion.

MR. PILKINGTON: Yes. The question is highly technical and legal but it is a very serious question. In 99 cases out of 100 no doubt, nobody ever hears anything about it when a divorce is unlawfully granted in Western Australia because of the court having no jurisdiction by reason of the parties not being domiciled here. But some day the question may arise, when one of the divorced parties goes to England and there are marriage settlements and land or property to be inherited. The children then will be illegitimate and not recognised. I was consulted on this very subject some years ago. The nature of the difficulties was exhibited in the case of Earl Russell, who went to America and got a divorce there, and then, having returned to England, got married again. He was brought up before the House of Lords and indicted for bigamy, and convicted—very properly convicted. The man does not matter in such a case; what does matter is the wife and the children who are affected by what he has done. It is not right that we here should legislate so that it is possible there may be a divorce granted here which will not hold good if investigated elsewhere. As regards the Act of 1911, I am inclined to think that it would be held good and valid if a question arose; but my point is that we are dealing with subjects which are very dangerous and very delicate, and that we ought not to be dealing with them in the rather casual manner in which we are dealing with this Bill. I think it is highly dangerous to pass such legislation as this unless we know that the matter has been very closely investigated, and until we have the highest authority that can be got for saying that the legislation is such as will hold good if it ever comes before a court. I shall support the amendment.

MR. HUDSON: The member for Perth has raised an alarm throughout the Chamber that something we are doing is beyond the jurisdiction of this Parliament. He also says that the Bill has been introduced in a careless manner. If I have introduced it here in a careless manner, I have erred in very good company—company in another place, and company in the Parliaments of other Australian States. On referring to the Act of 1911 hon. members will see that it was reserved for the Royal assent. It was not immediately assented to by the Governor here. It was one of those Bills which are sent to England for consideration by the highest authorities before they are assented to.

Hon. P. Collier: But such details would not be looked into before the Royal assent was given.

MR. HUDSON: Why was the Bill of 1911 reserved for three or four months?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Governor pleases himself as to whether or not he reserves a Bill for the Royal assent.

MR. HUDSON: The same principles have been applied in Victoria for 30 years to my

knowledge and no case has occurred to cause the fear indicated by the member for Perth.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I agree with the member for Perth in protesting against the casual manner in which the Bill is before the House. Here we have in the closing days of the session a Bill of such importance submitted and passed through the second reading stage without any debate and almost entirely taken through Committee.

MR. HUDSON: It has been on the file for over a month.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That does not matter. If the Bill had been debated earlier, we should have been able to deal with it properly. I suspect the origin of Bills of this character. When a Bill of such an important nature as this has been introduced by a private member, I have found that very often the House has been asked to legislate for some particular or special cause. Parliament should not be asked to amend legislation in order to relieve one or two individuals who are able to pull strings. I received a typewritten anonymous letter in connection with this Bill about a week ago. It argued strongly in support of the Bill and urged me to assist to bring about its passage.

MR. HUDSON: I have no knowledge of that. I do not know of any individual case that the Bill is designed to favour.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The matter should be adjourned.

MR. HUDSON: This is the last private members' day, you know.

Hon. P. COLLIER: After having moved the second reading of the Bill, it would then have become an Order of the Day. I should like to know why the Bill was not brought down earlier. We should have an opportunity to look into it and therefore should report progress at this stage. This procedure is indicative of our indifferent, careless, and slovenly way of doing our work.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The strictures of the leader of the Opposition are unnecessarily severe because the Bill was debated for weeks in the Upper House. Those clauses which we have agreed to already will meet with the unqualified approval of members. It only places the law of the State in the same position as it is in England. We now come to the question of domicile and I am not going to contradict the member for Perth in the opinion he so lucidly expressed. There is a doubt in my mind as to how far the so-called statutory domicile really prevails, but the mischief occurred in 1911. No harm, however, has been done by that, so that perhaps hon. members could accept the amendment suggested by the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) and then leave the next clause dealing with domicile as it stands in the Act of 1911. I would be sorry to lose that portion of the Bill which we have already passed, because I

am quite certain the Bill will be of great use and will prove of advantage to many people in the State.

Mr. LAMBERT: The judgment of the leader of the Opposition went astray when he stated that he suspected the origin of this measure and that we should accept it with some reserve. He was also wrong in his reasoning when he stated that if the Bill was designed to assist two or three people, the House should not tolerate its introduction. I claim that if there is only one person who is suffering an injustice under any law, this House should most certainly consider legislation to remedy that injustice. I consider, however, that the House should receive the Bill with hesitation, particularly seeing the source from which it emanates, but as the Attorney General said, there are many good features in the Bill which should not be lost. I hope we will be able to eliminate that portion of it to which the member for North-East Fremantle takes exception, and keep in mind the question of domicile raised by the member for Perth. We could retain the good features of the Bill and so give relief to those who are suffering an injustice under our existing laws.

Mr. LUTEX: The arguments advanced by the member for Perth have induced me to alter my views in regard to this Bill. I was entirely in favour of it as it stood until I heard the hon. member. I know of a case where a man has been in an asylum in another State for 16 years and his wife has not been able to marry again. I was under the impression that the Bill was designed to meet cases of that description, and I certainly think that the matter should be adjourned so that we might arrange to overcome the difficulty. The Federal Government have the power to legislate in connection with divorce but so far they have not done anything. I would like to see them move in this direction and take cognizance of what has been done by the Western Australian Parliament. I should like to see the Bill adjourned for a while so that some amendment may be drafted which will be acceptable to the committee. Failing that I will support the Bill as it stands.

Mr. ROCKE: Whilst I feel there is some element of cruelty in compelling two persons to be legally bound, when there is no reason to suppose that they will be able to fulfil the functions of life, it seems to me that this Bill contains several dangers. It has been suggested that it was created for some specific case. If that is so it has not been created to give relief to women. It is designed essentially to assist a man who may be placed in an awkward position. If the clause is passed a man may get relief but not a woman. I should like to see it postponed for further consideration. There are some good points in the Bill and it would be a pity to lose them all. If the hon. member insists upon going on with the clause I must oppose it.

Mr. Hudson: Let it go.

Mr. DURACK: I, too, must oppose the clause. If the measure is necessary then it is one which the Government should have introduced. We must have regard to the feelings of a woman, who in her sane moments in the hospital may have her health affected by the knowledge that her husband is going to divorce her. I will support the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 8—Western Australian domicile of wife to be retained in certain cases.

Mr. HUDSON: In view of the remarks of hon. members I will not press the clause.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 9 put and negatived.

Clauses 10, 11—agreed to.

New clause:

Mr. HUDSON: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 9 as follows:—“Section 1 of the Act intitled ‘an Act to amend the procedure and powers of the Court for Divorce in Matrimonial Causes, No. 7 of 1871,’ is hereby amended by inserting after the word ‘payment’ in the sixth line of the said section the following words: ‘or if such wife shall remarry or if her circumstances shall in the opinion of the court render a continuance of such payments or any part thereof no longer necessary for her maintenance or support.’”

Cases have arisen where the wife has remarried and her second husband is capable of supporting her. The divorced husband has also remarried and has to keep another wife and family, and yet he has no relief from the order of the court. That is not a fair proposition, and I commend the new clause to the notice of hon. members.

Mr. DUFF: I support the new clause. I know of a case in which the respondent has had to pay alimony for nine years at 27s. 6d. a week. After the divorce the wife married again and the second husband was able to keep her, but the respondent was not able to get any relief from the alimony. The court should have the option of saying whether the payment should be continued or not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: My objection to the new clause is to the words “or if her circumstances shall in the opinion of the court render a continuance of such payments or any part thereof no longer necessary for her maintenance or support.” This may mean that a woman would be put to the expense of going to the court to defend any action in this respect.

Mr. Duff: She need not go to the court.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then she would lose the maintenance due to her. If a woman through her own industry is able to keep herself and her children, why

should her divorced husband go free if the court desires that he should? That is going too far.

Mr. DUFF: She may come in for a lot of money.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That should not make any difference except to show the husband what a mistake he made in getting a divorce.

Mr. PICKERING: I know of an instance of a man and wife who were divorced, and both parties married again. The wife is now in a position to support the children, who are over 14 years of age. Yet her former husband still has to support his divorced wife, who to-day is the wife of another man. I think the original husband should be accorded some relief.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I should like to hear from the hon. member in charge of the Bill what this new clause means. Is it going to deprive the wife of the payments to which she is justly entitled?

Mr. HUDSON: The object of the payment is the maintenance and support of the wife, and unless she requires it there is no obligation to pay the money. It is only an omission from the original Act. It is causing great hardship. The new clause means that if the wife does not need money for her support and maintenance there is no obligation on the part of the man to pay it. The objection has been raised that the woman may have difficulty in defending the case; but the husband is not likely to make the application unless he knows that she is in a position to maintain herself without the payment.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If she has sufficient to maintain herself the court, under this new clause, would order that the payment should cease.

Mr. HUDSON: Not necessarily; it would be at the discretion of the court.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

MOTION—STATE SMETTING WORKS. TREATMENT OF ORES.

To disallow regulation.

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate on the following motion by the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith):—

“That Subclause (2) of Regulation 16, for the smelting of auriferous copper ores at the State Smelting Works, Phillips River, under the Mining Development Act, 1902, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 31st July, 1919, be disallowed.”

On motion by Mr. Davies, debate adjourned.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from 29th October; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, Hon. W. C. Angwin in charge of the Bill.

Clause 13—Amendment of Schedules 4 and 6:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Consequentially on a previous amendment, this clause should be deleted.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 14—Preferential voting:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I thought that, perhaps, in consequence of the striking out of certain previous clauses this clause would require to be amended, but I am assured by the Solicitor General that it is in proper order. It provides for preferential voting where the municipal district is divided into wards.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I should be glad if the hon. member would leave out this provision, because I am advised by my officers that it will be difficult to apply it to municipalities. Of course, if the Committee say that in regard to municipalities the principle of one man one vote shall be adopted, it may be practicable, but I should like to have an opportunity to further consider the clause. To accede to my request will not delay the attainment of the hon. member's object, because the Municipalities Bill will be one of the first to be introduced next session. It is now under preparation, and there is not likely to be any objection by Ministers to its early introduction next session. This will give me and the departmental officers opportunity to go through it thoroughly, and there is no reason why it should not be in operation for the municipal elections of next year. In these circumstances I think the hon. member should agree to leave out this provision.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I was surprised to hear the Minister say that his officers had advised him that there would be some difficulty in administering this clause; if that is so, his officers know nothing whatever about it. I previously formed that opinion from the statement the Minister for Works made when introducing the Road Districts Bill. He then pointed out that the difficulty was in administering the preferential voting where the ward system is in force. This is quite contrary to the advice of the Chief Electoral Officer, who says that the difficulty is in administering it where there is more than one candidate to elect. In the case of absentee voters, the returning officer will mark on the envelope containing the ballot paper the number of votes the voter has to cast. If there is any difficulty in applying this system of voting, the same difficulty must exist in connection with the State elections, because the basis is exactly the same.

Mr. Foley: If there was a by-election at the same time, there would be different candidates.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There could be only one candidate for each ward. If there was an extraordinary vacancy, the election must be held on a different date. I consulted the Solicitor General and afterwards the Solicitor General and the Chief Electoral Officer together, and later, after altering the clause, I again consulted the Solicitor General, and he said the clause provided all that was necessary.

The Minister for Works: That is from your point of view.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There can be only one point of view. The difficulty here is that we have different systems of voting and this leads to many informal ballot papers. I am not wedded to the preferential system but we should adopt a uniform system.

Mr. Davies: In the event of a council being dissolved, would there be any difficulty?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. There could be only one candidate for each ward; besides, the possibility of a council being dissolved would be very remote.

Mr. Davies: Would there be any difficulty if it did occur?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. Under the Mines Regulation Act, it was necessary to appoint two workmen's inspectors who were balloted for by members of the unions. Without giving the matter much consideration, the Chief Electoral Officer adopted the preferential system and, before he could declare the successful candidates, he had to count the votes 25 times. I do not know how the Federal authorities will get on with the Senate elections when they have eight candidates and three to be elected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no doubt that the Solicitor General expressed the view stated by the hon. member; I believe in preferential voting. But there will be no harm if we allow this matter to stand over till next session. Probably this measure will fit in quite well with the new municipalities Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Take your Road Districts Bill. You promised it last session and it is not in operation yet.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Road Districts Bill was set aside by Minister after Minister because they did not think they would be able to get it through. So far as it lies in my power, I shall endeavour to bring down a municipalities Bill next session.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: During last session, the Minister said the Road Districts Bill would be passed early this session. By a stroke of luck, he got it through this House quickly.

Hon. P. Collier: By the consideration of the Opposition.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But that Bill has not yet become law and, if we adopt the Minister's suggestion, it will probably be two years before we have the benefit of preferential voting for municipal councils.

The Minister for Works: I think it will be possible to get it through early next session.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Road Districts Bill shows that it is not possible.

Mr. PICKERING: I favour preferential voting. It has proved very satisfactory. I strongly oppose the proposal of the member for North Perth and I hope the member for North-East Fremantle will stick to this clause of his Bill.

Mr. FOLEY: There are many amendments on the Notice Paper and the Perth municipality desire that, after the promise of the Minister for Works, these should not be proceeded with. The Minister, however, would be wise to accept the principle of preferential voting so that it will be an accepted principle when the municipalities Bill is brought down next session.

Clause put and passed.

New clause—Amendment of Section 109:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move—

That the following new clause be inserted:—"Section one hundred and nine of the principal Act is amended by omitting the words 'within one month,' and inserting in place thereof 'after the nomination of the candidate and.'"

This is consequential on the passing of Clause 14. It means that until candidates have been nominated, no one can vote in absence.

New clause put and passed.

Mr. SMITH: I do not intend to proceed with the amendments of which I have given notice with one exception. I wish to refer to the Minister's promises.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot do that.

Mr. SMITH: The Minister's promises will render some of my amendments unnecessary.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is entirely out of order.

New clause—Power to establish an analytical laboratory:

Mr. SMITH: I move—

That the following new clause be added to the Bill:—"The council may establish an analytical laboratory and employ analysts, and may undertake analytical work for other local authorities including local boards of health at prescribed or agreed charges."

The city council appointed a qualified analyst and equipped a laboratory in 1917 in order that the work required by the city might be carried out on the premises. Several local authorities decided to take advantage of the laboratory and asked the city council to undertake work for them, but it was found that they could not legally do so. The new clause will overcome the difficulty.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept the amendment moved by the member

for North Perth. From a perusal of the speech delivered by the member for North-East Fremantle when introducing the Bill I find that the main objects of the measure are, firstly, the removal of the disabilities in the existing Act as regards getting on the electoral roll unless all rates are paid prior to the 1st October; secondly, one man one vote instead of one to four votes according to property; thirdly, the writing off of rates which for any reason whatever may not be collectable; fourthly, deposit of plans; fifthly, preferential voting for mayor and councillors; sixthly, extension of the qualification of women to act as mayor or councillor. The amendment goes beyond the scope of the Bill as introduced by the mover, and therefore I cannot accept it.

Mr. FOLEY: Possibly I may move to dissent from your ruling, Mr. Chairman. The title of the Bill is "An Act to amend the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906." I contend that when notice was given of intention to move for leave to introduce this Bill, no intimation was given to the House that the member for North-East Fremantle intended to amend the Act in any particular way. In the circumstances, I submit, any portion of the Act is before the House for amendment. It is true that when moving the second reading of the Bill the member for North-East Fremantle gave an outline of the amendments he intended to propose. Perhaps you will mention the Standing Order on which you base your ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: Standing Order 277 provides—

Any amendment may be made to a clause, provided the same be relevant to the subject of the Bill, or pursuant to any instruction, and be otherwise in conformity with the rules and orders of the House; but if any amendment shall not be within the title of the Bill, the Committee shall amend the title accordingly, and report the same specially to the House.

Mr. FOLEY: Under that Standing Order, Sir, what is your ruling regarding the title of this Bill? What was the title of the Bill when it was introduced into this House?

The CHAIRMAN: I have ruled the amendment out of order on the ground that the subject matter of the amendment is irrelevant to the subject matter of the Bill. If the hon. member desires to dissent from my ruling, let him move to that effect. I cannot, however, allow him to discuss my ruling.

Title—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

BILL—SALE OF CHAFF.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th October.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [9.7]: I suggest to the member for Avon that it would be well to defer consideration of the Bill until next session. I think he would find that the Bill, if passed, would not work well in practice. What he desires to achieve would render it almost impossible to conduct the business of a chaff merchant; and I doubt whether the measure could be of any benefit to the farmer. The hon. member's desire, I understand, is that where chaff of an inferior class is sold in expensive bags, some regard shall be had to the value of the bags. To-day the price of chaff is about £10, and the cost of bags may be £2. Thus the value of the chaff itself, without the bags, would be £8. If a man's chaff were sold for £4, the value of the chaff itself, without the bags, would be £2; and the hon. member considers that in such circumstances the farmer should receive adequate consideration for the bags. I think that matter a very difficult one to arrange in any circumstances, and it can hardly be arranged under this Bill. I suggest that during the recess the hon. member should go into the question with the Honorary Minister for Agriculture, and see if they can frame a Bill which will achieve the hon. member's object. I am entirely in sympathy with the hon. member's desire to protect the interests of the farmer.

Mr. Harrison: Do I understand that the Government will bring in a measure next session, and make it a Government Bill?

The PREMIER: I suggest that the member for Avon go into the matter with the Honorary Minister for Agriculture, in consultation with the Parliamentary Draftsman.

Mr. Harrison: In view of what the Premier has said, I will agree to let the measure be withdrawn this session, but I certainly desire that the objective of the measure should be reached.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [9.11]: I move—

That the Bill be discharged from the Notice Paper.

Motion put and passed; the Bill discharged.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1919-20.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous sitting; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Business undertakings:

Vote—Other Hydrant Undertakings chargeable to Revenue, £32,663.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS AND WATER SUPPLY (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [9.14]: Hon. members

will see that this vote includes matters of great scope. So much is evident from the information given in the Estimates before them. The estimated expenditure under this heading for the current year is £32,663, being an increase of £2,648 over the actual expenditure of last year. Included in the amount are advances in salaries, representing the small item of £95. The estimated revenue for the current year is £24,500, as against last year's actual receipts of £24,576. Hon. members will see it is anticipated we will be rather worse off than we were last year by £2,723. Hon. members will also have noticed in connection with the Estimates of the departments I control, that we have taken the precaution to place a footnote on each page which sets out that the Estimates are made up on the rate of wages obtaining on the 1st July of this year, and should increases be awarded we will have to come forward with an excess next year. Since then the railway award has been delivered and it means that the Government will have to give consideration to the wages of other employees. The matter will be at once gone into. I have to-day given instructions to the officers of the department to deal with the various classes of labour in connection with public works and water supplies, and to prepare for me a comprehensive statement showing each class of labour as it is dealt with in the railway award, and the present wages we are paying. It is my intention as soon as this information is available and as soon as I can get a little relief from the onerous duties of this Parliament, to invite the secretaries of the different unions to meet me with the view of discussing the position and seeing whether we can arrive at some basis which will give us a certain amount of security in regard to future operations. I want to make that statement because I am satisfied I am voicing the opinion of the Government. The situation which has arisen is certainly serious and it will influence our business affairs. It is well that we as a Government should know, and that the people should know exactly where we are trending, because there cannot be the slightest doubt that unless larger sums of money are available with which to pay the increases to the wages men the result must be a certain amount of curtailment of employment. If I have £50,000 to spend on one particular job and my wages bill comes to 20 per cent. more than was anticipated I should not be able to give as much employment as I originally thought I would do. I hope there will not be any misunderstanding in regard to this matter. The apportionments of the expenditure have been as follows: On the Eastern goldfields about £8,000. This includes replacement of part of the pipe line, and it also provides for other pipe lines which are showing signs of deterioration and wear. On the Murchison goldfields it is estimated that we shall spend £8,350. This will be partly for the replace-

ment of plant in connection with the Meekatharra water supply and also the replacement of a wooden main at Leonora. At the Phillips River goldfield it is expected that we shall spend about £1,000 on ordinary maintenance. On the South-West water supply and drainage we expect to spend £2,090. This is an additional provision for the purpose of cleaning out several large drains in the district which require attention and which have done considerable good and which must not be allowed to fall into absolute disrepair. A certain amount is also for repairs to Wonnerup flood gates and bridges, which were damaged by heavy floods and in some instances by the action of the sea. With regard to the maintenance of the drainage business it seems to me a determined stand will have to be taken by the Government in the future. Many drains in the South-West have been established and have done good work, and I think that while the Government undertook to carry out large capital expenditure in that way, it will not be asking the people who are benefiting from that expenditure too much to request them to provide labour and money to maintain those drains. In several instances in my own district—the member for Sussex knows this as well as I do—an awkward position has arisen. It is difficult for a member to have to approach a Minister and ask for maintenance to be provided for a work which the people themselves should be expected to carry out. On this point I have already taken steps and I intend to see whether the people cannot be made to realise their proper responsibilities. With regard to agricultural water supplies which deal principally with dams along cartage routes, we have allowed £2,330. We have also made a further provision in connection with the maintenance of boring plants in regard to both water and coal. So far as the North-West water supply is concerned it is estimated that £1,650 will be required in connection with the maintenance of tanks and wells in the Pilbara goldfields, Roebourne and Onslow districts, and also towards the maintenance of a water supply at Derby and Marble Bar. With regard to Derby we are at present negotiating with the authorities there and I think we shall very shortly arrive at a conclusion which will be satisfactory so far as both the Government and the people in that district are concerned. Arrangements have been made with the West Kimberley road board to take over the Derby water supply and we think it will be possible to bring this about on really decent lines. With regard to the stock routes, provision has been made for the expenditure of £2,700. This will cover the maintenance of the coastal stock route and also those in the Leonora-Nullagine and Cue-Ashburton districts. The estimated receipts for this year show a shortage of £76 compared with the receipts of last year. Owing to the closing down of the Great Fingal mine it is

expected that the receipts from the Day Dawn water supply which reached £900 last year will this year only realise between £300 and £350. With regard to Ora Banda it is to be regretted that mining activities there have been on the decline and apparently are still on the decline. We can but hope that a better time is coming, as in connection with gold mining I believe it is a case of never despair. Sometimes mines turn out well when they are least expected to do so, and this is what is happening in the Hampton Plains district and elsewhere. Therefore with the optimism which we all possess we can hope that even Ora Banda will again show signs of activity. Last year we received £1,676 in revenue. This year the estimate is £800. I trust, however, those figures may prove to be erroneous. With regard to the Harvey irrigation scheme, last year we received £487 and this year we believe we shall receive about £2,000. There has been considerable trouble in connection with that scheme. It is a very long story, but every effort has been made to put it upon a fair financial basis and to carry out the promises made by the Minister when the scheme was inaugurated, so that there may be no objection on the part of the people to pay rates. Unfortunately the Harvey orchardists have had considerable trouble with the irrigation scheme, through various causes as well as scenery, etc. However, I do not desire that hon. members should discuss this question if it is possible to avoid discussing it, because it is likely there will be litigation in the near future, and it is advisable that the views of the department and the evidence in the possession of the department should not be disclosed. We have appointed a commission to deal with the scheme. The personnel of that commission is the Under Secretary for Works, Mr. Munt; the Engineer-in-charge of water supplies outside the metropolitan areas, Mr. O'Brien; and the irrigation expert Mr. Scott, and from what I can learn from Harvey the people are of the opinion that that is a strong commission and that it is one from which they can expect fair treatment. I believe that to be the case and we think also we shall be able to receive revenue during this year to the extent of a couple of thousand pounds. There will be no harsh measures taken there—not because it is in my district nor because at the last election they voted against me instead of for me, but because fair consideration is due to the settlers, and politics do not count in these matters.

Hon. P. Collier: They will vote for you next time. You have been treating them well.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has been fully realised that the market for fruit has been considerably limited and the prices which have been realised have hardly been sufficient to pay for the cost of dealing with the fruit after it has been

grown. In such cases we shall do as we have done in the farming districts. It has been the practice and it will always be the practice for the Government to give consideration to people who are honest at the bottom and who are suffering from disabilities. That course has been followed in regard to the Harvey irrigation scheme and I believe it will be found in the course of time that what the Government have done has been fully justified. Further with regard to that scheme every effort has been made to extend the area of the operations, as we have found from experience that we have a very much larger quantity of water impounded there than the people of Harvey can be expected to require, and as there are other areas close at hand which can take water, it is proposed that we should supply them and in that way increase our revenue. I would also explain to hon. members that in addition to dealing with quite a large number of these mining water supplies, the department investigates and advises on any proposal for a water scheme or water supply that may be required in any part of the country. It is felt by the Government that if we have professional men on whom we can rely we should give the people the benefit of their experience and advice and in that way help along what might be said to be a big family. After all said and done we are all one family and we are all carrying out useful functions, and must assist one another for the ultimate public good.

[Mr. Foley took the Chair.]

MR. GRIFFITHS (York) [9.30]: It is rather a pity we have not been able to discuss this vote earlier in the session. There are certain phases of it which might with profit to the country and members themselves be discussed here, and nothing but good can result by a continuance of this debate this evening. I wish to refer specially to the question of water conservation, irrigation, and drainage, and the application of hydraulic science to the development of the State. This prosaic heading would not lead hon. members to think that there was much material out of which to build romance, or from which to indulge in prophecy so far as the future is concerned. Hon. members might go back some 28 years and think what has been accomplished since that time, and what would have been the feelings of the members of the first Legislative Assembly to sit in this State if they could have understood what would be accomplished in these matters by the year 1919. I am sure that if an hon. member in those days had suggested that this would happen his colleagues would have had some doubt as to his sanity.

The Minister for Works: They were men of strong convictions.

MR. GRIFFITHS: It is possible that even more than has been done might have been

done during that period. The tone of the debates during this session has been on a higher level than many which have preceded it. The member for Kimberley has repeatedly drawn the attention of the House to the great possibilities of the North and the North-West, and the potentialities of that part of the State. That portion of Western Australia is so vast that if the lower half of the State were dropped into it it would be lost there. I take it that the efforts of hon. members in advocating the development of the northern areas of the State are of an educational nature. We have heard of artesian belts, the boring for water along the stock routes, and the damming of the rivers. We in the South-West do not realise the immensity of the northern portion of the State. Although I do not pose as an expert, I have always prided myself on my knowledge of geography, but the other evening I asked the member for Kimberley to give me some idea as to the rivers in the North. He ran off a string of names of rivers in his electorate and gave me the names of ten or 12, of which I knew three or four, and finished up by saying that there were scores of rivers there. The member for Ashburton also ran off a string of names of rivers and said there were scores in his part of the State. Probably no vote in the Estimates has more romance attached to it than this one. I do not pose as a special advocate for the North-West, but I have been constrained to speak on this vote for a special reason. A friend of mine, who has recently returned from India, has told me of the enormous development that has been brought about in India through irrigation and water conservation. He was enthusiastic in regard to what had been done so far as the building of the great tanks along the river courses was concerned, and about the building of the miles of embankments, and he also waxed enthusiastic as to what had been done in southern India, where great rivers had been impounded, tunnels driven through mountains, and water conveyed to land which otherwise would have been dry. We have a great heritage in the North-West of this State. Although we have not the cheap labour they have in India, it is possible we may learn something from that country. My friend stated that 50 years ago in India there were 300 miles of railway, and that the turnover was 40 million pounds per annum. To-day there are 32,000 miles of railway, fed by 37,000 miles of metal roads and the turnover reaches the enormous figure of 260 millions sterling per annum. This was brought about by irrigation and water storage methods. There is nearly the equivalent of the size of Great Britain, namely, 119,000 square miles, under rice alone in India, 75,000 square miles under millet, and 33,000 square miles under wheat. So far as the north of this State is concerned, with its scores of rivers and other advantages, we have something which we in the South-West do not recognise. When I was in the Eastern States I saw notices in the windows say-

ing, "Buy Tweed River bananas." Our shops should be displaying the sign, "Buy Gascoyne River bananas." With regard to our coastal swamp lands, we have at our back door at Herdsman's Lake 13,000 acres of land on which it is possible to grow all the fruit and vegetables required for the metropolitan areas. The member for South Fremantle has been energetic in bringing forward the claims of Jandakot, of which we shall hear more in the near future. The member for Bunbury pointed out that we have not given that consideration to drainage in this country that we should have done. Our coastal swamp lands mean drainage: With regard to irrigation we know that in ancient and modern times irrigation and water conservation have played no small part in the development of those countries which have a two season climate, and have large areas of arid and semi-arid lands. Those countries carry a large population per acre, a greater population than is found in the cities. In India two-thirds of the people are on the land, and the same applies to Egypt. Of the newer countries, the United States has ten million acres of land under irrigation methods of cultivation, and there are 40 million pounds of private capital invested in those lands. Nothing makes a country more prosperous than settlement by irrigation, and nothing tends more to the promotion of the general welfare of the community.

Hon. P. Collier: Victoria and New South Wales have spent millions of pounds in irrigation in recent years.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Whilst we have done a great deal we have not done anything like as much in proportion as the Eastern States have done. Irrigation means a contented population, because it does away with that isolation and lonely life which is the bane of rural life. Rural loneliness is the bane of rural life.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Can you get irrigation without rivers?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We have in the South-West plenty of small rivers, which will lend themselves to an irrigation scheme. Victoria is in the van in respect of irrigation. New South Wales has not been so vigorous.

The Minister for Works: What about Burrinjuck?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That contains as much water as Sydney harbour. It has been constructed at a cost of 1½ millions of money, and it irrigates 500,000 acres of land. They have also other schemes in New South Wales, but Victoria takes the palm. Mr. Hugh Oldham, who has just left this department, published a little booklet a few years ago, from which I read the following:—

In Victoria they have 37,475 acres under lucerne, 11 waterworks districts, 13 irrigation and water supply districts, three waterworks trusts, the Mildura Trust, 13 million acres of land supplied with water for stock and household purposes, 215,213 acres under irrigation, while 14,000 acres are irrigated under permit or license; also 135 towns, exclusive of principal cities and

suburbs, are supplied with water. The rainfall ranges from 12 to 15 inches in the northern Wimmera to seven inches and down to even five inches in parts of the mallee country. There are to-day many very successful farmers with valuable and substantial farms, due to the improved methods of cultivation, and to the supply of water for stock and other purposes in the mallee country Farmers are now successfully growing wheat and grazing sheep right through the mallee, as far North as Mildura, and the supply of water is being pushed further afield every year. That is the way water conservation and irrigation have been carried out in Victoria. South Australia has also been very vigorous, and we read the other day of an enormous dam to be constructed on the head-waters of the Murray River. In Western Australia we have not gone in for water supplies on a large scale, except in the case of the Mundaring Weir, which supplies the goldfields and, in crossing the wheat belt, supplies also a large area of agricultural districts with water. The department has certainly done some fine work, and a good deal of credit is due to the late Minister for Works, Mr. W. D. Johnson. An energetic campaign of boring was carried out in the wheat belt, and although a lot of salt water was found, yet good work was done. Moreover, large areas were supplied from Government dams. Recently I attended a meeting at Bruce Rock, at which two resolutions were passed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are you sure they were not inspired?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I think the House generally gives me credit for sincerity. This subject is of great importance, and only good can result from discussing it. We should have a more general distribution of the Goldfields Water Supply than at present obtains. The first resolution passed at Bruce Rock was as follows:—

That this district generally be served with the scheme water, and a scheme be prepared to serve the whole road board district.

Whilst that, if carried, would supply local requirements, still the bigger question of supplying the wheat belt with scheme water ought to engage the attention of the department. It was held that if bigger bodies of water could be handled, not only would a direct benefit be derived from the increased production, but it would be a more profitable proposition for the department.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It has already paid splendidly—on the wrong side of the ledger.

Hon. P. Collier: How much is owing by the farmers up there?

The Minister for Works: Some £26,000.

Hon. P. Collier: Which they will not pay, although you reduced the price to them.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I repeatedly hear it said that the farmers will not pay. One would think they were a lot of scamps. I know we have some there who would dodge their liabilities, but such men are to be found in all communities.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: After all the motor-cars you showed us there you cannot plead poverty.

Hon. P. Collier: They had every sign of wealth up there.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We always put our best goods in the shop window.

The Minister for Works: On a point of order. We are not discussing the Goldfields Water Supply.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is comparing that scheme with other schemes embodied in the Estimates. I think he is in order.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am speaking under the heading of "water supplies in country districts and on the goldfields." The second resolution passed at Bruce Rock was as follows:—

That the Government be approached to supply the whole wheat belt with a scheme at a sufficiently reasonable rate to allow of farmers raising stock.

This is a subsidiary scheme running off the goldfields scheme. We know that in the mallee country large areas have been supplied with water, resulting in greatly enhanced productivity. From Mr. Oldham's booklet I read the following:—

Again, concerning the wholesale supplies of water for farming purposes there are three large schemes of this description in South Australia. Those schemes cover areas which could not otherwise have been successfully developed, and there is no doubt that, in respect to these proposals, the indirect advantage is sufficient to warrant the partial nationalisation of the works. . . . The peculiar regularity of the Western Australian climate, with its long dry summer, demands a vigorous irrigation policy in order that development may proceed. It is certain that the South-West, with its fertile lands, will never be fully reproductive until this work is undertaken. Dairying and its allied industries cannot be successfully established until closer settlement areas are formed and summer fodders are cultivated. . . . Western Australia, with its magnificent climate and valuable land, will shortly attract its full share of immigrants and land seekers, but this will only come about to its fullest extent through the development of these natural resources which have been referred to, when it will be possible to provide as much variety as is available at the present time in the Eastern States.

We have a great responsibility in that, while we have not large rivers, such as occur in the Eastern States, we have many small schemes. I believe the Minister has some 17 surveys that have been taken on the Colbie, Serpentine, Murray, Harvey, Brunawick, Drakesbrook, and other rivers between Perth and Bunbury, which will irrigate 150,000 acres of land. The damming of the York, Toodyay, Beverley, Northam, and Avon section is one of those things that will come in the future, but so far has been practically uninvestigated. We can grow lucerne better than it can be grown in Victoria. This is a

question well worthy of consideration. We often have quoted to us the returns from Mildura and other places in the Eastern States, but we have records in our own State quite equal to anything that has been achieved in the Eastern States. I think more attention ought to be paid to this question of water conservation and irrigation. This House might reasonably and for the benefit of the country consider the matter of water storage and irrigation, particularly along our ranges here. At Northam Mr. Watts's orchard has produced some magnificent results. He is irrigating his land and utilising what supplies of water he can get. In some of these places I have seen the fruit packed and I know that what has been stated is correct. At Kalamunda four-year old citrus trees are carrying up to three cases without distress. Trees under 15 years old have carried from 20 to 23 cases per tree, and 43 lemon trees of the same age returned 600 cases of fruit, 23 cases being taken from one tree at one picking. At Mr. Butcher's, Kelmseott, 53 trees 23 years old, carry from 30 to 50 cases per tree, while Mr. Buckingham's aged trees at Roleystone carried up to 40 cases per tree. At Mr. Fawcett's, at Pinjarra, 19 orange trees nearly 30 feet high and 53 years of age, have returned as much as £300 in one season. These illustrate some of the possibilities of our country. Mention has been made of the possibility of supplying water in the Avon Valley. The natural resources of this valley make it a somewhat more difficult problem, but we have a class of country and climate unsurpassed for fruit growing. It is similar in many respects to the decomposed granite of the south coast of New South Wales. This is the class of soil which Mr. Watts is irrigating at Northam. Irrigation is absolutely necessary in order to obtain the best results, but the Avon Valley has the advantage that it can grow to perfection a larger variety of fruits, including all citrus types and vines. Furthermore, the climate of this district is in every way suitable for drying fruit without artificial aids. A thorough investigation of the natural resources of the Avon Valley is warranted, in order that this particular source of wealth might be exploited to the fullest extent. I hope some day to see a sheet of water stretching from Beverley to York and from York to Northam. York, the most picturesque inland town in Western Australia, has its natural beauty marred in summer time by the ugly—

Mr. O'Loughlen: Member who represents it?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No, by the ugly mud flats when the river is low. Such a stretch of water would be of immense utility for intense culture and would be a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [10.4] : The question of water conservation is the most important one which has been before the Committee and it always will be. The member for York should be congratulated

on the informative speech he has delivered this evening.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: His party did not take much notice of it.

Mr. LUTEY: It is regrettable that so few farming members were in their places to hear it. It would have been instructive to them and I hope they will peruse "Hansard" and learn what the hon. member said. The member for York referred to the scores of rivers in the North-West, and I was pleased to hear this reference. I hope that some day we shall have a Parliamentary visit to that part of the State. A celebrity in Perth has a scheme to irrigate the eastern goldfields from the rivers in the North-West. He should have a talk with the member for York and perhaps we might be able to bring what is regarded as a far-fetched scheme to fruition.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The State has no money for it.

Mr. LUTEY: I have a lively recollection that, on our trip to the Wheat Belt, the Premier asserted that it did not pay farmers to give more than 2s. 6d. per thousand gallons for water. We were informed that a number of residents from Cheshire, experts in cheese making, could not engage in that industry owing to the water with which they were supplied. The Premier said it would be fitting to call their cheese not Cheshire but dam cheese. It was a jocular remark, but I hope the farmers will see their way to clear off the £26,000 owing to the department and that the department will supply the water at 2s. 6d. a thousand gallons. The member for York said £3,000 had been spent on the eastern goldfields. Even if a good many more thousands were spent on the eastern goldfields, it would be justified, especially at the present stage.

The Minister for Works: That is only for outside prospecting supplies.

Mr. LUTEY: I should like to know the position regarding the pipes from the Coolgardie line to Hampton Plains. The Minister has been particularly energetic in regard to this matter, and I congratulate him for taking action at the precise moment to supply water to that district. He referred to the amount of revenue collected. The opportunity is present and, with a forceful Minister such as the Minister for Works, who I believe realise the position, there is scope for the useful expenditure of more money. Expenditure is justified to supply water not only to Hampton Plains but to the south of Boulder right through for 60 miles to what is known as the "Orchin leases east of Lake Lefroy. The Victory lease and 13 other leases have been applied for. I have met men who have taken up these leases, but practically the whole of the men have had to leave the district, which is said to be one of the most promising in the State, on account of the lack of water. If the Minister could make arrangements to supply a small condensing plant, it would be of great value to the prosperity of this portion of the State. It would result in increased population and

consequently more revenue, and the Water Supply Department would be in a more buoyant position.

The Minister for Works: If you call at my office I shall have the engineer there to talk it over.

Mr. LUTEY: I shall do so. It is difficult to get down to that part of the country. I believe there is a future before it but, if they receive this assistance, there will be something big doing. I should like to know what progress has been made with the pipe line running towards Hampton Plains?

The Minister for Works: The trouble is to get the pig iron.

Mr. LUTEY: The lack of water is very serious. If it had not been for the thunderstorms on the goldfields recently, Hampton Plains would have been deserted. The only supply they have is the water carried there in tanks by the Lakeside Firewood Company. The rains have eked out the supply for a week or two and a good number of men are working on the line. This is a big proposition, covering as it does such a big area of country. I believe we shall have numerous mining camps along that line of country, where gold is being discovered at the present time. I appreciated the remarks of the member for York regarding water conservation. I had an opportunity five years ago to be at the laying of the foundation of the Blanchetown lock in South Australia. Owing to interstate jealousies between Victoria and New South Wales and South Australia, it took many years to come to an agreement, but progress is now being made and this work will be in the interests of the people of Australia generally. A bishop who was asked what would be the best thing to do with the water supply of London replied, "Dam it." His hearers thought he was swearing, but what he said was quite correct. Everything possible should be done to conserve water in this country. Every effort should be made to supply these new goldfields with water, even if it is necessary to put up smaller condensers to assist the prospectors further out.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [10.13]: I congratulate the Minister on his statement that he is taking care to keep clear the main drains to the South-West, but if we are going to give the South-West its due, it will be necessary to construct a system of main drains throughout the whole coastal territory, more especially from Perth downwards, perhaps as far as the Leeuwin or beyond. While the Minister is willing to assist in this direction, in those districts where the Government have assisted liberally, the residents have not responded. There is a drainage area within my electorate called Lennox drainage area. That was put in, though not intentionally, at the expense of the Government; there was some misunderstanding and the cost of the scheme had to be borne by the Government; consequently, it is really a national scheme. The Minister suggested

that the people deriving benefit from the scheme should finance the upkeep and maintenance, and with him I am entirely in accord. I have done my utmost, since I have represented the district, to induce the people benefiting from the scheme to contribute the necessary funds for the preservation of the scheme. It is evident that if some steps are not taken to maintain that scheme, it must in a great measure revert to its original state. I hope the people concerned will realise that, and will contribute sufficient money to maintain the works constructed by the Government. One important work carried out in my district by the Government is the Stirling Estate drainage scheme, and I have to thank the Minister for having granted during the past year sufficient money, £500, to place that scheme in workable order. Previously the scheme did not give effect to the intentions of the engineer, and consequently land which had been bought at great expense by the settlers on the Stirling Estate was of little value to them. Since the expenditure of the £500 provided by the Minister, the scheme has proved quite adequate. There is a very large area of country extending from Perth southwards which to-day is practically lying idle. The solution of the difficulty is to be found in a drainage scheme. It is useless for settlers to drain for themselves, because they only drain from their own properties to the properties of other people, and so the benefit of one is counterbalanced by the damage of another.

Mr. Lambert: But much land is locked up for speculative purposes.

Mr. PICKERING: Not of the land that would become valuable by being drained. It has been demonstrated in my own electorate that drainage brings valueless land into fruition. Settlers in my electorate to-day are making good on such land in the dairying and potato-growing industries. I am glad to learn from the Minister that he has provided sufficient funds to replace the Wonnerup flood gates, which were washed away by a heavy flow of water last winter. Until they have been replaced, the swamps bordering on the Wonnerup Estuary will remain water-logged. I am glad the Minister is keeping his eye on drainage schemes throughout the South-West. The cost of drainage works, I observe, is to be somewhat increased; but one cannot regret that increase in view of the fact that it is due to a raising of wages.

[Mr. Stubbs resumed the Chair.]

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle [10.22]: I do not know whether to compliment the Minister or condemn him. Certainly he is responsible for the shower of requests to-night, and also for the unholy alliance entered into between my colleague the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe and the member for York. Evidently members feel that the Minister is passing through a period of generosity, that his heart just now is open to all who ask. He has

brought this upon himself. How happy could we be if only we could secure all the millions of money required to carry out the great works suggested by the member for York! We are to bring the rivers of the North-West, right from Kimberley, down to York for irrigation purposes. It will not cost much. A wave of the wand, and the thing is done. Members who put forward such huge propositions fail to realise that they live in a country which has a population of only 300,000, and that those 300,000 people must fail to obtain the enormous sums required to carry out such works. What has been the cause of all these demands? The Minister has decided that he can supply the people of the agricultural areas with water and allow them to break their promises and disregard their agreements. The water is to be supplied to them at the expense of the other people in this State. In the past the people of the agricultural areas have condemned the Coolgardie Water Scheme. They have said that the scheme did not return expenses. However, in this division affecting the people of the agricultural areas we find a loss of £23,163; and in face of that loss the Minister has reduced the agricultural water rate. In the metropolitan area, where the water supply shows an accrued surplus of several thousands of pounds, he has increased the sewerage rate. According to the last return concerning water supply to the agricultural areas, the expenses exceeded the receipts by £212. That does not sound much. But it must be borne in mind that not a penny is charged to the agricultural areas for pumping the water, or for the mains that carry the water to the agricultural areas, or for the reservoirs supplying those areas. All those costs are charged to the goldfields people. Yet the Minister has reduced the rate in the agricultural areas by one penny per acre, and the cost of excess water used in those areas from 6s. to 2s. 6d. Practically, the farmers can have double the quantity of water for the same money as previously. And then the Premier tells us that we should discontinue the payment of sinking fund on account of the Coolgardie Water Scheme loan because we shall be able to meet that loan when it falls due. Meantime the Minister for Works is giving away money.

The Minister for Works: There may be a loss of £3,000 involved to the country.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The loss is over £23,000, or nearly the amount of the sinking fund payment. No wonder the member for York and the member for Ivanhoe and the member for Sussex ask for millions when Ministers are so generous! I am surprised that those hon. members should make their requests when the election is still 12 months off. Can we in the present condition of our revenue afford to reduce water rates below what is already an unpayable proposition? Last session the Minister held, with me, that those people

had failed to carry out their obligation. One member has said that farmers take no notice of summonses. Month by month the position is getting worse. During the drought of 1914, the Government then in office spent £90,000 on water supply to keep these people on the land. These people were never off the Government doorstep until they had been promised that the water pipes would be put in. These people signed guarantees. The majority of these people agreed by their votes to meet the payments for water. They said they recognised that the scheme water would be in the nature of an insurance. Since then the country has gone back to the extent of millions. The present Government do not know how to handle money at all; they simply give it away. Under existing conditions they actually reduce water rates by practically one half.

Hon. P. Collier: And only to one section of the community.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. The Minister has brought on his own head the demands made by the Country party.

The Minister for Works: I shall meet them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If those members put the screw on, the Government respond at once. The Minister ought to serve all the people alike. If there is a loss in this connection, the goldfields people are made partly responsible. No one can say what the loss is, seeing that the charges for the supply of water to the agricultural areas have been so largely debited to the Coolgardie Water Scheme as a whole. Those charges have really been debited to the people on the goldfields, who have to pay a water rate of 1s. 6d. in the pound, and who have to pay for their excess water at the rate of 6s. or 7s. per thousand gallons. They have to pay everything so far as they are concerned, and then we find other people receiving this water at a loss to the State. Is that fair? The time has arrived when fair play should be given to all parts of the State. The same thing applies to the metropolitan area. There is a surplus of several thousand pounds, and yet the rate is increased; while in the other case, where there is a loss, the rate is reduced. What is the reason for that? The only conclusion I can come to is that it is a part of the bargain to keep the Government in office.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10.32]: It is time that members of this Assembly realised that a comprehensive water supply scheme should be undertaken in this State. There are on the goldfields certain areas that could be utilised for pastoral purposes if a water supply were obtained. I regret to say that so far the Minister has not dealt with the question. Provision has been made for supplying water on stock routes and in many other places, but in this important matter of the pastoral areas on the goldfields the Minister has either overlooked it or is indifferent towards it. We have big areas of reasonably decent pastoral country on the

goldfields, and these areas could be stocked if water facilities were given.

The Minister for Works: I will take the matter into consideration and make inquiries.

Mr. LAMBERT: I would also like to gently remind the Minister that this has been going on for the past two or three years. When Sir Henry Lefroy was Premier I drew his attention to the fact that large areas of goldfields land could be utilised for pastoral purposes if arrangements were made to supply water.

The Minister for Works: You went to the wrong Minister.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am aware of that now, and also that the Minister for Works is in his present position in perpetuity. I am now bringing the matter before him on the floor of the House. I know he is interested in this vast territory. Those who have water facilities there, either by way of dams or wells, are making a reasonable thing by following pastoral pursuits. I do not say the land is equal to that of the Kimberleys or the Murchison, but I am led to believe that if water can be obtained at a reasonable rate in the season when it is required, an area of territory a couple of hundred miles beyond the head of the railways could be utilised for pastoral purposes.

The Minister for Works: They have any amount of water beyond Leonora.

Mr. LAMBERT: It should be an obligation on the part of the Government to afford facilities for conservation. Unlike the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Augwin), I consider that the question of providing water supplies should be a national one. There was an initial mistake made in the provision of interest and sinking fund in connection with the goldfields water scheme. If the Minister was conversant with the requirements of the outback districts he would agree that the money could be utilised for pastoral purposes. If he cannot see his way to make provision for water conservation, he should utilise the scheme water to give reasonable help to those who are trying to add to the wealth of the State.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [10.37]: I am pleased to learn that the doctrine of my friend the member for Kimberley and I have been preaching—the development of the North-West by irrigation and other methods—has at least found a disciple in the member for York (Mr. Griffiths). I think that if we peg away we will make sufficient friends, and then we shall be able to compel the Government to realise the necessity for providing a comprehensive scheme by which it will be possible to develop that huge portion of our State, the North-West, and so convert it into a valuable asset. The figures given by the member for York with regard to irrigation in India are very interesting, and I am pleased that they were submitted to the House. India has been developed in a wonderful way of late years by means of irrigation. Hon. members who take an interest in Indian matters will have noticed that

every speech made by the Viceroy at the opening of Parliament contains a reference to the wonderful strides India is making in production as the result of irrigation. I have read some works on the subject, and I have also discussed the matter with people who have come from India, and I have been assured that the irrigation methods are not restricted to running rivers, such as is being done in the Eastern States, but also to what might be termed dry rivers like those we have in the North-West. These are being harnessed by the construction of weirs and dams, and large areas of what were dry lands have been made cultivable. A good deal of irrigation is also done in India by lifting water from wells and distributing it. Recently the Minister for Works was good enough to allow one of his engineers, Mr. Arney, to accompany me to the Gascoyne. We all realise that Mr. Arney is one of the best experts we have on irrigation methods. But on his arrival at Carnarvon he admitted that the conditions there were foreign to any he had been previously acquainted with. That is why I want to impress again on the Government the advisability of requesting the Indian Government to assist us by letting us have for a time the services of an engineer who has been accustomed to irrigation works similar to those which we would need to construct in the North-West. The engineers in India are familiar with the best methods for dealing with dry and running rivers, such as those of the Gascoyne. This would not involve the State in any very great expense, and the benefit that would be gained would be considerable. If we are to wait until we can teach our own engineers the methods it is advisable to adopt in connection with the irrigation of lands such as those of the North-West, it will be many years before we can do anything. Such a delay will mean a considerable loss, not only to the State but to private individuals. I ask the Government to take this matter seriously into consideration, as it will pay the Government to follow the course I have suggested.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [10.42]: I am pleased with the earnest tone that has been adopted by hon. members in connection with the debate on these Estimates, and I thank those hon. members who have made generous references to myself. With regard to the matter brought forward by the member for York (Mr. Griffiths), that of taking water a distance of 25 or 30 miles, it could very easily be dismissed by an assemblage of farmers or anyone else. But before I could recommend such a proposal to the Government, I would have to acquaint myself with the probable cost, and then there would be the difficulty of where the money was to come from. It is not much use my going to the Treasurer and saying that Bruce Rock wants a main down there, and that the member for the district would guarantee that the people would pay for it. We have

to take these things seriously, and although we may be satisfied that the area referred to by the hon. member requires attention, it is impossible at the present time to do what the hon. member asks. The hon. member's speech was very instructive, but I would have preferred it to have been delivered on a motion to deal with the matter, and in connection with which it would have been possible for me to collect and give him information of value. As to the matter brought forward by the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe (Mr. Lutey) regarding Hampton Plains, I assure him it has not been lost sight of. The hon. member was good enough to say that the engineer had shown foresight in connection with the matter. The difficulty up to date has been in regard to pipes, and the procuring of pig iron from which to make them. I believe, however, there is a shipment on the way, and if the developments at Hampton Plains are sufficiently encouraging no time will be lost in having the pipes made.

Mr. Lutey: I understood he had sufficient pipes for the work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is not so. If the pipes were available and the prospects warranted it, I would induce the Government to find the cash and let me get on with the work. There is not likely to be any danger of a shortage of water. I told the hon. member by interjection that if he would call upon me at my office I would arrange for the chief engineer to meet him, and we could then consider the question of the Orchard lease and also that of a small condensing plant. Everything that can legitimately be done in matters of this sort should be done. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) gave me a dressing down for having reduced the rates in certain agricultural areas.

Mr. Duff: They were too high in the first place.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am in accord with the member for North-East Fremantle. Whether the price was too high or not, however, is a question. If people induce the Government to spend money by saying that they will carry out their obligations, then they should keep their word. It is not the only part of Western Australia where the people have induced the Government to spend money and have neglected to carry out their own obligations. I ask hon. members to remember that, however pleasing it may be to work in with their constituents, they have a higher duty than that, namely their duty to the State. They must say to their constituents that if they wish to put forward claims for consideration by the Government and by the people's Chamber, it is not a good way of going about it to induce the Government to spend money on a guarantee from them, and then endeavour to avoid fulfilling that guarantee, such as has been done in many of the districts of Western Australia. The loss that will ensue to the State will be in the region of £3,200, but it is believed that the reduction in the water

rate, and the giving of an extra quantity of water to the people for their rate, will enable them to start keeping stock, which they cannot do under the old conditions. If that is so, and I believe it is, I do not think the loss of £3,000 should be shrunk from by the Government which, in other directions, spends hundreds of thousands of pounds in trying to establish people on the land. There is a considerable sum due from the settlers by way of arrears of rates. Having made this reduction and given them an opportunity of seeing whether what they believe can be carried out can be done, it will be the duty of the Government to insist upon the payment not only of the rates in connection with this but of the arrears of the past. I did not want, and I do not want, to take drastic action in regard to such a matter until I am satisfied that the settlers have the money in their pockets. With the harvest that is just coming in, and after the payment they receive, if they do not pay up their arrears we shall have to tickle them and endeavour to get the money out of them.

Mr. Lutey: "Tickle them" is good.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Coolgardie wants me to provide a water supply in the pastoral goldfields. The only pastoral portion of the goldfields that I know of is around Leonora. There is available abundant water there. Whether it can be conserved or not is another matter. In the present financial position of the State, and the probable financial position for the next few years, the Government are precluded from entertaining such a gigantic scheme as that suggested by the hon. member. The member for Gascoyne has made a suggestion that we should get an expert from India. I assure him that the proposal will receive due consideration. It will be well thought over and inquiries will be made, and if it should happen to come within the range of practical politics, I am sure the hon. member will be satisfied with what will be done.

Vote put and passed.

Vote, Perth City Markets, £978. Hon. F. E. S. Willmott, Minister:

Mr. JONES (Fremantle) [10.50]: I should like some information as to these markets, and what will be done with regard to the collection of rubbish, corrugated iron and insanitary smells that are found there so close to the railway station. These markets are the only real rival in the city to the septic tanks, about which we hear so much from the member for East Perth. It was the original intention of the Government to provide new markets for Perth. The years, however, have gone on and we still have the same unsightly and insanitary place that we have had for so long. It would almost appear that they were there forever. We are entitled to know from the Minister what he proposes to do in the matter of providing markets for this growing and important city. Markets have for all time been an important factor in city life. It should be one

of the principal features in any city of which the inhabitants should be proud. In the days of the Roman Empire beautiful buildings to form the market places were erected in all the principal towns. Is it the intention of the Government of to-day to provide the biggest contrast they can to the markets of so many hundreds of years ago? We find at present in these strange hotch-potch buildings at the corner of William and Wellington streets a place that is difficult to approach on account of smells, and at the bottom end there is a perpetual accumulation of stagnant water. I do not think that would be tolerated in any private building in the State. We have a market there for the purpose of selling fish and distributing commodities that are intended for human consumption, but adjoining it there is this filthy water, the accumulation of many days. Even if a big flush of water is run down the whole market it does not remove all the stagnant water.

The Premier: Where is this?

Mr. JONES: At the markets. I only wish the Premier would see it as I have seen it on many occasions. The tables on which the fish is set out for sale are covered with tin tops. At Fremantle the fish tables are covered with slate tops. At the same time one has to go from Fremantle to Perth in order to buy fish, although we have in Fremantle better markets for selling it than is the case in Perth. At the Perth markets there is also the old sanitary system still in vogue, notwithstanding the fact that the new system is at the very doors of the markets and there are all the conveniences necessary for a deep drainage scheme. This old system exists within a few yards of the place in which the food is being distributed to the public. It is a wonder the people do not rise up and tear the place down. It is a breeding ground for disease and contagion. It seems to me that the Premier has his mind set entirely on the country, and is so busy giving away millions in the South-West on broad acres and cows that he has not time to think of this disgraceful state of affairs in the heart of the city. It would seem to be the intention, by bad smells and the general surroundings of these Perth markets, to drive people out of the metropolitan area into the country. The Premier should make a statement on this subject.

Hon. P. Collier: That is one way of populating the country districts.

Mr. JONES: It is one way of populating the city with flies. The stalls where the fish is sold are a mass of cobwebs and an accumulation of years of dirt. It would be fortunate for the people if a devastating fire were to sweep through the building and burn it down.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [10.56]: Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise. It is a good thing the people do not know some of the things which the hon. member has just spoken about. I do not, however, think he has been to the

Perth markets very often. I have been there very often myself because I am interested in the price the people have to pay for their food. I go there to look at these prices.

Hon. P. Collier: The buildings are very ancient.

The PREMIER: I know they are.

Hon. P. Collier: We were about to build new markets when you turned us out.

The PREMIER: The good intentions were there. These markets are in a bad way and the land will soon be acquired for other purposes. The leader of the Opposition says that some years ago it was intended to build new markets, but the war has altered that. I do not know that we can get another site as convenient as this for the purpose. There is no doubt that the Government markets have done good work and have been of benefit to the public for many years. They are certainly badly placed at the present time. The buildings are old and somewhat dilapidated, but they have served the purpose for the moment. I have not seen the accumulation of dirt referred to by the hon. member. The next time I go there, however, I will look for it.

Mr. Lutey: What about the sanitary conveniences?

The PREMIER: I will see that the whole thing is inquired into.

Hon. P. Collier: It was proposed to abandon the site, and that is why the sewerage works were not gone on with there.

The PREMIER: They have to be abandoned. The freezing works are water-logged and it is a wonder that Mr. Cairns was able to keep going for so long. I will ask the Minister in charge to look into the matter. I am certain that he will rectify what can be rectified.

Mr. Jones: Who controls them?

The PREMIER: The Minister for Agriculture.

Mr. LUTEY (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [11.0]: Seeing that for years it has been intended to reconstruct the Perth markets and that the Premier has now expressed the Government's intention of erecting new markets, I express the hope that the markets to be built will be of modern design, and something very different from what exists here or in the Eastern States at the present time. The Eastern States markets of which I have knowledge are all drab and dirty, and their approaches are not what they should be. The member for Forrest suggests to me that I might say something about butchers' shops, but if I got on to that subject I might be regarded as stonewalling—I should have so many criticisms and suggestions to offer. With regard to the new markets, I earnestly hope that they will be of such design and construction as will make them a credit to Western Australia. The walls should be of glass, so that the place will be attractive. Let us have done with blank, drab brick walls.

Item, Acting Manager (£600, less amount apportioned to other concerns), £25:

Mr. JONES: Perhaps the fact that the manager of the markets receives only 10s. per week—less than a charwoman's wage—accounts for the bad condition of the markets.

The Premier: He receives £600 a year.

Mr. JONES: Has the manager 23 other jobs besides that of managing the markets, which is valued at one-twenty-fourth of his salary? The management of the markets is important, inasmuch as it concerns the people's food. Were it not for the overlapping of duties between the Perth City Council's health inspectors and those of the Government, the Health Department would long ago have reported in favour of closing the markets altogether. Is the manager expected to supervise the markets as regards cleanliness?

The PREMIER: The officer here in question is the manager of the markets, and his salary is apportioned among his various duties. The markets are well managed, and show a profit, and the public are well served. The manager sees that the people about the markets do their duty.

Vote put and passed

Railway Department, Hon. J. Scaddan Minister.

Vote—Railways, £1,746,521.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [11.7]: Hon. members will naturally recognise that the railways represent one of the most important of the undertakings controlled by the Government, when they realise that of the estimated revenue for the current year something over two millions sterling will be earned by the Railway Department while of the expenditure shown on these Estimates about 1½ millions is allocated to that department. It would be as well if I gave a short review of railway operations during the year 1918-19 and drew attention to certain reforms made during recent months and to various proposals for the future. Last year's railway earnings amounted to, roughly, £1,872,000, and the working expenses for the same period to £1,572,000, leaving a surplus of earnings over expenditure equal to £300,000. The year's interest payments on the capital invested in our railways, however, amounted to £665,000, showing a loss of £364,000 on the twelve months' operations. The earnings exceeded the estimate by £68,763. The items chiefly responsible for this latter increase are—increases in salaries to officers under the arbitration award, £20,000; payments to returned soldiers for accumulated leave, £6,500; and double pay granted to employees of the department who worked on Armistice day, £4,000. These three items alone account for £30,500. The cost of material and stores required by the department also increased considerably after the Estimates had been prepared and submitted to Parliament. The estimated railway revenue for the current financial

year is £2,100,000, while the expenditure is estimated at £1,746,000; and if these estimates are realised there should be a surplus of earnings over expenses of £353,000. The year's payments on account of interest in respect of capital invested in our railways will, however, amount to £673,000; so that we may estimate a loss of approximately £320,000 on the year's working. I should state that in the framing of these estimates the department did not take into account any increased expenditure for wages awarded by the Arbitration Court. We know there would be an increase under this head, but it was impossible to forecast with any degree of accuracy what that increase would amount to over the whole of the railway service. We estimate that it will be not less than an additional £250,000, but it is impossible to exactly determine it just now. The award is somewhat difficult to interpret in a way that would enable us to determine the point, because while the basic rate has been fixed and could easily be applied to the rest of the service, which the award does not cover, there are so many alterations in the rates above the basic rate that it is hard to say just how they should apply to other branches of the service. The Commissioner has asked for authority to approach the several organisations and to offer them a general agreement embodying increases commensurate with that given by the Arbitration Court of 1s. 5d. per day. Whether or not that will be satisfactory, I cannot say, but if it is not acceptable the rates which it is considered should be above it will have to be determined by the court, because there are no means by which we can apply the award to the rest of the service. I mention this in order to let members know that, as far as we can see, the increase that will be shown over and above the Estimates will approximate at least £250,000. While we estimated the loss at £319,000, it did show on the face of it an improvement on last year, which was a loss of £364,000. If we accept the £364,000 of last year, and add to that the increased cost of coal, amounting to £30,000, and the additional amount under the award of £250,000, it will show a loss of £640,000 for the year. Naturally, hon. members are concerned about the position of the railway system. I do not know whether one can fairly apply the principle laid down by the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) who in discussing another division of the Estimates contended that, if the cost of the service increased, those who got the benefit should pay the increase. I have not consulted the Government in this, but it is as well that I should state my own opinion, which is that the general public must be asked to make up the increased cost of rendering those services. The increases had to come. It was impossible for us to continue employing men who were rendering a service to the general public unless the general public paid them a sufficient re-

muneration. The increases have been granted and the Treasury must ask the general public to find the ways and means. Very many people imagine that an award given against the Government is quite different from an award given against a private employer. As a matter of fact, an award given against the Government is an award given against the general public, and the public must find the additional cost represented by the award. I do not wish it to be understood that I complain of the award. Personally, I think that under the conditions prevailing in Western Australia, the amounts granted, taken in the gross, are not more than the men deserve. We have no right to call upon any man to render a service unless we pay him for his service. The loss, therefore, will be approximately £640,000. Economies must be introduced where practicable; but, after all, it is not certain that any more economy can be introduced without reducing the efficiency of the service. Although we may by economy save a few pounds, it might mean a tremendous loss to the industries of the State and to the general community. We have to take into account that, owing to the war, all the requirements of the department have increased tremendously in cost, and that there is no evidence of an immediate fall in those costs. Also we have to remember that, during the war, supplies were cut to the bone. I believe the general impression abroad was that, after the war, prices would fall and that therefore we were entitled to allow repairs and maintenance to go by the board. Many of our stations are a disgrace in respect of renewals, painting and general maintenance. In some cases the necessary material has been absolutely unprocureable. The attitude adopted was to permit these things to stand over for a time. But there does not appear to be any sign of a fall in the cost of our requirements. Things have been allowed to get into a bad state, for which successive Governments have been responsible. We now have to find additional money to again render our service efficient. On the 1st July, 1914, 68 locomotives were awaiting repairs; on the same date this year the number was 118. In 1914 we had 639 wagons awaiting repairs; this year the number is 804. A similar proportion exists in regard to carriages. Again, owing to the number of men who enlisted, there has been a general shortage of labour. In many cases we carried on without increasing the staff, adopting the simple expedient of calling upon those in the service to allow their leave to stand over. As a result of this, we found that on the 1st July of this year, 115,132 days of leave had accumulated; in other words the accumulated leave in the railway service now stands at 367 years, which has to be paid for in cash when the leave is taken. Our running track, although quite safe, was allowed to get into a state of disrepair. We have now to do a great deal of re-sleeping and even relaying of our lines. What are we to do to

meet the economic position? Naturally, the people will complain if an increase in charges is suggested. We shall be told that it will cripple industry. Still, the money must be obtained from somewhere. If the service is rendered in the interests of the general community, the general community must find the wherewithal to carry on. So far as I can see, we shall have to revise the whole of the charges on the railway system in order to make good some of the loss which is accruing year by year. This does not include sinking fund on our capital cost, but merely working expenses and interest on capital charges. We very often have the statement made that as business increases so will the revenue increase, and in that way we shall make good the loss. That is not the case with regard to the railway system. As the business increases so do the costs of operating and train mileage increase. While it is true that the margin of loss becomes less, it does not decrease to the same extent which might be assumed. Each £100 of additional revenue under the present system should give £35 towards the reduction of the deficit, so that it will take a million in revenue to reduce last year's deficit of £350,000. Over and above that there will be an additional £350,000 loss this year, so that to meet the loss on that basis we will have to get two millions additional revenue without interfering with freights and fares. Last year's revenue was £1,873,000. The highest revenue received by the Railway Department was that of 1913-14, when the figures reached £2,257,000, with a population of 320,000 people. In 1899-1900 the revenue was £1,259,000 with a population of 172,000. It thus took 14 years, and progressive years too, for our railway revenue to increase by a million pounds.

Mr. Pickering: And now you want to do that in one year.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: No. The general public may have the impression that it is only a question of increasing the revenue in order to wipe out the loss. We must, however, take into account the fact that if it took 14 years to increase the railway revenue by a million, we cannot possibly hope to raise two millions in one year to wipe out the deficit. We have therefore to look in other directions for an increase of revenue. Over and above everything, costs are rising, while in many instances our requirements are almost unprocureable. With regard to the basic wage, in 1914 it was 9s., and now it is 11s. I am merely stating these facts so that the position may be appreciated. Take Colliie coal. In 1914 it was 11s. per ton. To-day the price is 16s. That is a pretty big rise. Whilst that seems to be a sad tale to have to tell the House, at the same time we may compare our railway system with those of the other States of Australia. Our railways last year showed a loss of £354,301.

[Mr. Foley took the Chair.]

Mr. Pickering: Did that include sinking fund?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, it included loss on earnings and interest. South Australia's loss last year was £185,896, Victoria £163,597, New South Wales £211,817, and Queensland £1,418,473.

Mr. Willcock: That loss was made up by payment of additional wages.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This year Queensland estimates a loss of two millions upon the railways. Between 1914-15 and 1918-19, the period of the war, the loss on the railway system of this State was £942,000, whilst that of Queensland was £3,688,000, South Australia £975,000, Victoria £1,818,000, and New South Wales £881,000. After all, therefore, our railway system is not as badly off in comparison with some of those of the other States, particularly when we take into account that in Western Australia we have a system which provides a mile of railway for every 91 of the population, and that is exclusive of the Midland Company's railway, as against one to 403 in New South Wales, one to 346 in Victoria, one to 196 in South Australia, and one to 130 in Queensland. The working expenses per mile in Western Australia compare very favourably with any of the Eastern railway systems. We have to face the position that something must be done with regard to the earning department of the railways in order to more nearly approach the cost of operating our system, which naturally has a great bearing on the industries of the State. I cannot say anything more definite at this stage with regard to the policy it is intended to adopt to meet increased costs. We have shown on the Estimates increased earnings to the extent of £227,103 over the figures of last year. That is a fairly extensive increase, but I think we are justified in assuming that that increase will be obtained because of the harvest prospects, which are excellent. With that increased earning of £227,000 we shall have to expend an additional £174,000, not taking into account the recent wages award which will mean another substantial increase in the expenditure. That is the point I am trying to make. The margin is so small that it requires tremendously increased earnings to make good the loss. Increased revenue of course means increased mileage, and increased mileage means increased cost of operating.

Hon. P. Collier: You are expecting bigger earnings than any year since 1913-14.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are entitled to do so, as the prospects are better than they ever were before. Of course a good deal will depend on shipping.

Hon. P. Collier: You will not reap the benefit of the good harvest if you cannot get the shipping.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is my point. In connection with the increased cost of operating, it is well to mention that the increase in the price of Collic coal will involve an additional expenditure of at least £31,000. If we deduct that amount, it will mean that the increased cost of operating this year, taken on the same basis as last year, will be £143,000 to earn £227,000. With

the increased cost of coal included, however, the additional expenditure will be £174,000. We have already made provision for automatic increases to cadets and officers receiving up to £200 to the extent of £8,164. We have also provided for an increase to temporary clerks from 11s. to 12s. 6d. per day which, in the aggregate, will mean an additional outlay of £505. Then the agreement with the loco. running staff will mean an increase of £1,747, or an aggregate increase in salaries and wages over last year of £10,416. We know that some of the losses are due to the operating of railways on which it is impossible to increase freights and fares sufficiently to make them pay. They are developmental railways to assist the establishment of important industries, and we must accept a loss in this direction. To make such lines pay at present is quite impossible. Agricultural railways, or spur lines as they are often referred to, showed a loss last year of £81,318. The Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe railway showed a loss of £6,525, and the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway a loss of £12,918. Thus the spur lines and other lines not connected with the main system accounted for a loss last year of £100,761. A few months ago, Colonel Pope was appointed acting Commissioner of Railways, and the Government intend to again ask Parliament to consider the appointment of three commissioners. When considering the applications for the position of Commissioner of Railways at a salary of £2,500, I gained the impression that it would be impossible to obtain any one man who possessed all the qualifications required to operate such an extensive system and to consider and deal with all its branches in a proper and effective manner. I have already given notice of my intention to introduce a Bill for the appointment of three commissioners. I do not know whether members will agree with me, but, in Colonel Pope, I consider we have the nearest approach to one man who combines all the qualifications necessary for the proper conduct of the railway system. His appointment has proved better in operation than even I expected when I recommended to Cabinet that he be appointed acting Commissioner. He is full of energy; he knows how to approach the men employed in the service, and the men know how to approach him. Under his regime, greater harmony has existed in the service than has ever been the case. He knows how to approach the public; he knows when to say yes and when to say no.

Mr. Griffiths: That was demonstrated by the statement he recently published in the "Weekly Notice."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: So far, Colonel Pope has unquestionably done as well as any of his predecessors, and my private opinion is that we should do well to make his appointment permanent. Quite a number of people assume that it is possible to introduce all sorts of economies into the railway service and achieve better results financially, but it is very necessary, in a

country which has to depend on producing commodities for the world's markets, to give facilities in advance of actual requirements to enable those commodities to be produced and placed on the world's markets. On the recommendation of the Commissioner, I have already expended sums of money in many directions to provide these necessary facilities. The Commissioner has taken the proper view that these facilities in the first instance will enable production to be carried on at once and, although we as individuals may suffer some inconvenience through not having asphalted platforms and better accommodation at every station, or might have to stand occasionally when travelling short distances, such as between Subiaco or Leederville and Perth, these inconveniences must remain pending the provision of facilities necessary to enable us to produce commodities in the country and get them to the world's markets. If there is increased cost in handling such commodities, someone has to pay for it, either the producer or the consumer. If we can reduce the cost of handling by giving additional facilities, even though their provision demands the expenditure of money, it will in the long run prove economical to do it, and the general public must of necessity reap the advantage. So we have attempted to give necessary facilities which previously were withheld because of a lack of material and the cost of providing them. During the present summer season, we hope to have better conveniences for the travelling public. These will be provided largely by speeding up our system. I do not want to complain in the slightest of what has been done. Frequently very unfair complaints have been made against our railway system. When we consider that many of our engines—and the member for Geraldton will bear me out in this—were unserviceable owing to material being unobtainable, and that we had to carry on as best we could without them, and that most of the delays were due to engine failures, it will be realised that no one in the department could be held responsible. We have had to accept that position but, during the last few months, we have tried to pick up somewhat in order that, when the demand is made, we shall be able so far as our narrow gauge will permit, to speed up the service and improve it. In addition to this, we intend to provide greater conveniences for the public during the summer. We have put on additional dining cars and sleeping accommodation on our main systems between Perth and Albany and Perth and Bunbury. One of the first acts of the new Commissioner for Railways was to make an inspection relative to the very frequent complaints about the dining car on the Perth-Kalgoorlie express, and he adopted the wise course of taking the dining car off the train earlier, in order to cut out that late hour or two when most of the damage was done. He has also considered the question of making the dining cars serve the purpose of a buffet in addition to providing the ordinary meals, so

that people who join the trains at intermediate stations might obtain fruit, confectionery, refreshments and soft drinks, and travel under better conditions than in the past. These improvements will entail a little outlay but they will give a good return to the department. There will undoubtedly be some discontent regarding the conditions under which we have let many of our railway refreshment rooms, but this is a matter which the Commissioner will consider.

Hon. P. Collier: A fair adjustment of the rents should be made.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have not consulted the Commissioner of Railways, but the altered conditions must naturally affect the income from these refreshment rooms. Thus it must reduce their powers of paying rent, which are fixed by tender.

Hon. P. Collier: They tender a certain rent under certain conditions.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The only thing that is possible is that the Commissioner might agree to terminate the whole of the contracts or leases of the refreshment rooms and call for fresh tenders. It would not be fair for the holder at present to say he wanted this readjusted without any competition. He may, of course, express the view that it will mean ruin to him, but as a matter of fact it means nothing of the kind. I have heard it said that it is good business to set up another business in opposition to someone who has a good business on the other side of the street, because it is to the good business that the public go and it is thought that being there they would also go to the other place. It may be that our system on the railways will attract more people, and that the losses of the other people will not be as great as they assume. It is, however, a matter for the Commissioner to consider in the first instance. I want it to be understood that while I am Minister for Railways I am not going to take the responsibility of also being the Commissioner of Railways. We do not pay the Commissioner a higher salary than the Minister for the Minister to take the responsibility. We pay the Commissioner to attend to matters of detail, but on questions of policy, as Minister, I am prepared to take the full responsibility. Matters of this kind must first of all be submitted to the Commissioner, and if a question of policy arises I am prepared to make a recommendation to Cabinet and take the responsibility. I am not aware that the Commissioner has been approached on the matter, but if he has I am sure he will mete out justice to those concerned. Since the Estimates were printed the Secretary for Railways, Mr. Rushton, has been appointed to the position of Secretary to the London Agency and Immigration Office. Mr. W. H. Hope, who was previously chief clerk, has been appointed to Mr. Rushton's position with a commencing salary of £550. The position of chief clerk, formerly held by Mr. Hope, has been abolished. One of the best moves made by the acting Commissioner is that we have got away from the old red tape

method of handing over the control of the railways to the heads of departments, leaving the Commissioner to carry the responsibility purely on the advice given by the technical officers. Colonel Pope has so organised the department that it is now in direct touch with him. He is able to obtain direct information on technical matters, all of which he cannot be expected to know about himself, and is thus enabled to more completely understand the position appertaining to the different branches. He has appointed, as outside inspector, Mr. Backshall. I believe the appointment of Mr. Backshall will prove of great use to the department. He is an excellent official and already there has been good results from that appointment. Complaints have been made by the public, but in the past they have not been properly dealt with. Under the old method a complaint went to the head of the department, it then went to the sub-head, and then to the foreman, and each individual put up his own case. Finally the matter came before the Commissioner, and usually he found that no responsibility rested with anyone.

Mr. Willcock: If it rested with anyone it usually rested with the office boy.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The acting Commissioner has now said that he is going to have some officer upon whom he can rely to make inquiries into all these matters, someone who is not under the control of anyone else, who will give him information regarding them. It is useless to expect someone who is under the control of another official to give the Commissioner information which might affect that official's position. The Commissioner has now brought everybody under his direct control, and already we have had results which have justified the acting Commissioner's action.

Hon. P. Collier: What salary will he get?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not sure, but it is below the amount which requires Ministerial approval.

Hon. P. Collier: That is £400 a year.

Mr. Willcock: The salary is £350.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is one matter which is giving us a lot of concern, and that is in regard to the level crossings in the metropolitan area. The Railway Department take one view and the local authorities take the opposite view. It is a question as to which is the correct view. The Railway Department may traverse a street, which in itself is of no value to them, but is of value from the railway point of view. The crossing, however, is of value to the people who wish to get to the other side with their vehicles. As the local authority is interested in the welfare of the people who use these vehicles, they are entitled to protect them when they are crossing the railway line. Although it is a convenience to the department to traverse a street, the local authority should make proper provision to enable the general public to cross our railway system.

Mr. Willcock: How do you get on with the trams?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Unfortunately, there have been a number of accidents recently, but I do not know of a single case in which it can be fairly claimed that if the people had taken ordinary care before crossing the railway, the accident could have been avoided.

Mr. Willcock: It is done all right in connection with the trams.

Mr. Smith: The speed of the trains is far in excess of that of the trams.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is all the more reason why the public should observe greater caution when crossing the railway line. In many cases people driving motor cars run up to a crossing at full speed, and give themselves no chance of pulling up when they reach the line if they suddenly find that a train is approaching. They take the risk of a train being there, and then find that they are too late to get out of the way.

Mr. Willcock: They blow their horn.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: A train cannot pull up at every crossing. With regard to the trams, it frequently happens that two persons are quietly crossing the street and suddenly see a tram. One of the two rushes across to the other side and the other stands still until the tram has passed. When the first person has crossed the street and taken the risk of being struck by the tram, he quietly waits until the other man has walked across, when he could have waited on the other side of the street in the first instance without running any risk at all. People also frequently rush across the railway line, and then stand still on the other side watching the train go by. It is not a fair proposition to ask the Government to provide an additional £350,000 to make level crossings from Wyndham down to Eucla, simply because the people in the metropolitan area will not take proper care when crossing our railway system. It is even suggested that we should have a crossing made every few chains along our streets, or alternatively that we should put up bridges there.

Mr. Duff: What about children crossing the line?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In various places in the metropolitan area we have overhead bridges to enable adults and children to cross the line in safety. I could show the hon. member a beaten track across the railway line within 50 yards of an overhead bridge, thus showing how little use is made of the bridge.

Mr. Duff: That is not always so.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Does the hon. member suggest that we should erect a bridge opposite the gate of every man who crosses our railway system? There are parts of the world where the railways are electrified and have a third rail, and in those parts of the world one never sees a person crossing the railway line. By their

suggestions here members encourage the public to cross the railway lines.

Mr. Duff: What about children?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Surely parents can teach their children the proper method of crossing a railway line.

Mr. Duff: That is a very poor argument.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will produce to the hon. member, any day he likes, not one but 50 places on the metropolitan railways where people have deliberately crossed the line, where they have made openings in the fence and cut the wires in order to get through.

Mr. Duff: You were present when those children were in danger from a train. Those children were drawn back by yourself and others.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite true; but how far was an overhead bridge distant?

Mr. Duff: It was not conveniently close.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Between two bridges now existing and distant not more than a quarter of a mile from each other, the people want another bridge erected.

Mr. Duff: Only a footbridge.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Are we to build footbridges everywhere? A train cannot pull up at every crossing, and the people must take precautions. Most of the recent accidents have occurred at crossings where there is very little traffic. I know there are dangerous crossings, but, nevertheless, most of the recent accidents have occurred at crossings where the traffic is very light. Does the hon. member suggest that there should be a subway or an overhead bridge at every crossing? Two hundred thousand pounds could be spent in providing subways and crossings on the metropolitan railways, and still there would be accidents. I propose to get the Commissioner of Railways to call a conference of local authorities affected with a view to deciding what crossings can be closed. We do not want so many crossings. It is absurd of people to complain that there is no overhead bridge at Pier-street, while there is one at Beaufort-street.

Mr. Duff: I am sorry you promised to do something, because you have not done it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member does not know. Only this very week the Commissioner, whom I told that something had to be done in regard to Jarrad-street, arranged to shift the signal box at Cottesloe and put up proper gates. The best course probably would be to put up a light gate that could be cared for by a returned soldier.

Mr. Duff: Have you done it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is going to be done.

Mr. Duff: That is a dangerous crossing. You saw it yourself.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not attempting to deny that that crossing is dangerous. But in the case of the crossing

at which the last accident occurred—an accident in respect of which the Railway Department have been subjected to considerable criticism—there is a good view of approaching trains. Only the other day I had a suggestion made to me that we should alter our time-table so as not to have two trains passing a crossing simultaneously. That suggestion was made quite seriously. The problem is not solved by merely waving a wand, or by merely saying, "Put up a gate." Since I saw the hon. member and the Cottesloe council I have obtained an estimate of the cost of providing overhead bridges or subways throughout the metropolitan area. The cost would be £300,000.

Mr. Duff: Are you going to do anything?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have already told the hon. member that I am prepared to take some action with regard to the more dangerous crossings. But I ask the people to assist me with regard to the closing of some crossings that are not needed.

Mr. Duff: But that is very indefinite. You promised to do something at once.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not permissible for the hon. member to engage in conversation with the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot say anything more definite than that we will deal with the more dangerous crossings. I am not going to tell the hon. member what we are going to do, because we have not yet decided what we are going to do.

Mr. Duff: You said you would do something before the summer set in.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The whole position has to be reviewed. The problem is one that has to be tackled, but I am not going to be forced into spending money merely because of an agitation which is due largely to want of foresight and lack of ordinary precautions on the part of the general public. I am not going to be forced into doing something that will land the system in more difficulties, perhaps, than have to be faced at the present time. I shall ask the public to realise their responsibility, and I shall ask the Railway Department to use every reasonable precaution. Frequently hon. members and the public accept the view that the man on the locomotive has been careless. If the man on the locomotive were to pull up every time he saw the possibility of a collision at a crossing, there would be a lot of questions asked. The traffic could not be carried on under such conditions. The general public have a responsibility, as well as the Railway Department. However, the whole question is being considered, and when a decision has been arrived at action will be taken for the purpose of minimising the danger at crossings. I submit the Estimates, reminding hon. members that we do not take into account the increased cost of the de-

partment necessitated by the award given by the Arbitration Court.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 12.5 a.m. (Thursday.)

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 27th November, 1919.

	Page
Questions: Repatriation—1, Employment in Public Service; 2, Sustenance allowance...	1730
Motion: State Trading Concerns control...	1730
Bills: Road Districts, Com. ...	1733
Divorce Act Amendment, returned ...	1734
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, 1R.	1734
Sale of Liquor Regulation Act Continuation, 1R.	1734
Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Ltd. (Private), 2R.	1734
Constitution Act Amendment, 2R. ...	1735
Traffic, Assembly's Message ...	1749
Industries Assistance Act Amendment, 2R. ...	1753

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

QUESTIONS (2)—REPATRIATION.

Employment in Public Service.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education: Can he inform the House when the return, as promised by the Minister in reply to questions asked by me on 1st October relative to the employment of returned soldiers in the Public Service, will be laid on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Returns from departments are now almost complete, and it is anticipated that the return will be placed on the Table next week.

Sustenance Allowance.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education: 1, Did the Federal Repatriation Department approve of the following paragraph, appearing on page 8, "Soldiers Settlement Guide," 1919, issued under the direction of the Hon. James Mitchell, M.L.A., Minister for Repatriation:—"A sustenance allowance will be paid by the Federal department for six months pending productivity of land, the amount being 20s. per week for single men, 30s. per week for married men, and 2s. 6d. for each child not exceeding four"? 2, Is it a fact that the Federal

Repatriation' Act and its regulations clearly set out that any sustenance granted pending the productivity of land is granted only in necessitous cases? 3, Is it a fact that the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Board, acting with the authority of the Minister controlling the board, determines—(a) what are or what are not necessitous cases; (b) the productivity or otherwise of land granted to discharged soldiers under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act; and upon such determination recommends the Federal Repatriation Department to grant sustenance within a prescribed period? 4, Has any recommendation made by the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Board for the granting of sustenance pending productivity of land granted to discharged soldiers been refused by the Federal Repatriation Department?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes, this being the arrangement entered into by the Federal Repatriation Department. 2, Yes. 3, (a) Yes; (b) Yes. 4, No.

MOTION—STATE TRADING CONCERNS, CONTROL.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.34]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House, and in accordance with the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner, all State trading concerns should be placed under a general manager or board responsible direct to the Treasury.

I do not propose to go into the very important principle of State trading concerns. I take it that the system is established and, since it is established, I wish to see the shareholders of these ventures dealt with as shareholders are dealt with in an ordinary business affair. One of the first steps that will put the State trading concerns on a sound footing is to carry out the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner in his report for 1918 as follows:—

State Trading Concerns. The sawmills, brick works, implement and engineering works and Boyup quarry are controlled by the Public Works Department. The steamship service, ferries, and hotels by the Colonial Secretary's Department, while the Wyndham Meat Works, refrigerating works and butter and bacon factories are under the Agricultural Department. In making my departmental inspection I was much impressed with what seemed to me the necessity for bringing all trading concerns under one control, and I came to the conclusion that the interests of the State would be best served either by placing the whole of these undertakings under a general manager or an independent board of business men, the general manager or board to be responsible direct to the Treasury and have the management of the vari-