

phal progress of the party with which I am associated. That party had its genesis in the mining industry, and always had its backbone there. While elsewhere the hands of those that fed were bitten by those who were fed, the mine workers have remained invariably loyal to their political faith. I ask hon. members to consider whether in the course of nine years there must not have arisen need for improvement in our mining laws. It is a scandal that those laws should not have been amended long ago. This is the only piece of legislation by which the House can directly assist the miner, by improving the conditions under which he works. The object of the Bill is laudable, and I appeal to the House to do for the miner what he has been prepared to do in this hour of stress and need. No member of this House will say for a moment, "Cornell believes this is all the miner wants; Cornell believes that this will suffice for the miner's needs." I said in my opening remarks that I did not believe anything of the kind. As a representative of the mine workers, however, as a representative of those who constitute the backbone of the present Government, I say that the mine workers have been prepared to sink all controversial proposals during this time of stress, when we do not know what is before us. The miner says that he wants certain conditions and that his lot will not be satisfactory until he gets them. He is prepared to waive the majority of those conditions until better times. All he asks now is the right to appoint inspectors to look after the welfare of the miner. If such inspector finds that the welfare of the miners is not being safeguarded as it should be, then he must have the power to take action before the proper tribunal, a court of justice.

On motion by Hon. F. Connor debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 29th September, 1915.

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Acting Premier: By-laws of Broad Arrow roads board.

QUESTION—LIME DEPOSITS, LAKE CLIFTON.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is he aware that a majority of the settlers in the South-West find it impossible to profitably farm their holdings without a supply of lime? 2, Seeing that a tramway could be cheaply constructed with second-class material, do the Government intend to develop the Lake Clifton lime deposits, and thereby carry out the promise made by Mr. Bath at the Harvey show?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, The use of lime is essential to produce the maximum results. 2, Owing to the financial position the Government were unable to undertake the work as desired, but they have received a further offer to exploit the deposit from a private company. The Government are investigating the matter from the point of view of the relative merits of the Lake Clifton and the Dongarra deposits.

QUESTION—TIMBER INDUSTRY, SEA FREIGHTS.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Works: 1, Will he make representa-

tions to the Federal Government for vessels engaged in shipping the harvest to be utilised in carrying timber after that work is completed? 2, Is it a fact that timber contracts could now be made, but for the prohibitive freights ruling at present? 3, Is he aware of any steps that could be taken to enable the State Sawmills and other timber firms to maintain production in anticipation of getting cheaper freights?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes, applications have already been made to the Federal Government for vessels, but the demand for tonnage is so great and the interests so varied, that the vessels are chartered to the highest bidder, and the same procedure would no doubt prevail after the freighting of the harvest is completed. 2, Yes, certain countries to which previously large quantities of jarrah were exported, are practically now closed to this trade on account of the excessive freights ruling. 3, The only method of continuing producing would be the provision of the necessary capital, but the anticipation of cheaper freights in the immediate future is very remote.

QUESTION—JETTIES, DEPTH OF WATER.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Premier: What is the depth of water at the jetties of the following harbours:—Geraldton, Carnarvon, Point Sampson, and Port Hedland, and also at the anchorage, Onslow?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Geraldton, 23ft. outer end, decreasing to 18ft. 1,000ft. in shore; Carnarvon, 18ft. low tide, 22ft. high tide, outer berth; Point Sampson, 18ft. low tide, 36ft. high tide; Port Hedland, 16ft. low tide, 35ft. high tide; Onslow anchorage, 24ft. one and a half miles north of jetty end.

QUESTION—WHEAT GRISTING AGREEMENT.

Mr. GEORGE: I wish to ask the Acting Premier, without notice, whether

he will lay on the Table all the papers that have passed between the Government and Ockerby and Co. and the Perth Roller Flour Mills, or either of them, in connection with the gristing agreement.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I can scarcely answer the question without an opportunity of looking into it. I am not aware of the whole of the circumstances surrounding the contract, and, therefore, I am not prepared to answer the hon. member off hand. I scarcely think the matter is so urgent as not to allow of notice being given. Certainly the Government have nothing to hide, but before answering the question I desire an opportunity of looking into it.

Mr. GEORGE: Then I will give notice of my intention to ask the question to-morrow.

QUESTION—SINKING FUND.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I desire to ask the Acting Premier, without notice, whether he has received any reply from the Premier in Melbourne in regard to the statement alleged to have been made concerning the sinking fund.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, I received the following reply from the Premier this morning—

Statement that I made explanation *re* sinking fund to conference untrue. Not mentioned there. Report in *West* probably due to statement made by me on arrival to local Press who had published Wilson's and Gardiner's criticisms without having previously published actual proposal and they asked me to explain it. This I did, and as you are aware no action has been taken in direction of approaching sinking fund trustees, and you can again assure Parliament that matter is one on which I have no intention of flouting their wishes, my object in mentioning it in Budget being to enable discussion.

Apparently the report was incorrect. It seems that the Premier did not make such a statement to the conference.

Mr. Munsie: It is near enough for the *West*.

SELECT COMMITTEE, WYNDHAM FREEZING WORKS.

Extension of time.

Mr. GEORGE: There are several essential witnesses whom we have not yet been able to get hold of. I move—

That the time for bringing up the select committee's report be extended for a fortnight.

Question passed.

SELECT COMMITTEE, HORSE- RACING CONTROL.

Extension of time.

Mr. HUDSON (Yilgarn): I move—

That the time for bringing up the Select Committee's report be extended to Wednesday, 5th October.

The committee have closed their inquiry, and the report is in course of preparation. Every endeavour will be made to submit it to the House on Wednesday of next week.

Question passed.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE, MO- NEY BILLS PROCEDURE.

Extension of time.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning): I also have to ask for an extension of time. I move—

That the time for bringing up the Select Committee's report be extended for one week.

The committee of this House have met and, as you know, Sir, have practically agreed on a line of action. The committee of this House have to meet the committee of the other House next Tuesday. The result will be reported to this House on the following day.

Question passed.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Vermin Boards Act Amendment.

2, Postponement of Debts Act Continuance.

Transmitted to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1915-16.

In Committee of Supply.

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

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.45]: In dealing with the Estimates we have heard a good deal of what is called constructive criticism. It seems to me to be a most difficult thing to find what constructive criticism means. If we criticise any particular items and our friends object to it, it is unfriendly criticism. Anything I have to say, however, will not be said in any carping critical spirit. I will deal first of all with the sinking fund. We have had a good deal of discussion and argument as regards the sinking fund. I am not like some hon. members on this side. Personally I wonder whether instead of placing £265,447 to a sinking fund, the money could not be put to better use. I certainly do not pose as an authority on high finance; therefore if I happen to tread on some of the toes of the financiers of this House I hope they will forgive me and put it down to my youthfulness and inexperience. I view the matter in this way. I consider that a private individual would not borrow money, and that is evidently what we are doing, and place it to a sinking fund. I think this money can be far better spent in developing various portions of the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They are supposed to take it out of their revenue.

Mr. THOMSON: They are not doing it. We have faith in this country, and I take second place to no one in my belief in the future of Western Australia. I think it is a country with great possibilities. To my mind that money might possibly be spent to better advantage in developing this huge State of ours. When we turn to Return No. 7 we find State steamships, sawmills, implement works, South Perth ferries, milk supply, brickyards and quarries, a total of approximately £426,729, which has been placed against the loan expenditure. What I want to point out is that we are

appointed by the people. We are supposed to represent the people, and the people themselves say "What are you doing in the House; why are you allowing the Government to expend money in these ways?" All I can say is that we know nothing about it. It seems to me, if we are going along at this rate, where apparently eight members, who have been appointed by the people, are to overrule a total of 80 members, that the country is paying a lot of money for nothing. We are paying a considerable amount of money to members who come here and if we desire to criticise any particular items on the Estimates we are met by the reply that the money is spent. I wonder whether it might not be in the interests of good government if the House was to refuse to pass some of these items. If we are going to continue in the way we are going at the present time, there is absolutely no need for the country to go to the expense of paying so many members of Parliament. Let the country appoint seven or eight business men to run the affairs of the State. After all those who are appointed, the Ministers, are only appointed to carry out the business affairs of the country. The unfortunate part of it is that they are usurping the whole power of Parliament. I consider that this House should be consulted in matters of this sort. Take for instance the latest purchase which the Government have entered into, namely the purchase of the steamer "Kangaroo." There we have an amount of £140,000 which they have expended. It seems to me that while we claim that we are governed by the people, it is absolutely a farce, as affairs are being conducted at the present time. I am representing some 4,000 electors. If there is any loss incurred on these affairs, these various business undertakings which the Government have entered into, those electors have got to pay their proportion of the loss. They will be taxed to make up for it. I should be lacking in my duty to my electors if I did not protest against the continued action of this Gov-

ernment, or any other Government, in this respect.

Mr. Bolton: My electors are taxed to pay for the agricultural railways in your electorate.

Mr. THOMSON: Nothing of the sort. I guarantee that the loss on the various enterprises which have been entered into by the Government will far outweigh the losses on the agricultural railways in my district.

Mr. Bolton: That does not matter; it is the principle I object to.

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member has undoubtedly derived great benefit in his constituency.

Mr. Bolton: Not as much as in yours.

Mr. THOMSON: That is not so. If the hon. member can point out where the electors of my constituency have derived benefit from the fish shops, from the meat shops, the State timber mills, or from the Perth trams—

Mr. George: Or workers' homes.

Mr. THOMSON: As far as workers' homes are concerned, the people have derived some benefit. If the hon. member can point out any of these things from which the people have derived benefit I have a lot to learn. I am giving my view about the matter. I certainly consider that we, as a House, should take strong measures in respect to these matters. I admit that rigid economy must be exercised, but the most remarkable thing is that when economies have to be exercised the first places that are touched are the outside districts and the out-lying portions of the State. Comparisons are odious, so I hope hon. members will pardon me if I touch upon these matters. I am not doing so in a parochial spirit. In 1912 the then Minister for Works (Hon. W. D. Johnson) promised the settlers in the Nyabing, Pingarnup, and Chinecup districts that they would have the railway extension built from there in time to lift the 1914 harvest.

Hon. Frank Wilson: A good many promises like that have been made.

Mr. THOMSON: Unfortunately for the settlers of that district, owing to the

war, the Bill did not pass Parliament at this time last year, but it was passed subsequently. I understood from the present Minister for Works (Hon. W. C. Angwin) that this line was to be constructed at once so that we would get this year's harvest to the market by this means. He made the statement that they proposed to use the rails which had been lifted from the Great Southern railway and that they had sleepers in stock, and what from his point of view was a most important matter, that it would give employment to men who were out of work. If we turn now to the city of Perth—and I hope the hon. member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly) will pardon me for including this—we find that in Murray-street there is a deviation in the tramway service. I understand the people of Perth did not want these tramways taken away from their present route.

Mr. Foley: On what do you base your argument?

Mr. THOMSON: A petition signed by 13,000 people was presented to the Government.

Mr. Muusie: There were thousands of them living in my electorate.

Mr. Foley: They canvassed all over the metropolitan area.

Mr. THOMSON: They had a perfect right to do so because they all use the trams.

Mr. Foley: It was a shopkeepers' petition.

Mr. THOMSON: There was a petition presented to the Minister containing 13,000 names of persons opposing this alteration, but the Government in spite of the protest of the people of Perth, insisted for some reason or other on putting down this line in Murray-street. This line is costing, according to a reply which the Premier gave to a question I asked him in this House, £13,800. There is not a mile and a half of line being laid and it is not urgent in my opinion. The people of Perth have all the facilities they require already. Here we have a double line running up Hay-street at the pres-

ent time, and it answers all the requirements.

The Minister for Lands: No, it does not. It is absolutely dangerous to-day.

Mr. Allen: That is because of the terrible state of the line.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. THOMSON: I view the question as a country member.

The Minister for Lands: You ought to be somewhere near accurate, however.

Mr. THOMSON: I say it is accurate.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Mr. THOMSON: The Premier's reply to me should be accurate. He said it was to cost £13,800.

The Minister for Lands: You said there was no need to expend the money.

Mr. THOMSON: In my opinion there is not any need to spend the money. It is purely a matter of opinion, however.

Mr. Heitmann: Let it go at that.

Mr. THOMSON: I think I shall be able to prove what I am aiming at. As I was saying a sum of £13,800 is being expended here in spite of the wishes of the people of Perth who did not want it. Taking into consideration that, according to the Minister's statement, they had the rails and had the sleepers, this £13,800 would have been better spent in building railways in the country. It would have paid for the labour and the extension of the line which would be a benefit in the districts I have mentioned and which was urgently wanted.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What about the £140,000 spent on the steamer; that would have built a few miles of railway?

Mr. Foley: He is coming to that; he is only having a trip on the tram at present.

Mr. THOMSON: When it comes to a matter of economy the first places which are cut off are the outside districts. These people who were promised definitely that they would get their harvest lifted by the railway in 1914 have not had their expectations realised.

The Minister for Lands: It was said that an effort would be made, but that it was a question of whether the Treasurer

could supply the finances. My desire was to explain the thing perfectly to them.

Mr. THOMSON: There may be a misunderstanding on the part of the people out there, but they are of opinion that the Minister promised them that the 1914 harvest would be lifted. We were subsequently in hopes that the harvest would be lifted in 1915. This is the unfortunate position. Some of the settlers live 30 miles from the railway, and it is absolutely impossible for them to carry on at a profit. While the Minister was making that tour—and I was very pleased to have him in the district, so that he could see what was going on—

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is that the Bruce Rock business?

Mr. THOMSON: No. While the Minister was making that tour he also promised the people from the Ongerup and Needilup districts that he would have a survey made for their railway. I know the reply we will get is that there are no funds available. That is almost a nightmare to members of Parliament.

The Minister for Lands: And outside of Parliament, too.

Mr. THOMSON: Probably so. When we find that the Government purchase a steamer, and pay £140,000 for it, and that they can go and force upon the people of Perth tramways which they do not want at a cost of £13,500, it is no wonder that the people living in the country districts wonder what value they are getting for the money they are paying to keep members of Parliament here to represent them.

Mr. Foley: What benefit would that have been to the people in the country?

Mr. THOMSON: They would have had the hope of getting a railway. Seventy-five per cent. of the people in these districts have been living there in the hope of getting a railway and if it had not been for the chance of getting this railway they would have left. I know for a fact that one man in one of these districts has left his crop and walked away. He has enlisted, and he said to his neighbour, "You can take the

crop," and there are other settlers who have done the same thing.

The Minister for Lands: Some have gone from alongside the railway.

Mr. THOMSON: Perhaps they have, but that does not get away from the fact that these people were promised a railway.

The Minister for Lands: It does not prove that some have not gone from alongside the railway.

Mr. THOMSON: The point I am leading up to is this: we had a good deal of discussion in regard to the Esperance railway, and I believe it was the Acting Premier who promised the settlers in the Esperance district that if they would cart their produce to the road where the railway line would go the Government would cart their produce at railway rates either to Esperance or to Norseman and purchase the wheat. I would like to get something definite from the Minister, whether he will give the same promise to the people living in the districts I have named as he gave to the people in the Esperance district. If it is good enough for the people in Esperance to have a promise made to them, I hope the Government will extend the same promise to the people in the Nyabing and Ongerup districts. I regret to say that unless something of that sort is done some of the settlers will have to leave. Many of them have come from the old country with a considerable sum of money and have spent the whole of it there, and it is only because they have spent the whole of their money there they are hanging on to their land in the hope of getting a return. I hope the Minister in reply will give a definite assurance that saving the railway going to these districts he will grant to the people the same promise as he gave to the people of Esperance. Still dealing with the economies experienced in the different districts I asked the Minister for Works whether the statement which appeared in the Press was correct, that the Albany Jetty would be reduced from 1,000 feet to 800 feet, and this is the reply and the reason he gave—

The Chief Harbour Master asked for spring piles to be provided, and consequently it was decided, so as not to increase the original estimate, to curtail the length by 200 feet, but at the same time to increase shipping accommodation by providing for berthage on both sides of the jetty; the original scheme provided for berthing accommodation on one side only.

All I can say is, that it is a very lame excuse indeed. I am not blaming the Minister for Works; I am prepared to admit that he has to be guided by his responsible officers, but when we find a man who poses as an engineer, and I say poses as a engineer advisedly, prepares plans and estimates for the department, and does not provide for spring piles for a place like Albany, the sooner that man is dispensed with the better. To say that the jetty to be built is only to be used on one side is an absolute absurdity. While I do not blame the Minister personally, certainly I blame the Minister for giving such a reply to the House and trying to gull the people of Western Australia, particularly those along the Great Southern line. Perhaps members may say, "What has a jetty at Albany to do with the member for Katanning?" We are one of the great wheat producing areas, and as long as the port of Albany has not proper shipping facilities for handling wheat, so long will every farmer in my district lose 1½d. on every bushel of wheat he grows. I would like to get another assurance from the Government that as soon as funds are available the jetty will be completed to its full length.

Mr. Heitmann: There is no possible hope until Geraldton has received some help.

Mr. THOMSON: All I say is that Geraldton has my sincere sympathy. Geraldton has been suffering the same as Albany has been for a great many years. If members turn to return number 8 they will find that the port of Fremantle had £106,055 spent on it.

Mr. Taylor: During what period?

Mr. THOMSON: If the hon. member will look at return number 8 he will find the expenditure compared with previous years, and Fremantle Harbour Works have had spent on them last year £106,055, and a little lower down it will be found that Harbours and Rivers generally have had an amount of £58,014 spent, all going to prove the argument that the central portions of the State are receiving what to my mind appears to be more than their just due or proportion. Considering the Government came into power with one of the planks of their platform as decentralisation, there is something wrong.

Mr. Heitmann: That is only in the abstract.

Mr. THOMSON: Probably it is.

Mr. Male: It has not powellised.

Mr. THOMSON: It has not powellised but it has paralysed as far as the results are concerned. I do not want to make members for the metropolitan area feel antagonistic to the country, they should have what they are justly entitled to, but it is amusing to me as a country member that when economy is required the places attacked are those outside the metropolis. I do not know if it is because there are more voters in the metropolitan area. There is an old saying that if you take care of the pence the pounds will take care of themselves, and if we take care of the country the cities can take care of themselves. We have had that proved during the last drought. The Ministers themselves and the people have been taught a severe lesson, that unless the country is prosperous the towns are going to feel the effect. Speaking purely from that point of view, I want the Government to consider when economies are to be effected they should be distributed equally all over the State. I hope the Minister will give us something definite as to what is going to be done to provide proper handling facilities at the port of Albany. We want to have facilities the same as at Fremantle so that the producers in my district will get the full advantage as those more fortunately situated in similar districts near the port of Fremantle. And I say that without any antagonism to Fremantle. I appeal

to the Government to give us along the Great Southern those facilities which are so sadly lacking. When other plans are to be prepared for jetties the best thing the Government can do is to get another engineer to prepare the plans, for it is a disgrace and does not reflect any credit on the engineering branch to produce plans without providing for spring piles. We find on return number 5 that mechanics' institutes are cut down to £750. I have no desire to say that the votes for the Library and Art Gallery in Perth should be cut down. I think they are very necessary institutions, and I am proud of what we have here. They are certainly an educational benefit to the community. Again, comparisons are odious. We have a great many mechanics' institutes in the State and last year, without any notice, these institutes were told that they were not going to get any subsidy. That was for 1914. The people running the mechanics' institutes should have due notice that they were not going to have any subsidy. In my district we have a mechanics' institute and it has been a marked boon to the community, but we found that our subsidy was cut off, the only reason the Minister could adduce being that there was a billiard room in the institute. I maintain that a mechanics' institute in a country district where it provides the means for young men to keep out of the hotels is performing a good function, even if it has a billiard room in conjunction with it.

Mr. George: What is wrong with a billiard room?

Mr. THOMSON: That was one of the reasons why we were refused our grant. They say the institute is being used as a club. When this institute was started and it was proposed to place a billiard table in it, we were met with strenuous opposition from the publicans. They knew they were going to lose a considerable amount of their business. In the country districts there are not many places of amusement where young men can spend their evenings, and it is there that such places as mechanics and literary institutes do good work. The subsidy is practically cut off so far as the country

districts are concerned, for while we find that in the metropolitan area £6,850 is granted, the country is given a paltry £750. I am endeavouring to show that where economies have to be effected they should be effected over the whole of the State, and not merely on the outskirts. In regard to railway improvements in our districts, there has been considerable agitation for trucking yards for sheep. There is a considerable number of sheep in the district which I represent, and on the spur lines, which the Government so cheerfully charge us 1s. a ton extra for using, there are no facilities provided at all.

Hon. Frank Wilson: When they went to the country they said they would take it off, and they took it off for five minutes and put it on again.

Mr. THOMSON: The Commissioner of Railways has been approached by deputation and by letter for a considerable time past in regard to these facilities, and he has always refused to do anything. It is a sound business proposition for the railways to provide the people on the spur lines with trucking yards. I am prepared to admit that if we go to the Commissioner again he will say, "We have provided you with portable hurdles and portable races, but the cost of moving them from place to place is so great that the people themselves prefer to travel their sheep 30 miles to a main line, so that the stock may be handled and trucked properly, and so that there might not be any risk of injury being done." In one portion of my district the settlers offered to erect trucking yards provided the Government found the material. There are millions of second-hand sleepers along the Great Southern railway. I do not know why the Commissioner absolutely refuses to allow the people to utilise these sleepers for the erection of sheep yards. To my mind his is a most amazing refusal, and I hope the Minister for Railways will direct that, so far as funds will permit, the Railway Department will provide these facilities.

Mr. Bolton: That is a necessary qualification.

Mr. THOMSON: I am prepared to admit that, but there are all these sleepers on the Great Southern railway which should be used for that purpose, and many of the settlers would be prepared to put them up themselves if the Railway Department would only move the sleepers.

Mr. Thomas: I suppose they are condemned sleepers?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes.

Mr. Harrison: They would not be long enough for stock yards.

Mr. THOMSON: I am only referring to sheep yards. There is another matter I want to touch upon, and it refers to the treatment which is meted out to people in the country, and particularly on the Great Southern line. Many people who travel at night time, and in winter time especially, experience considerable inconvenience by having to wait often for a couple of hours for a train at a station where there is no shelter provided. Along the suburban lines waiting rooms are always provided for ladies and gentlemen, and I do not see why the people in the country should not have similar facilities.

Mr. Thomas: And you are charged a higher rate in the country.

Mr. THOMSON: Along the suburban lines people pay cheaper rates than do the people in the country, and yet the latter have to put up with greater inconveniences. While in the suburban areas trains run at intervals of half an hour, we in the country have to put up with only one train a day, and invariably that train is late. Recently I went over the Collie to Narrogin line, and at Narrogin I had to wait two hours to connect up.

Mr. Harrison: That is nothing.

Mr. THOMSON: It was a bitterly cold night, and there was no shelter of any kind. When funds are available the Railway Department should certainly take into consideration the advisableness of providing waiting room accommodation for male as well as female passengers.

Mr. Harrison: Travel round by Merredin next time. It is 200 per cent. worse there.

Mr. THOMSON: If it is so much worse via Merredin, then all I can say is heaven help the people in those parts. I do not ask that economy should be exercised purely in the country districts, but I do consider that it should be exercised in many directions by the Public Works Department. Most of the work at the present time is being done departmentally, and I can quite understand the feelings of the Minister for Lands when he wrote a minute in connection with the Nevanas contract, that he did not want his officers to be taken seriously so far as their Estimates were concerned.

The Minister for Lands: I never said that.

Mr. THOMSON: I have taken it from the file.

The Minister for Lands: You did not read the file properly; you read it like the member for Murray-Wellington did.

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member stated that he did not want the officers of the department to be taken seriously.

The Minister for Lands: That had nothing to do with their estimates.

Mr. THOMSON: I will read the exact words which appeared on the file, "I have looked through the points raised by the departmental officers, and my opinion is that they have gone to the utmost extremes in building up the cost of these works, and I do not want them to be taken seriously."

The Minister for Lands: That is in regard to reinforced concrete.

Mr. THOMSON: That is the statement the Minister made.

Mr. Bolton: Why take only that extract and leave out the preceding few lines?

Mr. THOMSON: There is absolutely nothing about reinforced concrete in the minute. The statement made by the Minister was a definite one.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It applies to everything!

Mr. THOMSON: I agree with the Minister that it applies to everything.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I tell you you are deliberately

misleading the House. It does not apply to everything.

Mr. THOMSON: The Honorary Minister said that it did, and I quite agree with him.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I say now it does not.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister for Lands stated that he did not want his officers to be taken seriously. What is the reason for that?

Mr. Munsie: He only said that in regard to one subject.

Mr. THOMSON: When hon. members have finished interjecting I will proceed.

Mr. Munsie: Then be fair.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. THOMSON: There is no getting away from the fact that the Minister wrote that minute, and in my opinion, when the officers of the department know that work has to be done departmentally they do build up their estimates, because they know they have to provide for excessive cost.

Mr. Heitmann: They must do that because in most cases they are up against public tenders.

Mr. THOMSON: They are not against public tender. I maintain the cost of our works is being built up through having it done departmentally. There is no check; we have nothing but an estimate by the officers. Speaking from memory, I believe it was Mr. Beasley, the Chief Architect, who stated that the only way of getting the true value of the work was to call for public tenders, so that it might be known whether the estimate of the department was correct or otherwise. In connection with the Sewerage Department, I know of one case where a three-roomed jarrah house, which cost £375, was sewered at a cost of £82 14s. 7d. I inspected this property, and I considered that the value of the work done was not more than £47. That was not only my own estimate, but the estimate of a competent man, who said that he would jump at the opportunity of doing the work at that house for £47.

The Minister for Mines: Will you let me have particulars about that

house? Was it the same one that has already been referred to here?

Mr. THOMSON: It is the same house. The point I wish to emphasise, is that the people who are compelled to take advantage of the deferred payments of the department are those in poor circumstances, and they are not in the position to pay these big sums of money. It is grossly unfair on the part of the department to charge any individual £35 more for a work than it can be done by public tender.

The Minister for Mines: I can assure you that the cost of the connections which have been made by the department compare very favourably with the cost of the works done by contractors.

Mr. THOMSON: That is only one case which has come under my notice. I take it that the Minister is sincere when he makes the statement, but an assurance such as that does not convince me. The department sewered this place and no estimate was given. It is apparently a case of happy-go-lucky, do the job, charge what you like when the job is finished, and the individual has to pay interest as well as the cost. The plumbers and contractors in Perth would be only too pleased if they had the opportunity to go on to Government jobs and charge what they liked, allowing for every contingency. Why, if that were done, we would all be millionaires in a very short space of time.

Mr. Heitmann: The contractors are doing the work no cheaper.

Mr. George: That is easily accounted for.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not opposed to departmental work, but where the department do the work tenders should be called in open competition from those who are in the business, and the man who submits the price for the department should be made personally responsible for it.

The Minister for Mines: The engineer?

Mr. THOMSON: The engineer and the foreman. If this were done we would get proper value for the work. If the work was costing more than the price

submitted, there would soon be a foreman looking for another job, but it would lead to greater efficiency than is obtained at present. This is the only way in which we can get a fair estimate of what the work is costing, and if such a system were introduced and we then received an assurance from the Minister that the department were doing the work as cheaply or more cheaply than it could be done by people outside, I would be prepared to believe him.

The Minister for Mines: I have gone into the matter during recent months and have found that our costs compare more than favourably with the cost of a large number done by contract.

Mr. THOMSON: Does the Minister mean to tell me that for sewerage a three-roomed jarrah cottage £82 14s. 7d. is a reasonable charge?

The Minister for Mines: You cannot judge by the size of the cottage.

Mr. THOMSON: It is possible to judge by the work done, and any competent man will say that it was absolute robbery to charge £82 for it. As I have mentioned, a competent man in the metropolitan area would have been glad to take it on for £47.

Mr. Foley: Will you let me have a look at the specification?

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member would not understand it. I claim to have a certain knowledge of the subject, and I maintain that it is a very wrong principle that those who are not able to pay cash, and who are compelled by law to have their places sewered, should have to pay whatever the Government like to charge them. It is grossly unfair that the individual in the case I have mentioned should have to pay £35 more than the value of the work, and on top of that interest as well. To a certain extent, I am an advocate of day labour. I do all my work by day labour, so I am not speaking from any biased point of view. There are times when under proper administration the department should be able to do sewerage work as economically as, if not more so, than it can be done by contract, but unfortunately this has not been borne out by the charges made for the work which has

been done departmentally. If the Government are determined to pursue this policy, and I believe they are pledged to do so, they should, in fairness more particularly to those people of the metropolitan area who are not in a position to pay and who have to take advantage of the Government's extended terms, call for tenders, allow the department to submit a price, and give the work to the lowest tenderer. I submit these points for the serious consideration of the Government. It is said that comparisons are odious, but there is another matter I wish to direct attention to. The hon. Mr. Connolly recently asked the following question—

- 1, Is it a fact that the Government have guaranteed advances made by the Commonwealth Bank to persons or corporations for large sums?
- 2, If so, will the Government state the amount and date of each guarantee?
- 3, Under what authority were these guarantees given?

The Minister for Agriculture replied—

- 1, Yes. 2, (a.) One guarantee of £25,000 approved 29th March, 1915. (b.) One guarantee of £25,000 approved 4th May, 1915. (c.) Guarantee of £5 10s. per ton on ore shipped.
 - 3, The Industries Assistance Act, 1915.
- I would like to know from the Minister whether for giving this guarantee to this company or individual the Government are getting any interest.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Give notice of the question.

The Minister for Lands: You do not get interest on a guarantee.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The interest is paid to the bank.

Mr. THOMSON: This money has been guaranteed under the Industries Assistance Act. I admit that the bank get the interest, but if the Government could give a guarantee of £50,000 to one individual or company, why did not they guarantee the farmers' accounts at the private banks, and obviate the necessity for the Industries Assistance Board? The Government, however, have taken a mortgage over every farmer who required assistance—lock, stock, and barrel.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Poor farmer! He would have had to pay the interest and these people have to pay the interest.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, but why should the Government pledge themselves to the tune of £50,000 for the benefit of one company or individual? Are the Government doing this without any payment? I wish they would guarantee me without any security.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you allege that they have guaranteed this money without any security?

Mr. THOMSON: I assume the Government are not getting anything.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You said no security.

Mr. THOMSON: I assume the Government are not to get anything for the guarantee. Are the Government receiving anything for pledging the credit of this State to the tune of £50,000?

Mr. O'Loughlen: The industry is being carried on and men are being kept in employment. If you back a neighbour's bill, you do not get any interest.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not back anyone's bill. This transaction does not compare very well with the treatment meted out to the farming community. Why should one particular industry be guaranteed to such an extent and no mortgage taken over it, when nothing will be returned to the Government for the risk? I presume there is a certain amount of risk or there would be no necessity for the guarantee.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The comparison is not a good one.

Mr. THOMSON: It is one which appeals to me.

Mr. Willmott: What consideration are the Government getting?

The Minister for Mines: They are keeping the industry going. Are the Government to stand by and allow all our industries to close down?

Mr. Bolton: The Government have advanced £850,000 to keep the farmers going.

Mr. Willmott: And are charging 6 per cent. for it.

The Minister for Mines: If you lend me £100 you get the interest, but if you back a bill you do not get anything.

Mr. THOMSON: I would like some one to guarantee me to the extent of £50,000 without payment.

The Minister for Mines: You would get it if you had the security.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not speaking in a parochial spirit.

Mr. McDowall: You are not doing anything in a parochial spirit.

Mr. THOMSON: When speaking on the Address-in-reply, I expressed the opinion that if the Government prohibited children of under school-going age from attending school, a considerable saving would be effected in the education vote. The Minister for Education has given me a return showing that this year 2,700 children under the school age have been admitted. There are, of course, others for the previous year. The average cost to the State per head is £6 3s. 7d. exclusive of administration. Here we can effect a saving of approximately £21,000 without injury to anyone. Seeing that at the present time economy should be exercised, I say if we can economise to the extent of £21,000 by simply putting our education laws into operation, the suggestion might well be considered.

Mr. Hickmott: You will injure a lot of children who are over the age and are already at school. Many of the schools will be closed.

Mr. THOMSON: That argument might apply to some of the country schools, but the return shows that the major porportion of these children are in the more thickly populated centres. It would certainly be economical for the department to waive the regulation so far as children under age attending the half-time schools are concerned. The suggestion is worthy of consideration. I do not advocate the curtailing of the advantages of education to the children, but the Government might well economise in this direction. I also consider that, as far as possible, the wheels of industry should be kept going. The Government have my entire sympathy in the times of stress which they are up against at

present. I wish to be absolutely fair in any criticism I offer, notwithstanding that some members think I might be moved by a spirit of parochialism.

The Minister for Mines: Your criticism is perfectly fair.

Mr. THOMSON: Thank you. I want to be fair, and I want, if possible, to offer some constructive criticism, though I find it a difficult thing to do. As soon as one makes the endeavour, one is challenged from all sides of the House.

Mr. Bolton: Have you made the endeavour?

Mr. THOMSON: Hon. members opposite refuse to accept constructive criticism. One phase of the finances on which I should like to touch is the suggestion of the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas). We have a very large civil service, and a great many State enterprises now in progress. I do not know how many of these State enterprises we shall have before we finish. The suggestion of the member for Bunbury was that Government employees should be permitted to offer recommendations pertaining to their work to some responsible person other than the heads of departments. The reason for making such recommendations through another channel than that of the departmental head is that, unfortunately, cases have occurred where suggestions made to a head have been held back for a certain time and then put forward as the suggestions of the head. The man actually working in an industry can often point out where economies might be effected. Certainly Ministers themselves cannot do this. In 999 cases out of 1,000 any economy recommended by a Minister has been suggested to him. The appointment of committees, as has been advocated, is also worthy of consideration. Parliament as carried on at present is, to my mind at any rate, somewhat of a failure. The representatives of the people have practically no say in the main question, namely the expenditure. The eight men composing the Executive decide what is to be, and it is so; and the rest of the members come along like sheep and

follow their leaders. At present, we simply have to do as we are told. As members of the Legislative Assembly we ought to have a say in the expenditure of the country's money. I hope that the Premier will be successful in obtaining means to carry on. The last time he returned from Melbourne, he brought back two or three millions; and I trust he will do so this time.

Mr. Green: You said he wasted the money.

Mr. THOMSON: Under the conditions I have suggested it will not be possible for any Government to waste the country's money. In the interests of the State, and in the interests of the vast mass of our workers, I sincerely trust that the Premier will be able to secure funds, so that the wheels of industry may be kept revolving.

Mr. FOLEY (Mount Leonora) [5.49]: In speaking on the Estimates I do not for one moment desire that any hon. member should accept me for a financial genius. I should like every hon. member to have a good look round, and after viewing the personal appearance of all the financial geniuses let him remember that a financial genius is not speaking at the present time. There has been a great forward movement of the enemies of the Government—a movement emulating that of the Allies on the western front. On the eastern front also the whole force of the Government's enemies have been brought to bear. We find that this talented crowd of people, who all understand finance and who are all whales on economy, get their victims in an outback place in one of the farming areas and tell them that they must not trouble about economy at all, that, no matter what the condition of the State's finances may be, such and such a railway ought to be built. That is the broad national sentiment of the people as it rules at Kuminin onwards to some point between Merredin and the next station. Never in this Chamber have I given a vote against a proposal to which Ministers have said the agriculturists are entitled. The last speaker (Mr. Thomson) began his remarks with borrowing and he finished with borrowing.

He concluded by expressing the hope that the Premier would still be able to borrow more money. Yet in the preceding breath the same hon. member said that the last time the Premier got two millions he squandered it. The hon. member's interest from the view point of economy was so strong that he expressed the hope that the Premier would get more money to squander. If that is economy, I fail to see where the comparison between certain hon. members and high financial experts comes in. My opinion always has been, and until I get evidence to prove the contrary it always will be, that this State at the present time, and also Australia at the present time, because they cannot borrow, are in an advantageous position by reason of finding themselves thrown on their own resources. It would be a good thing for the people of Australia generally to be thrown on their own resources to a greater extent than has been the case in the past. My belief is that if borrowing were stopped, we should be able to show some assets. Our borrowing friends say, "The more you can borrow, the higher your standing as a financier or a financial institution." My belief is that had Western Australia been thrown on its own resources in years gone by, instead of borrowing from outside sources, we would now be producing something here and would have no need to borrow from outside to the extent we have done. This question could have been solved if the men in our Legislative halls had gone in for direct taxation and had not allowed themselves to be dominated by the litt' personal opinions bounded by their own electorates. With direct taxation in this State there will, in my opinion, be no need for a borrowing policy. I shall not enter into the details of the Estimates, because I consider that would be useless. Not knowing what the figures actually mean for this State, I shall not trespass upon the time of the Committee by dilating on something with which I am not fully acquainted. But I will say that the Parliamentarians of this State should

have more say in the expenditure of the money of this State. They should to a greater extent be able to decide in what directions the money shall be spent. Under those conditions the politicians of Western Australia would be able to make better use of their brains. The leader of the Country Party looks at me. My head is not a very large one and I do not claim to possess the brains of a genius; but no matter how little or how much brains a man may be endowed with, the people of this State pay a man in Parliament to use his brains to the best advantage of the State. We could individually use our brains to a greater extent than we are allowed to use them at the present time, if the idea I have suggested prevailed in regard to the spending of money and in regard to the formulation of schemes for conserving the interests of the State. If we cease borrowing, what position shall we be landed in? I venture to assert that if we were not of a borrowing disposition, if we relied on our own resources, we could find accommodation for another million of people here. I do not mean that they should be brought here just now; but if a non-borrowing policy had been adopted in the years gone by we would have had another million of people in the State at the present time. Under those conditions that golden South-West, flowing with milk and honey, of which the leader of the Country Party speaks, would be realised; and when one goes into a hotel in the South-West one might be able to get honey on one's bread, and also fresh milk in one's tea, instead of the condensed milk that is served up at present. That borrowing policy on which the State appears to have gone absolutely mad has spread—and the State is largely responsible for this—to our farming friends. Let us look at the people on the other side who have made their way as farmers, men who started on small holdings, and some of whom—I am glad to say it—are now possessed of competences. In many instances those farmers started entirely on their own resources, with really nothing but

pluck and energy and a grim determination to see the matter through.

Mr. Green: And also a loan from the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. FOLEY: The farmers in the Eastern States to whom I refer had no agricultural bank to draw upon.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: They had its equivalent, though.

Mr. FOLEY: It is only a very few years ago that the *crédit foncier* became worth anything to the Victorian farmer. The borrowing policy and the policy of leaning on somebody else which this State has fostered, has now extended to our farmers, with the result that the farmer will not do anything without having somebody to lean on.

Mr. Griffiths: The early settlers went out and were ruined.

Mr. FOLEY: Others have taken their place, and if the individual has suffered, at least the State has benefited. According to the policy of my hon. friend, posterity in this State is not going to reap the benefit, but is going to pay the bill for the squandering of money in the farming districts. The loss of much of the money on our spur railways, which my friends opposite consider a virtue, is held to be a virtue by members on this side also. We agree that the money has not been lost to the State, but we contend that there are other parts of the State, as for instance the metropolitan area, which should have proper facilities. When it comes to the provision of facilities I wish to be fair to all portions of the State. Something has been said of the expenditure of money on harbours. I believe a great mistake has been made in the centralising policy regarding our harbours and the carriage of the produce of the farmers. People in some parts of the South-West have to consign their stuff to Fremantle, notwithstanding that the mileage to Bunbury is very much less. In the Eastern Districts very often the stuff is taken to Fremantle, although it would be more profitable to send it to some other port. The whole question of decentralisation should be thoroughly considered. In order to give the producers the full results of their labours

the railway system should be so administered as to allow the producer to rail his stuff over the least possible number of miles. This would benefit the farmer to a very great extent, more so indeed than the granting of concessions in other directions. If the farmer were allowed to pay freight to his nearest port, I do not think there would be so great a demand on the part of the producer for the initiation of the system of bulk handling, for the benefit which would accrue to them through the lessened railway mileage would serve to divert their attention from the question of bulk handling. The member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) in all seriousness referred to the question of the South Perth ferry boat, built to carry passengers from the City to South Perth. He said there was something wrong with that boat altogether. If so, it is not right that, because I am sitting on this side, I should be expected to say the Government did right. After all, the six men who constitute the Government did not construct that boat, did not design it.

Mr. Thomson: It was their engineers again.

Mr. FOLEY: But under the pernicious system of having to depend solely on red tape methods, the Government have to take the advice of their officers.

The Minister for Lands: You are not going to take the statement of the member for Canning as correct?

Mr. Willmott: Do you deny it?

The Minister for Lands: Absolutely.

Mr. Taylor: It hurts you a bit, though.

Mr. FOLEY: If the boat is, as the member for Canning says, top heavy, if there is anything wrong with the boat from an engineering point of view, it is certainly the duty of the Government to go right into the question and get a report from the engineer; and if he cannot show conclusively that his opinion is right, the services of that man ought to be dispensed with. I am glad to have the assurance of the Minister for Lands that the boat is all right. Whether we are in opposition, or sitting behind the Government, the great majority of members wish to see

the best possible return given for money paid. Coming to the question of facilities for the trucking of stock at our railway sidings, I may say that recently I saw about 200 head of cattle, worth from £16 to £17 a head, awaiting trucking. The railway yards were in so advanced a state of disrepair that a rope had to be run around the fences, and the moment a bullock went against this improvised fence down went the structure, and the valuable stock were running all round the country side. Many pounds might have been taken off the value of that stock if the man attending them had not known how to deal with them when they got out. The railway facilities provided for the trucking of valuable stock should be of the very best. Again, there is the recognised system of effecting repairs to these facilities. Suppose the railway yard at Leonora requires repairing. A note is sent down, a report is made, men who understand the business in that town are not called upon to repair the yard, but other men are sent up from a centre perhaps hundreds of miles away. It takes perhaps two days for those men to get there, and so two days wages, together with expenses, have to be added to the cost of the repairing of that yard. If a local man who understood the business were asked to carry out repairs, the work would be done far more expeditiously and consequently a great deal more cheaply than when it is done by men sent up from far distant places. The question of education was raised by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson). To a great extent I am with that hon. member. I do not believe in children under the prescribed age being sent to school, although it must be remembered that the stopping of this practice would impose hardship on many schools in outback centres, which are working on the minimum number of scholars. If the schoolmaster is willing to devote some of his extra time and to give the necessary extra trouble to the teaching of the younger children, I think the Minister for Education, if I know him rightly, would not object to that being done. But in our big congested centres,

where I know for a fact that in many instances the mothers send the children of tender youth to school merely to get rid of them, I hold the State should not be saddled with the extra expenses entailed, not for the education of the children but merely for the care of them. The State should be prepared to bear the cost of the education of the child, but not that of the care of children under the prescribed school age.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. FOLEY: Before I finish with the education question I want to give what I think is a good idea for this House to adopt. In regard to the operation of our educational system, by bringing various things into the curriculum of our State schools, there recently was a big meeting in Perth where many of the old ladies present decided that, so far as much of our legislation was concerned, it was not a matter of legislating at all; it was only a matter of education. The right people to impart that education were, they said, the State school teachers. As one who has knocked about the world a bit, I contend that it is wrong altogether for any State school teacher to be put in the position of having to endeavour to teach sex physiology in our State schools. I think there are few parents of the children themselves who are qualified to teach their children these questions, or to impart the knowledge to them which will be good for them and of sufficient advantage to them. I say that if the parents of children will do what they should do, that is, impart the knowledge which is necessary for the child, the father imparting the knowledge to the son and the mother imparting it to the daughter, there will be no need to saddle our State school teachers with the responsibility of having to speak on this question. I only hope that as long as the present Minister holds office—and I do not think he is likely to go out for some time—or any other educational Minister who may take his place, he will always keep out of the curriculum of our State schools the question of sex physiology, for the reason

that the teachers—with some exceptions of course—are not qualified to teach it. Indeed, sometimes the parents of the children are not qualified to do it.

Mr. HEIMANN: And not many members of Parliament can judge whether they are qualified or not.

Mr. FOLEY: If this question is to be taken on under our educational system, I trust it will be taken on by the men and women well versed in the subject and qualified to impart the knowledge which is necessary. Touching on another phase of the educational question, I think there is one bright spot in the administration of the department, and that is that continuation schools are being established in various portions of our State. This, to my mind, is one of the best possible means of giving to these children in the outback centres a fair handicap with the children in the more congested centres.

Mr. THOMSON: The trouble is we are not getting them.

Mr. FOLEY: We do get them. We get them in many portions of the State. I am glad to say there is a continuation school in my district, and I did not have to fight a great deal to procure it. But what I am sorry for is that there are not more continuation schools throughout the State. To my way of thinking the ordinary State school education which the child gets at our State schools is laying the foundation of the best education it is possible for any child to get. When that child left school in the olden times, not in the good old days, but in the bad old days, it was a matter of leaving school and leaving behind everything of an educational nature, but the continuation schools are going to be the connecting link between the foundation of education and technical education which is going to qualify the men and women of the future to take, first, better positions than they have taken in the past, and secondly, to put them in the position of attaining a higher educational standard than they could hore to do under our old system. So far as mining is concerned in this State, it is, to my mind, one of our most important industries. Mining here is paramount, and is still the paramount

industry of the State. The mining industry has been responsible for keeping in the State much of the ready cash, and there is little enough that we have been able to get hold of recently. Most of the currency has been put into circulation through our having produced something in the way of gold and other minerals. There have been methods adopted recently that were not adopted before. The big gold hunt formulated by my friend Mr. McIntyre, has taken place. It was not such a big thing after all, but the present Government have themselves to thank that it was not left to Mr. McIntyre to bring his scheme to fruition. No matter how successful he was or how big the proposition was, the Government was behind him in providing supplies, both so far as animals and tools were concerned. It was a good thing and it would be a good thing, no matter what Government were in office. I only hope that the critics of the present Government will think that this in itself is another of the bright spots in the present administration. On the question of assistance to mining, I may remark that we have the system of State batteries. I admit right away that the State battery system in itself, looking at it from the purely monetary, and profit and loss point of view, shows a direct loss as a system. This State has gained, however, more than one hundredfold, taking into consideration the gold won and put into circulation in our State as a result of this system. There are many things, so far as this system is concerned, that we as goldfield members know are wrong. In the circumstances the question of a comparison between the assistance given to mining and the assistance given to the farmer comes in. If a man has got a crop to put in—and we will say he has land for the purpose—there is the rent to be paid for the property on which he puts in his crop. If he does not pay the rent he is still able to keep going on the land, for the Government will give him the right to stay there and pay no rent at all. Then, again, the Government lend money with which to put in his crop. Furthermore, he is enabled to borrow

from the Government in order to help him in taking the crop off.

Mr. Taylor: He is also given machinery.

Mr. FOLEY: On top of that he is given everything necessary for the bringing to market of his crop. True, he pays a certain rate of interest which, after all, is only right. When we come to consider State batteries under that same head and under those conditions we have this position. The gold hunter has to rely solely on his own resources, first to find the show, secondly to work it when he has found it, and after he has got something from the show he has to pay cash in every instance to the State battery for the treatment of the stuff. The two systems are different. When my friends, the representatives of the farmers, are criticising every other industry in the State and every other portion of the State, I want them to take into consideration the fact that, as far as the battler on the mining field is concerned, he is thrown on his own resources to an even greater extent than the farmers are.

Mr. Willmott: They receive assistance in prospecting.

Mr. FOLEY: In what way? They certainly do receive assistance for prospecting in some cases. Before men working a mine can receive assistance at all, they have, first, to prove, not only that the working is a good one, but that by the spending of money in assisting that mine the Government are not going to benefit the individual men, but are going to do something in the direction of opening up a line of reef which is going to benefit others than themselves.

Member: The State must have some security.

Mr. FOLEY: The State have that much security, that the security that has been taken in many instances has been held by the Government so long that many leases in this State in the past have been locked up and it was impossible for the prospectors to get them.

Mr. Male: You cannot compare the security offered by prospectors to the security offered in the crops.

Mr. FOLEY: I do not know whether you can make a comparison there or not.

Mr. Heitmann: The life of the average prospector is a bed of roses compared with the life of some of our struggling cockies.

Mr. FOLEY: He has the thorns and the cocky has the roses. It amuses me to remember in connection with the hon. member for Geraldton, who is a newly-born representative of the cockies, that the last time I heard him when he was sitting in a seat yonder, talking about the perils of the prospector, and the hardships of the prospector and of how the mining industry was not being fostered in this State, to find him now turning round and talking about the interests of the farmers as against those of the mining industry. He changes quicker than the seasons do.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: He is quite consistent.

Mr. FOLEY: There is nothing so consistent as his inconsistency. So far as locking up many of the leases by the Government over which they hold a lien is concerned, I say it is doing prospecting a great amount of harm at the present time. After all if the Government have taken a mortgage over machinery, and the machinery on the lease does not meet the amount of the mortgage, I contend that it is as well to throw the land open to allow other prospectors to make some use of it. There are many places in the State where leases have been locked up, and, so far as my own district is concerned, if there is a lease locked up I am right on to the owners of it, and I will always assist the Minister to get the land thrown open. The result of what I have done is that at the present time all the leases which are held in my district are being worked. There can, however, be improvements made in the conditions regarding leases over which the Government hold a lien. The member for Katanning again referred to the hardy annual "Contract versus Day labour," and he went on to say that he believed in day labour. The hon. member misquoted the Minister for Lands as far as certain contracts were concerned. The position he

took up was that the supervision was wrong; that it was not good. Having had the opportunity of working on both day labour and under the contract system in mines, I claim to have some knowledge of both systems and I can claim that I have worked as hard under the day labour system as I have under contract.

Mr. Allen: Out of which did you make the most money?

Mr. FOLEY: I know that in connection with the contract system, many of the men who have worked under this system in some of the mines of the State are, at the present time, either occupants of the Sanatorium at Wooroloo or they are buried in some of the cemeteries of the State. So far as mining is concerned, 999 out of every 1,000 men do an honest day's work when they are on wages under ground, and, having done that, they can hold out their hands for their fortnight's pay and say that they have earned their money honestly. The great difference between day labour in our mines and day labour in connection with public works is that in the mines the men who supervise know their work. So far as the policy of day labour in connection with Government work is concerned I claim that it is a good one, but I say without fear of contradiction, that many of the men who occupy the positions of supervisors are not familiar with their work. They do not know enough about it to show men under them what they ought to do, and how they ought to do it. In a certain weekly journal a little while ago, I saw some photographs which were reproduced to make believe that the men who were working on the undergrounding of the telephone system were loafing. I could take every photograph in those pictures to show conclusively that the men could actually be in the position which the picture portrayed them to be in and yet that they were doing a fair thing to the State. I claim that the men do not get a fair deal so far as the day labour system is concerned. I am not holding a brief for those men who will not do an honest day's work, but we ought to have men in charge as supervisors who know how to supervise work.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Is the supervisor given a free hand?

Mr. Male: Do you hold that the supervisors are not capable of carrying out their work?

Mr. FOLEY: There may be men who will not do a fair day's work, but I have seen men put in charge of jobs in the metropolitan area and who told those under them to do the work in a certain manner. The men, of course, followed out the instructions, but my contention is that if a supervisor is not capable of telling a man under him how work should be done he is not fit for the position.

Mr. Smith: Why does not the Department make a change?

Mr. FOLEY: The supervision in connection with the day labour system on Government jobs is not what it should be, and I believe if the Government got right down to the question and insisted on the best possible supervision we would get better results than could possibly be obtained under the contract system. After all, if a contract is let for plumbing or sewer work, and if it is taken at say £2 per chain, the contractor does not put men on contract. He engages them on what is nothing less than day labour. The difference in connection with the contract is that the contractor has good supervision.

Mr. Heitmann: That has always been recognised in connection with contracts.

Mr. FOLEY: Why cannot the Government have equally good supervision? The Government pay as much money—or at least they should do so.

Mr. Smith: Why do you not recommend to make a change?

Mr. FOLEY: I am not in the Government. I am only criticising them for not doing this. The question is big enough for the Government to tackle differently from the way in which it has been tackled in the past, and, if men are not giving fair work for the remuneration they are receiving, it is the duty of the Government to make a change. That remark applies equally to the men who are working as it does to the supervisors.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The men are your masters and you cannot deny it.

Mr. FOLEY: Does the hon. gentleman know a man who is my master?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes.

Mr. FOLEY: My friend is a dealer in platitudes, and, as I do not know much about platitudes I cannot continue the argument with him. I take it he is having just a slight tilt at organised labour again. I might tell the hon. member that there is nothing in trade union rules which makes it imperative that a man shall only do as little as he can, for as much as he can get. I believe that statement is just as true as the policy of the Country party which was initiated by Mr. Chas. Moran when he said that longer hours and less pay was the solution of the difficulty in connection with farm labour. We might just as well take him as the mouthpiece of the Country party on that question as we might take my friend opposite in regard to his criticism of organised labour, and, as the leader of the Opposition is a direct representative of labour, and as he is their guide, philosopher and friend, of course he should know more than a member of Parliament of the common or garden variety like myself. Another matter that I wish to object to is the expenditure which has taken place in connection with the Agent General's Office. Year after year I notice that the emoluments of this office are going up. When I came into this Chamber the sum that was being paid to the Agent General was considered a fair thing. If the Agent General is doing all the work that everyone says has to be done, then that gentleman is not sufficiently paid. But when I see that there is no extra work being done, and that year after year the estimates are being increased, and when we find that this office is being used as a sink for money, it is time that the House took hold of itself and said "We shall not allow this state of affairs to go on any longer." It may be money well spent, but I fail to see how the expenditure of such a large sum of money on the Agent General's office is justified this year, when we take into consideration the fact that the work which has to be done this year does not bear comparison with what has been done in the past. I contend that

we should keep a tight hold on the expenditure in that office, a greater hold at the present time than in the past.

Mr. Taylor: And whenever a member of Parliament goes to England he returns full of eulogy for this office.

Mr. FOLEY: Once an Australian Parliamentarian goes to England he is settled so far as Australia is concerned, and I do not know of one exception to the rule.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Will you not except the Premier?

Mr. FOLEY: I do not know of one exception to the rule. There is another question which, to my mind, the Government should take into consideration, and that is in connection with the administration of the Prison Department of this State. At the present time, every man is wanted to fight for the honour and glory of Great Britain. I contend there are men in prison in Fremantle, and in the other gaols of the State, but more particularly in Fremantle, who would be quite willing, if liberated, to immediately go into camp and prepare for the front. I know I will be met with the argument that the Commonwealth authorities ask is there any record of crime against any of the recruits. I have a postcard from a man who served 12 months for embezzlement in Fremantle Gaol. He did there all that was required of him, and the day he was released he enlisted. I have a postcard from him at the front. Who will say that he is not as good as any man who is fighting our battles at the Dardanelles? There are many men in Fremantle Gaol who are of the same calibre as this man. I would not liberate a certain class of criminal, for instance, the criminal who has committed an offence against women or children. I would not let out the murderer, but I think that four-fifths of our prisoners in Fremantle Gaol at present would, if liberated, be willing to go right into camp. In fact, some of them have told me that, if they were liberated, they would dearly love to go and fight for their country. They are in prison because they have been found out. I doubt if there is any man in the State who, had he been found

out in certain things he has done, would not be in gaol.

Mr. Willmott: That is pretty sweet.

Mr. FOLEY: And it is true. I hope the Colonial Secretary and the Attorney General will go thoroughly into this question and that, if it can be proved that there are men in prison suitable and willing to serve the country, they will see to it that these men are not debarred from going to the front. Both from the State and from the national point of view, if there are in gaol men who are willing to go to the front, they can there expiate their crimes better than they can in gaol.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [8.4]: I think the Government deserve the assistance of all members in the troubled times through which we are passing. The Premier's speech disclosed his recognition of the difficult task in front of those charged with the responsibility of seeing our finances through at the present time. The Premier told us clearly that, while he had money to carry on business until the end of November, it was premature to talk about what arrangements would be necessary after that date. He could not tell us until after the conference he is now attending in Melbourne had been held. Every member will re-echo the hope that the Premier's mission will be successful, but it appears to me we can hardly take seriously the Estimates of revenue and expenditure that have been placed before us until we know the result of that mission. To my mind, the Estimates merely expressed a pious hope of what the Government propose to spend during the following year, if loan moneys or other moneys are obtainable, but it is very doubtful whether the whole of the Estimates will not have to be revised unless the Premier's mission is successful. We have an increasing deficit and, while it is true that hon. members on the Treasury benches hope it will not be increased, that it will amount to only a quarter of a million on this year's operations, still I am sure that, recognising the probable curtailment of loan funds and the effect such a curtailment will have on the revenue, we must all feel that it will

be a very difficult matter to expend the proposed amount of money from revenue unless further loan moneys are forthcoming. If this were not so, the Premier's statement to that effect would not be a correct one, and he put it very clearly that these Estimates depended largely on the success of his mission in Melbourne. It appears to me that in the near future there must be some curtailment of the expenditure of loan moneys, and that it will have the effect I have outlined. The Premier stated that economy was the dominant note in his speech, and I think the remarks of hon. members suggest that there is a fear that the Government are approaching times when force of circumstances will compel the exercise of economy on lines that are not exposed by the Estimates. In these distressful times, I think the Government might regard Parliament as a committee of public safety and, perhaps, take us a little more fully into their confidence than has been the practice of Ministers, past and present, in the history of the State. With the shadow of this war hanging over us and the depression widespread to the extent it is, now is the time when party politics and party spirit should be subordinated to the best interests of the people. Members know, too, that this Parliament is a war-time Parliament, that it was elected by the people since the war began, and, I think, not so much to put party politics, however desirable, into operation as to look after three main duties. Pretty well every member is pledged firstly to endeavour to keep the people of the State employed during the period of war, and secondly to prevent the people being exploited in war time. In this connection, I feel sure this House will regret that to-night another place has seen fit to destroy a measure first brought into operation in Western Australia, and copied throughout the whole of the Commonwealth, and in other parts of the British Empire, for the protection of the people in regard to the prices of food. That measure went through this House without a division. Everyone was in favour of its main principles.

Mr. Nairn: They loaded it up with three commissioners.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yet we find that another place, representing narrow vested interests, perhaps the interests that will endeavour to exploit the people in the near future, has had the impudence to destroy the work of the Government which has received recognition throughout Australia, since it has been copied on to the statute-books of the other States.

Mr. Smith: They did not copy the three commissioners.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: But I venture to say it would be an easy matter for those commissioners to save the people of Western Australia hundreds of thousands of pounds, and that their salaries were infinitesimal as compared with that. The third duty I think we are pledged to is to encourage primary production. I do think that, while the war lasts, the Government, with the assistance of members, might devote their energies mainly in this direction, and we might reasonably have less party spirit than has been exhibited in some remarks that have fallen in the course of this debate. I may say a word of appreciation of the attitude of the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner), an ex-Treasurer, who in two Budget debates, from his seat in the House has offered to put whatever financial and other knowledge he has, and his very considerable experience, at the disposal of the Ministry. I remember too with some satisfaction that, when the war broke out, the leader of the Opposition was requested to attend one or two Cabinet meetings, and that he willingly availed himself of the invitation of the Government. In these circumstances I think that, before the Government brought down a proposal to interfere with the sinking fund of the State, to interfere with the fund that, rightly or wrongly, is looked on as the sheet anchor of the State's credit, it would have been wise if the Treasurer had conferred with those two ex-Treasurers I have mentioned and, perhaps, brought down such a proposal as would have been acceptable to all parties. Because it is a very

bad thing to have the sinking fund and the proposals respecting the sinking fund made the butt of party politics.

Mr. Bolton: There is no proposal yet.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I have the word of the member for South Fremantle for that, but, if he will read the Budget speech, he will see that there is a very definite proposal outlined.

Mr. Taylor: It has gone by the board.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In this connection I may say without reservation—I believe it is one of the faults of the Cabinet system whatever Government is in power—I think Ministers might consult at least members of their party considerably more than they do in regard to important administrative changes and proposals. Members on this side are anxious to assist the Government to every extent, particularly in regard to the need for economy, but we do not know what is going on.

The Minister for Mines: I would have thought you were more anxious to assist us in regard to expenditure.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I admit that I, in common with other members want the necessary and important public works of my electorate attended to; but under existing circumstances we have all to wait.

The Minister for Mines: And after that, you talk of economy!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In the period prior to the war we all enjoyed a measure of expenditure for which we were grateful, and now we are equally faced with the necessity for economy. What I wished to refer to, however, were the two important administrative changes made by the Government in connection with the changed finances of the State about six months ago. Every hon. member will recollect that last April the Government decided on a reduction of 7.89 per cent. of the salaries of the whole of the employees in the civil service. At the same time they decided on a drastic increase in the railway freights on most of the commodities that were taken to the people inland, and also to a lesser extent on certain fares. I did not like the reduction of the 7.89 per

cent., I admit, and to many of us—on this side of the House particularly—the basis seemed unfair, because we had just returned from a big election in the country during which we had advocated taxation not on a section of the people or on the civil servants alone, but on the whole of the people on an equitable basis, a basis ranging from 1 per cent. on small salaries up to 15 per cent. on big salaries. I share the regrets of the Ministry, however, that their honest, straightforward, fair, and just proposals in this direction should have been brought to nought by a Chamber which has shown time after time that it is the enemy of the people of Western Australia.

Mr. Bolton: Hear, hear!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Government found it was necessary to bring in this reduction of 7.89 per cent.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are disorderly in reflecting on another place.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If I am disorderly I am content to learn that from the Chairman, in whom we all have confidence.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not reflect on another place.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Thank you, Sir. In regard to this reduction of 7.89 per cent., we are told that it meant a saving of about £80,000 a year to the State. We were also told that it was necessary in order to avoid the dismissal of men from employment, and that being so it was reluctantly accepted by members of this side of the House, and we agreed to the reduction of our own salaries and did our best to justify the position in the eyes of the people of the State. But, two or three weeks ago I picked up my morning paper and saw that the Government had decided to alter this system, that no longer was the reduction of 7.89 per cent. necessary, but that from the 1st October next they were to be in the pleasing position of being able to do without that reduction. I, for one, was glad that it was so. I thought that the Premier had floated a loan for another million pounds and that

he would keep on going at the same rate until it was spent, financing the increasing deficit on revenue from loan funds. I am sorry to say, however, that the Budget speech which we have since read does not disclose that state of affairs; it does not even tell us the reason for this alteration, which will cost the State £80,000 this year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did you notice that the 7.89 per cent. reduction appears right through the Estimates for the year?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I think it is only for July, August, and September.

The Minister for Mines: It does not appear right through the whole year.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It is only for three months.

Mr. Smith: Are we going to abolish the increase on the railway freights?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am coming to that directly. When I saw in the paper that this reduction of 7.89 per cent. on the civil service salaries many of them high salaries but some of them unfortunately low—was to be waived, I looked for the next few days to see if the people inland were going to get relief from the administrative tax, which had been put on them through the railway freights simultaneously with the imposition of the 7.89 tax on State employees. I am sorry to say that I have been looking in the newspaper—which is the Government's medium of communication with us in this matter—and so far I have not been able to find any proposal for reduced freights emanating from the Ministerial benches. If we can afford at the present time to restore the civil servants to their former financial status, we can also afford to restore the freights to their normal basis. If the Government are going to forego revenue then the people engaged in the agricultural and mining industries and in our primary industries inland deserve this consideration at the present time more than any other section of the community. I urge that we have no right to make the railways the medium of lerying taxation on the people inland to which the coastal people do not con-

tribute. I admit that this view is recognised in theory by the Government. The Premier told a deputation at Kalgoolie that he did not approve of the increased freights, that it was merely a temporary expedient, and that it had been forced on him, as we know it was forced on him, through the action of another place in rejecting our legitimate proposals for taxation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Legitimate proposals you say?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Admitting these things, I say also that if this relief can equitably be given to officials—some of whom are drawing very large salaries—we have no right to deny that relief also to those people who are passing through a time of stress, and some of whom in the drought stricken districts and living inland elsewhere are suffering from very arduous conditions of life. If our railways were not paying it would be a different thing. I find that the estimated revenue for this year from the railways is £2,363,000, whilst the estimated working expenses are £1,642,079.

Mr. Smith: What were the actual expenses last year, and what was the actual revenue?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The total profit over working expenses for this year is £720,921.

Mr. Smith: That is not the net profit.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Against that the interest charges have to be taken out.

Mr. Green: That is £620,000.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I called at the Acting Minister for Railways' office to ask what these interest charges would be for last year and I was refused the information. In discussing the railways, I want to say that we are at a considerable disadvantage because the annual report of the Railway Department on the working of the system for the last year has not come down. I could see a difficulty about speaking on this subject, and I asked the Acting Minister for Railways to authorise the department to supply me with certain information that was in the Railway Report

for the 30th June, 1914, and which I could not get at in the absence of the report for this year. I am sorry to say, however, that the Minister could not see his way clear to give me that information although it was available in the department.

The Minister for Mines: It would be unfair to supply one member with inside information when another member could not have it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I think it was information that the public was entitled to.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why not move the House to get it?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I only found that I wanted it yesterday morning when there was no time for me to do anything. I cannot see any reason why the information should have been hidden unless it was the natural desire of the Minister to withhold information in regard to railway freights knowing that I intended to speak on the subject.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why not ask questions about the matter; the information can then be made public?

The Minister for Mines: I could not give you what other members could not have.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I should like some information, also.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Why did you not apply for it?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I was able, however, to obtain from the report of the speech of the Premier at Victoria Park a few weeks ago the information that the interest charges for the year ending 30th June, 1915, amounted to £487,631. I have estimated that probably the interest charges for this year would be £600,000.

Mr. James Gardiner: More than that, I think.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It was £587,000 odd last year. If the interest charge is £600,000 for this year, and the surplus of receipts over working expenses is £720,000, it is clear that the profit for this year promises to be £120,000 over the whole of our railway system; that is, above interest and working expenses.

Mr. Smith: These are imaginary receipts.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, but the Premier pointed out in his speech that whereas last year—

Mr. Smith: He was a very bad prophet the year before.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We had a drought and practically no harvest; this year we have a twenty-million bushel harvest to handle and he said it was probable that the railway receipts were under-estimated. These were the words of the hon. gentleman. Since I did not find many other items of the revenue bearing the appearance of being under-estimated, I took it that possibly he had some idea that he did not want a reduction made on these railway freights as a result of admitting that he had under-estimated that particular item.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: He pointed out there would be a loss of the freights of the sleepers for the Trans-Australian railway.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes. With regard to the high freights, I would sympathise with the Government to some extent if I believed that increased freights meant more revenue on the railways. As a matter of fact it does not mean this or anything of the kind. High freights unfairly tax the people engaged in our primary industries inland and prevent to a large extent their continued residence there. The railways get the full benefit of increased production, and I am very much afraid that any increase in railway freights has defeated its own end by discouraging the producer. It has also increased the cost of living in a degree out of all proportion to the increase in the freights. The consequence is that if a family gets out of work in the country the members of it have to come down to Perth to cheaper living and unemployed men seek the free meals existing at the Honorary Minister's soon-to-be-closed restaurant.

Mr. Thomson: Is it so soon to be closed?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I understand that the Honorary Minister intends the closure to take place from the end of the coming month. With the harvest coming on I think most of us will agree with that. In regard to the working railways, I would like to point out that the working costs were largely built up through the scarcity of water in the back districts. It meant a great tax on the revenues of the department to carry this water so far. This year that expenditure will not be felt by the department in connection with the ordinary railways. I might remind the Government that the figures of the Premier in regard to the estimated revenue and expenditure in connection with the railway system clearly disclose the futility of the jeers that are made from time to time in connection with the new agricultural railways.

Mr. Thomson: Hear, hear!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: While we build these railways, not expecting them to pay directly for the first few years of their existence, and while the Ministers have—and I am proud of it—subscribed to the policy of building these new agricultural railways at a greater rate than they have been built in the history of the State prior to this Government coming into office—

Hon. Frank Wilson: Ring off.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: And whilst we have them from time to time making remarks about agricultural railways not paying, yet the Premier's figures, put before the House, show that in round numbers the railway system as a whole will pay working expenses, interest and sinking fund during this current year.

Mr. Bolton: Not sinking fund.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Premier said at Victoria Park that the sinking fund last year was £114,000—

Mr. James Gardiner: Interest and sinking fund is £735,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What would the sinking fund this year be?

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: £115,000.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Remarks have been made to the effect that the agricultural railways are not paying and yet the figures disclose that the railway system

as a whole is paying working expenses, interest, and sinking fund.

The Minister for Mines: Because the system as a whole is paying, does it prove that the agricultural railways are paying?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes. The new agricultural railways which the Government have built in my district are this year going to carry on their backs some dead mining railways in the back country, railways which we very much regret to know are not paying at the present time, although I admit these railways paid for themselves over and over again and made big profits in the "roaring days."

The Minister for Mines: They are the best on the goldfields.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The agricultural industry has borne its fair share of extra taxation through the railways during the past few years. We have the increased fertiliser rates and there is also the reimposition by this Government of the Wilson Government's iniquitous charge of 1s. per ton on spur lines.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You won your election on your promise to take that off.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: And the Government kept the promise and took it off for 18 months.

Mr. Smith: Why did they put it on again?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is what I want to know.

The Minister for Works: Because the representatives of the farmers in this House said it was of no benefit to the farmers.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: As a farmers' representative in this House, I object to that statement. I never said anything of the kind. I find that when mining subjects come up for discussion the Government turn to mining members on this side of the House; they do not go to mining members on the other side of the House. It is wrong for the Government to say that the farmers' representatives in this House did not want the 1s. charge on spur lines taken off. If the Government want to know the opinion of the farmers' representatives on this subject they have

a right to approach the representatives of the farmers on this side of the House, and not go to their representatives anywhere else. But they never consult anyone before making these blunders. I hope that this year when the whole of the prospects of the State are bound up in agricultural development, when the whole hope of the Premier's Budget speech lies on the 20-millions bushel crop that is coming from our wheat fields, the Government will take into consideration the desirability of removing the increased freight charges to which I have referred simultaneously with the waiving of the present reduction of salaries paid to those who are fortunate enough to have Government billets.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Do you think you have any hope with that crowd?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Any action I can take to have the charges waived I am prepared to take.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What hope have you got?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In this matter I would mistrust the hon. member far more than the present Ministry. I remember that in years of prosperity and plenty, when we had no drought and no war, and when money was easy to obtain, the leader of the Opposition and his colleagues put this 1s. a ton charge on the new spur lines, thus setting a bad example to the present Government which I regret they have seen their way to perpetuate. I believe that if the financial position of the State was a little brighter, the present Government would waive that 1s. a ton charge just as I have the knowledge that it would not have been reimposed if the legitimate policy of this Government, as put before the people of the State, and endorsed by them at the last election, had been carried into effect. In regard to land settlement generally I confess I am a little alarmed at the outlook. I hear there is no money being provided for contract surveyors this year, and if that is so the Government will have to submit an excess vote before long because it will be absolutely necessary to get a limited amount of contract survey

going in the agricultural districts, particularly as soon as the reduction of prices forecasted by the Land Bill is carried into effect. I regret too that the land office facilities given to the settlers in the Great Southern districts at the time when the Great Southern railways and lands were purchased from the private company which owned them in 1907 are being gradually taken away. This matter was discussed in the House the other night, and I bow to the decision of the Chamber whilst making my own protest in the matter. At the same time I said that money was not being saved by the closing of the offices. I repeat that to-night. The draftsmen have been taken away from those offices and in the same offices expensive branches of the Savings Bank are being built up. At the survey office of Narrogin last week I saw an immense safe that must have cost a considerable amount of money blocking up the gangway in the front street. It had been sent down there in connection with the opening of the new and expensive branch of the Savings Bank in that centre.

The Minister for Mines: That is a good sign.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, but why not listen to me and let us have the survey offices which the people want, instead of establishing branches of the Savings Bank which are not wanted. The existing agency of the Savings Bank in that town was doing the work efficiently and well.

The Minister for Lands: There was grave dissatisfaction.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The hon. gentleman can take my assurance that I never heard one word of dissatisfaction. I honestly think that the expenditure which is being incurred to-day on a set of books and other paraphernalia in connection with the opening up of branches of the Savings Bank might have been avoided at this time. When economy is the dominant note of the Government's policy I would rather see one Savings Bank handling the people's money instead of two. It would have been a very good thing if the Government had en-

tered into an arrangement with the Commonwealth Bank which was suggested at the time it was started, and under which there would then have been only one bank. I do not mind whether the bank is run by the State or the Commonwealth so long as the people and the Government of Western Australia have the use of the money deposited in it.

The Minister for Lands: The people would not have it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I believe it would have been possible to make an arrangement under which the Government of Western Australia could have drawn the money and the people of the State would have had to bear only the cost of the administration of one bank instead of two in each country town.

The Minister for Lands: The Commonwealth did not make an offer. The State made a request which the Commonwealth would not agree to.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Acting Treasurer is in a better position than I am to know the reason which actuated his department in starting a branch of the Savings Bank at Narrogin. Naturally I am pleased to see any sign of progress in that important centre, but from my point of view I would have preferred to see the survey office, necessary for the interests of the farming community, left there, rather than it should have been dismantled and a branch of the Savings Bank put in its place, an institution for which there was no public demand at all. The agency of the Savings Bank in that town served all the requirements of the people who had money to deposit. With regard to the Agent General's office, the expenditure is comparatively small, but I join with the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) in thinking that the pruning knife could well be put into that vote at the present time, when unfortunately no loans are being floated in London and when, owing to the stress of war, immigration has had to cease for the time being. The Agent General still has a big staff of clerks in his office and I cannot understand what they and the Commissioner, whoever he is, are now doing. It appears to me that Mr. Kessel and one

good shorthand clerk ought to be able to do all the work necessary there during the period of the war, and I commend that suggestion to the Government. I would like to sound a note of appreciation of the work of the Attorney General in establishing a secondary school on the Golden Mile. I am assured it has been highly successful, and of very great benefit to the people, and I can assure the Minister that when better financial conditions return, and the shadow of the war departs, I shall be on his door-step urging that this policy of establishing secondary schools shall be continued throughout our ports and other important centres of population. The action of the Minister for Mines, too, in deciding on special reductions for low-grade ores at the State batteries during war time, struck me as a peculiarly broad and statesman-like policy. I only regret that his proper and evident desire to encourage mining during war time did not extend a little further, and that the same reasons which actuated him in that regard did not prompt him to help me in respect to the increased railway freights to which I have referred. I do not wish to finish my criticism without putting at least one helpful suggestion before the Government in regard to obtaining further revenue. It is easy for us all to urge additional expenditure, particularly in our own electorates. I hope that, although the Government are anxious to adjourn the House, and though it has been forecasted that this session will be a short one, the House will not adjourn until a good stiff tax on amusements has been added to our statute-book. To-day we see sports meetings, race meetings, football gatherings, and theatres being crowded with people. If at a time like this people have money to give for these amusements they have money to pay a good stiff tax on their tickets of admission. I think that for race meetings in particular a tax ranging from 6d. to 2s. 6d. might well be imposed on every ticket, and I urge the Government to adopt this means of obtaining further revenue.

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth) [7.45]: In view of the position in which we find ourselves I think it is the duty of every member to express his opinions on the subject of the finances. I do not believe in taking up the time of the House simply for the sake of talking, but, having listened to the Budget Speech, and to the speeches delivered by the leader of the Opposition, the member for Irwin, and other members, I would like to add a few words. The dominant note of all the speeches has been economy. If ever there was a time in the history of the State when economy was necessary it is now. I have looked through these Estimates very carefully and must say at the outset that I fail to discern evidences of economy. At the present time we find ourselves in a very bad financial position. A good deal of the blame for this has been attributed to the drought, some to the war, and, while admitting that the war is to blame, and the drought also, I contend that the Government must take the biggest portion of the blame. I do not wish to indulge in carping criticism, but I am not here to throw bouquets at the Government as the last speaker did. Had the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) held a seat in the House during the last three or four years and realised the position in which we have been placed, he would probably not have made the remarks he did. We have to share with the Government the responsibility for the conduct of affairs, yet, on many occasions our position has been a most humiliating one. We have sought for information and failed absolutely to get it.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Name the occasion.

Mr. ALLEN: I will give you some instances presently. On some occasions we have received evasive answers, on others no answers at all, and on still others answers which have been little short of an insult to those who asked. If Parliament is to take the responsibility which it should do, Parliament should be duly enlightened and received into the confidence of the Government. We have not had an opportunity of taking that part in the administration which we should do, and therefore we

cannot be blamed for the present position in which the Government find themselves, if they will neither give us information nor accept our advice. The Government must recognise now that had they stayed their hand instead of rushing headlong into a policy of State enterprises they would have had more money at command than they have to-day.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: That is your old bogie.

Mr. ALLEN: I think the Government have found it a bogie causing them a great deal of trouble. I have always expressed myself emphatically as being opposed to the Government entering into State enterprises.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: It is against your policy, but it is our policy.

Mr. ALLEN: If it continues much longer it will, I am afraid, bring us right on to the rocks. In a young State like Western Australia one of the principal things we require is capital. We are not going to get that capital if the Government persist in taking all these enterprises on themselves and doing their best to crush private enterprise, because that is the very best way to drive capital out of the State. By way of interjection it was asked what information had we been refused. I have in mind one question asked by the member for Claremont (Mr. Wisdom). He asked for information in regard to the Boya quarries, his question being as to the relative prices charged to the department for different sizes of metal. What was the reply? "Enough to pay working expenses, interest and sinking fund." It was a legitimate question, and the hon. member should have had the information he asked for; yet the answer he received was nothing short of an insult. Unfortunately, too, much secrecy has been the policy of the Government, and it is largely due to that secrecy that adverse criticism has been offered. Every member of the House has a perfect right to know what is going on; otherwise how can we share the responsibility if the Government find themselves in a tight place? It is no use blaming us, because they have never given us a chance to assist them. We have to face the position.

and it is well to tell ourselves the truth. There are departments in which I think economies could be effected. One I have in mind is that of the Agent General in London. The criticism I have to offer is not levelled against the gentleman occupying that position; we all have the greatest respect for him. At the same time it is a department costing £8,000 a year, and absolutely unnecessary at the present time. In addition to that, I believe we are paying a gentleman—a Mr. Davis—to sell our timbers, our jarrah, at a salary of £750 a year.

The Minister for Mines: Why not send Mr. Kessell out selling jarrah?

Mr. ALLEN: If the Government will but realise that we have a High Commissioner they will see that the time has passed for an Agent General. What we want now is a commercial agent.

Mr. Foley: God help Western Australia if we have to depend on him!

Mr. ALLEN: God help Western Australia if we had to depend on the hon. member! South Australia was represented by a commercial agent who did magnificent business for his State. Unfortunately for the South Australian Government he has left them. What we want is a qualified gentleman to open up markets for the disposal of our different products. It has been said that the vote for this department is less this year than last year. But it must be remembered that this is in a measure due to the fact that a new motor car is not required this year. I notice, too, that the item of £300 for expenses incurred by the Agent General in entertaining is still on the Estimates. It was exceeded by £55 last year. Why, I do not know, but I think the item might very well be cut out this year. In fact a great many of these items could be struck out from the Agent General's department. A commercial agent in London could do all the work of the department and in addition attend to the bulk of our indenting. In regard to our tramways, I was reading this evening the speech made by the Premier when moving the second reading of the purchasing Bill. The Premier has been wanting money very badly, and he has lost a

fine opportunity of collecting a bigger revenue than he has done from our trams. He pointed out during his speech the necessity for providing additional facilities for carrying the people over the lines I want to read a portion of his remarks. He says in regard to the Hay-street west district—

Hundreds of people regularly walk rather than wait at a street corner till the trams come along. In 99 cases out of a hundred they wait until they find that the car is full.

That is exactly the position to-day. We have not improved our tramway service one iota. Any member of the House who will take the trouble to inspect the tramway track will find that out for himself.

Mr. Munsie: Are there not any extra cars?

Mr. ALLEN: We certainly have some extra cars, but we have considerably more people using them. The track to-day is in a shocking condition; I never saw it worse. That particular portion of the track from Hay-street west into town is in a dangerous condition: it is apparent to anyone. There are places in it big enough to put one's thigh in and almost big enough to bury oneself in. I do not know what the position of the Government will be if someone capsizes a vehicle through one of these holes, and an accident occurs. The condition of the rolling stock, too, is extremely bad. Surely the rolling stock which we have should be kept in a better state of repair than it is at the present time. I do not know whether hon. members have observed it, but I have. It seems to me that it is a bad advertisement for the State for people to see our rolling stock in such a condition. Before we can get the tramway track into good order, I am sure that it will turn out to be a very highly capitalised concern, and I am sure we shall find it very difficult to make the paying proposition of it that we hoped. Through the courtesy of the Acting Premier's Office I have been able to obtain some figures from which I find that to the 30th June the sum of £529,052 has been spent on the tramway service out of a total of

£595,271, and we are spending another £13,000 in taking the trams out of Hay-street and diverting one line down Murray-street. I would like to know the real reason why the cars are to be diverted out of Hay-street from Hay-street west towards the City. I am satisfied that by diverting the cars from the up track, that is the track running to the City, the Government are going to lose a great many fares.

Mr. Foley: That particular portion belonged to the city council for a long time.

Mr. ALLEN: That is true. I say the Government are going to lose a considerable amount of revenue for the reason that the people living on the south side of Hay-street, in Harvest-terrace, Malcolm-street and Mount-street, will not take the trouble to walk to the tramline in Murray-street, but will rather walk into the City. Perhaps the Minister will give us some explanation as to why the tramline has been deviated in this way. I cannot see why, if it was necessary to do so, it should not have been done at Milligan-street or even at William-street. We are told that the reason why the alteration is being effected is because of the congested vehicular traffic in Hay-street. I say that is an absolute fallacy. I say there is no congestion in the vehicular traffic at all, and the only congestion I have seen is on the footpaths in the City. When the town planning scheme which is now before the City Council, and is, I believe, well in hand, becomes an accomplished fact, something will have been done to obviate that particular trouble. We have yet to add to the capital cost of the tramways a proportion of the cost of the power house, which is being built at East Perth. By the time all these expenses are added and the whole system is brought up to date, I believe that fully three-quarters of a million pounds will be found to have been invested. Unless the best possible management is exercised over the concern I say we cannot possibly avoid a very huge loss, and that it will turn out to be a white elephant. We have, of course, to judge all our State enterprises by the

results which are obtained from them. Unfortunately in almost all instances, the results have shown a failure on the part of the State enterprise concerned. This brings me to the State ferry service. At the time the Government took it over from Mr. Copley he was making £1,500 to £2,000 a year out of the service, and people were fairly well satisfied, but the Government came along and bought him out. To-day what have they by way of a service? The service which, under private control, was a fairly paying proposition, has now become a losing one under Government control. The people are getting the worst service, and the fares are being put up from the 1st of next month I understand. The result, I think, must be that it will continue to be a losing proposition under this kind of administration. The new boat, the "Perth," which was recently built by the Government, is, I understand, lying idle and has proved to be unsuitable for the purpose for which she was built.

The Minister for Works: She is not lying idle.

Mr. ALLEN: I was given to understand, at all events, that she was lying idle at the jetty, but I accept the assurance of the Minister that that is not so.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: She has been on and off ever since she has been built.

Mr. ALLEN: It is a losing proposition, and the people are being worse served than ever before.

The Minister for Lands: Suppose the people are not visiting the Zoo now in the proportion that they used to visit it?

Mr. ALLEN: Do you think that is the cause of the falling off in the profits?

The Minister for Lands: If the people do not patronise the service there must be a falling off.

Mr. ALLEN: The people are going in for amusement as much as ever.

The Minister for Lands: You are absolutely wrong.

Mr. ALLEN: When the Government opened the service to Como the Minister made the remarkable statement that he was going to spend all the profits that

were made on the service in the locality of Como.

The Minister for Mines: It would not be surprising that, with the war and the bad season, there should not have been some shrinkage in revenue in many directions.

Mr. ALLEN: South Perth is more prosperous to-day than it ever was before. There is no suburb in the metropolitan area which is making more headway than South Perth at the present time, and there is no suburb in which the settlement is going on more briskly than it has been doing there of late. I want to refer to a matter which the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) mentioned, and that is the question of sewerage. The opinion which he gave to the House was that as a result of a conversation with myself. Recently a deputation was introduced by the member for Perth to the Premier to ask for the appointment of a water and sewerage board. The Premier said that he could not form a water and sewerage board as requested. A member of the deputation interjected "What about a sewerage board," and the Premier replied "That is a different matter." I said we should have it as early as possible in order that the people may have some board to appeal to against the exorbitant charges which have been inflicted.

The Minister for Works: Who comprised the deputation?

Mr. ALLEN: They were representative people.

The Minister for Works: Who were they?

Hon. J. D. Connolly: There were some members of the city council.

Mr. ALLEN: They were people representative of the metropolitan area. The Premier challenged me to have a look at the files, because I referred to one particular exorbitant charge which had been made. I took him at his word, and had a look at the files, and I am more than ever convinced that the particular case which I cited, that of a cottage in Ballarat-street, the inhabitant of which was a lady who had to pay a sum of £82 14s. 7d., was one of, I was going to say, robbery.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: A cottage worth £100, I suppose.

Mr. ALLEN: The hon. member for Katanning inspected the work himself and took a plumber with him. I also took a plumber up, and he said in no case could the cost for the work possibly exceed £50.

The Minister for Mines: Was he a master plumber?

Mr. ALLEN: Yes.

The Minister for Mines: Then of course he would not say that the work could be done cheaper by the department.

Mr. ALLEN: The Minister told the deputation that the lady in question had stipulated for the best possible fittings, and for the best job that could possibly be done. I will read the lady's letter, and I am going to refer to the report which came along afterwards—

I have left the key of my house, 12 Ballarat-street, West Perth, (off Colin-street) with Mrs. Haig (No. 16) and am writing to say that if your officers wish to sewer the property while I am away Mrs. Haig will admit them to the house. I asked one of the men to tell the foreman I wished to see him before leaving for my holidays in South Australia, but he did not do so. When the bathroom is connected I want a new enamel bath on feet and a wash basin, also a lid to the lavatory stand, and if there is anything you want to know in connection with it you can apply to Mr. Eben Allen. I will be back in Perth on the 13th June and you can communicate with me at 1500 Accounts Branch, G.P.O., Perth, or 12 Ballarat-street. I will esteem it a favour if you could hurry the men over the work as I do not want the house to be open more than I can help. The sink is to be placed in the back verandah and not in the kitchen as at present.

When I made these complaints against these excessive charges on the cost of connection, a report was prepared by the Minister's responsible officers in which they made the statement, that this lady not only stipulated for

the best fittings and the best job, but that she personally made a selection of these fittings. The lady, however, was in the Eastern States at the time. She did not make any inspection of fittings, and did not ask for anything more than she asks for in the letter. I have been through the file and the correspondence. If the Minister had taken the trouble to go through them for himself, and if he would even do so now, he would not have been satisfied with the report which came along. I mentioned that there was a lot of waste labour on that job. It is impossible otherwise to make connections such as these run into as much as £82 14s. 7d. Bear in mind this was a woman with whom the department was dealing, a woman who was earning her own living, and who had to take the work on the terms offered by the Government. And yet, in spite of that, she was called upon to pay this large sum of money. Even at this stage I think we ought to have a select committee to go into the matter and give the people an opportunity of ventilating their grievances on this question. I am confident that the Government are receiving revenue to which they are not entitled.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: More economy.

Mr. ALLEN: I trust that in future cases the Government will get private tenders or private contracts.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They will not do so.

Mr. ALLEN: Let them get private tenders and compare them with the estimates of their own department. When a person is obliged to make these connections and has not the money to pay for them at the time the least that can be done is to get private tenders and to compare them with the departmental tenders. Until men realise that in these times they must give an honest day's work for the money they get, things will never be better.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: It is realised 'to-day'.

Mr. ALLEN: Until that is realised and some different course of action is taken the public are going to be bled continuously. It has been daylight

robbery in the past, and it is the duty of the Government to put a stop to it. I challenge the Minister to make an inspection in regard to this particular house connection, and to take any independent man he likes to go into the matter, and if he can find that there has not been an overcharge of £30 I will give that amount to the hospital.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It was one of the members of that union who won the V.C.

Mr. ALLEN: We are not talking about that union. We have been asked to suggest economies, and to make suggestions from which we can get more revenue. We are collecting substantial revenue by means of our stamp duty, and I think we might, in the present financial position, extend the operations of the Stamp Duties Act. I think the Government might well insist that everyone should put a penny stamp on his receipt for every pound in wages or salary that he receives. It would be an inexpensive form of tax and easily collected, and it would fall on everyone who earned wages or salaries from £1 a week upwards. The higher the wage the higher would be the tax. I do not see why the Government in their present position should not ask everyone to contribute towards the revenue in that direction.

Mr. Green: Do you not think an increased income tax would be better?

Mr. ALLEN: You would get at everyone in the way I have suggested, and any boy earning £1 a week would have to give his penny. In that way the Government would get a big income, and no one would have any objection to the arrangement. I am prepared to assist in any way I can, just as the leader of the Opposition and as the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) said they were prepared to do. We should all be prepared to share in the responsibility, but we must know exactly what the Government are doing first. There must be no more secret contracts and no more secret purchases, such as have been going on for the past four years, and which have landed us in such a terrible position. There must be a million of

money which has been expended on tramways and other State enterprises. I will not say the money has been squandered, but I do say there will be a great loss before we can get out of these different concerns. I understand that they intend to buy more steamers if they can get the money. The policy of the Government seems to be to borrow and spend. I do not mind borrowing and spending so long as the money is spent judiciously and we get value for it, but entering into competition with our people, it seems to me, is a policy which will spell ruin to the State. It will have the effect of frightening capital away. A man may establish himself in business and may be making a little profit when the Government, thinking that it is a good opportunity for them to step in, do so and start in opposition. I hope the Government will not try to force the House to swallow the Estimates which are before us because there are many instances in which reductions can be made. When we are considering the items I intend to make one or two suggestions for reductions.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [9-18]: The other evening when the Minister for Mines was introducing the Mines Act Regulation Bill he appeared to strongly resent some remarks made by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse). It seems to be a custom amongst members on the other side of the House to resent remarks made from this side of the Chamber, especially when those remarks affect mining. This evening, the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) whilst enunciating extraordinary ideas in connection with finance dealt with great vigour with agricultural matters. He indulged in high falutin' nonsense, to say nothing of flapdoodle, to quote my friend the member for Bunbury, and he displayed colossal ignorance as far as the agricultural industry was concerned. The hon. member indulged in would be humour at the expense of a much wronged body of settlers, apparently with the idea to in a measure defend his Minister, who is well able to take care of himself. I, as an agricultural representative, just as strongly resent criticism from

irresponsible individuals who know nothing about agriculture equally as much as those individuals resent criticism, which was not of a carping nature, made from the cross Opposition benches the other evening. I might be allowed to quote the cases of two settlers. One took up his selection and invested on it £2,000 of his own money. I have already stated that man's case here. He was very much on the rocks, to use a common expression, but to-day he has 800 acres of crop in, and on a conservative estimate it is likely to bring him between 3,000 and 4,000 bags of wheat. All that has to be carted a distance of 20 miles. A little to the south of where he is situated a neighbour of his will have some 1,800 bags of wheat to cart to Bruce Rock. There we have roughly 6,000 bags of wheat which will have to be carted over 20 miles to Bruce Rock. It has to be admitted that for a settler down there in the initial stage and with an inadequate plant, to get that wheat carted such a long distance is asking something in the nature of an impossibility. I also want to refer to a tragedy which occurred recently in that area. On a particular farm a man and woman took up land with the idea of making a living out of it for their son. Unfortunately this lad got typhoid fever and he was removed in great haste to Mr. Hedges' station. The poor lad died there and he had to be conveyed 28 miles to a burying place. It might be told us that often people have to cart their produce a great distance but in this case, the people who settled on that farm were induced to go there absolutely under false pretences, absolutely nothing more nor less. They were promised a railway and they worked and developed their farm until the misfortune to which I have referred overtook them. They are 28 miles from a railway station and there is no reasonable prospect of them being able to win out. Other settlers, to wit, those in the Kurnminin area, are in the same position and they find that the carting of their wheat long distances renders farming an impossibility. Is it fair to ask people to go

to such centres where they have to cart up to as much as 30 miles?

The Minister for Mines: Who is responsible for sending those settlers out there?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am not saying who is responsible. The fact remains that the people are there and I am answering the remarks which have been made by hon. members in regard to the alleged spoon-feeding of these people. The other evening I heard the Minister for Lands throw a taunt across the floor of the House that there had been spent more in the past 2½ years on the agricultural industry than had been spent on the mining industry since its inception, outside of course, the Coolgardie water scheme. I have looked up the Public Accounts and just in a rough way have analysed the loan expenditure. I find that on the development of agriculture there was spent £1,121,840. On Abattoirs, Cold Storage Export Depot, Grain Sheds, and Sale yards £145,105; Agricultural Immigration, £328,954; Loans for Purchase of Wire Netting, £11,485; Platforms and Approaches to Grain Sheds, £2,394; Rabbit-Proof Fence, £328,646; Purchase of land along Great Southern Railway, £300,000 (a great deal of which I presume has been sold). Loans for purpose of Vernin Board, £64,491; Implement Works, £10,453; Foundry, Meter, and General Workshops, £61,506; Purchase of Stock, £5,000; Purchase of Plant, £50,000; Agricultural Bank Working capital, £1,038,057; Harvey Estate Purchase, £24,661; Norseman-Esperance Road, including motor tractors, £10,407; Assistance to Settlers, £602,109; making a total of £4,055,161. Hon. members will notice that I have included in the Harvey Estate purchase of the Great Southern railway and the lands attached to it and also four headings under the Agricultural Implement Works. As we know the implement works are concerned in making pipes, girders, rails and trucks, and are engaged in general engineering and in doing work for the Harbour Trust, I think I am giving them a fair deal in regard to what I have put under the heading of Develop-

ment of Agriculture. So far as the development of goldfields and mineral resources is concerned, we find the following items:—Development generally, £616,308; Development of mining, £197,903; Eastern goldfields, £277,956; Kimberley district, £5,952; Murchison and Peak Hill District Goldfields, £111,378; Other Goldfields (including boring for coal and miscellaneous, £36,227; Pilbara Goldfields, £32,477, Erection of State Batteries and Provision of Treatment Plants, £261,775; State Smelter, Ravensthorpe, £60,000; making a total of £1,599,980. In regard to the railway expenditure from loan we have the following:—Newcastle-Bolgart, £31,320; Northam-Goomalling, £49,593; Goomalling-Dowerin, £7,720; Dowerin-Merredin, £97,538; Goomalling-Wongan, £45,393; [4] York-Greenhill, £38,610; Greenhills-Quairading, £58,560; Upper Darling Railway, £8,541; Wickiepin-Merredin, £182,647; Wongan-Mullewa, £312,613; Bolgart Extension, £6,032; Jandakot-Armadale, £37,837; Brunswick-Collie, £75,550; Pinjarra-Marinup, £26,655; Collie-Narrogin, £181,857; Bunbury-Bridgetown, £197,989; Bridgetown-Wilgarup, £37,653; Donnybrook-Preston, £41,028; Boyup-Kojonup, £70,564; Katanning-Kojonup, £22,067; Wonnerup-Nannup, £31,965; Dwellingup-Hotham, £64,902; Wagin-Bowellington, £33,239; Kukerin-Lake Grace, £5,924; Brookton-Kunjin, £74,748; Narrogin-Wickepin, £21,764; Wagin-Dumbleyung, £42,664; Katanning-Nannup, £48,733; Katanning-Shannon's Soak, £138; Denmark-Torbay, £50,000; Tambellup-Ongerup, £84,683; Yillimining-Kondinin, £98,274; Upper Chapman, £38,360; Naraling-Yuna, £19,994; Northampton-Ajana, £70,930; Geraldton-Greenough, £60,000; Wyalcatchem-Mt. Marshall, £30,630; Great Southern, £800,000; totalling £3,106,743. The loan expenditure on mining railways is as follows:—Coolgardie-Norseman, £109,966; Boulder duplication, £59,068; Boulder-Brown Hill Loop, £18,489; Kanowna, £42,803; Malcolm-Laverton, £70,054; Southern Cross-Bullfinch, £22,591; Geraldton-Northampton, £130,714; Geraldton-Murchison, £582,517;

Nannine-Meekatharra, £39,397; Mt. Magnet-Black Range, £85,299; Port Hedland-Marble Bar, £216,978; Hopton-Ravensthorpe, £34,436; Collie-Boulder, £15,785. In regard to the Northam-Leonora figures, I have given them as being, roughly, £1,000,000. The total loan expenditure on mining railways is £2,431,535.

Mr. McDowall: I want to know what you are driving at.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: If hon. members will only be patient they will find out.

Mr. Willmott: The hon. member for Coolgardie knows nothing about figures.

Mr. McDowall: I do not read them off column after column.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: The member for Coolgardie will be able to tell us what they mean.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I thought I would rival the reputation for quoting figures established by the hon. member for Coolgardie last session. In regard to agricultural railways, I have included the timber, Collie coal, and Greenbushes tin mining railways. The difference between the two classes of railway—mining as against agricultural—is a matter of £675,208. The loan expenditure on the goldfields water scheme amounts to £2,689,823, and on other goldfields water supplies £123,324, which totals £2,813,148. The Minister for Water Supply was recently asked by the hon. member for Avon:—

What is the total amount of loan moneys expended on the goldfields water scheme up to the 30th June, 1915?

And the Minister replied—£3,379,241. Taking the goldfields water scheme at £3,379,241, mining railways at £2,431,535, and mining development at £1,599,980, we get a total of £8,410,756. There has been expended on agricultural development £138,934, on agricultural railways £3,106,743, and on agricultural water supplies £4,055,168, a total of £7,300,793. According to this rough calculation, there has been up to date, £1,100,000 more spent from loan funds on mining than on agriculture—

Mr. McDowall: You are talking nonsense.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: And that is throwing in the purchase price of the Great Southern railway and the capitalisation of the Agricultural Bank. These figures can be verified by hon. members.

Mr. McDowall: Can you tell us what the goldfields railways brought in?

Mr. Heitmann: I missed the fourteenth line; will you repeat it?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The hon. member will not succeed in turning me aside from my purpose. The hon. member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) suggested a Parliamentary committee to deal with the financial proposals of the Government, so that the House might have a greater say in the expenditure of the funds of the State. Members on the Government side are very fond of talking about democracy and their democratic principles. They seem to claim this as their pet lamb, as the Kaiser claims the Almighty as his particular friend, as if no one else possessed any democratic principles. In view of the fact that we are now faced with such a serious financial problem, the idea thrown out by various members that the House as a whole should be taken into the confidence of the Government and that the handling of the State funds should be, not in the hands of an oligarchy of the Premier and his advisers, but of a Parliamentary Committee, might well be given the best consideration of this House.

Mr. George: That would not suit them at all.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Perhaps not.

Mr. Heitmann: Get back to those figures.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: In regard to the question of war time economy, it is well to look at what other parts of the world are doing. The newspaper, *Scotsman*, printed the following:—

An effort is being made by the Scottish municipalities, without sacrificing the efficiency of necessary services, to respond to the appeals of the British Government for the practice of war-time economy. The retrenchment which is being put into

force all over the country by public bodies shows that the authorities are alive to the warning given by Mr. Asquith that waste on the part either of individuals or of classes, which is always foolish and short-sighted, is nothing short of a national danger at this time. The object which all seem to have set before them is to diminish expenditure and increase savings in a rigorous manner. The Edinburgh Corporation has reduced its estimates for the year by a sum of about £10,000. The City Treasurer, on this satisfactory result, has been enabled to hold out a prospect of some measure of relief for the ratepayers. In the urgent necessity for economy, the first saving should be made upon capital expenditure. The larger Scottish municipalities are acting upon this principle. In Glasgow all schemes involving new work which have not been contracted for finally, have been postponed, and no new proposals necessitating capital expenditure are to be undertaken. In Dundee, while the part of the new town hall scheme for which Sir James Caird has made himself personally responsible is to be proceeded with, the other section, estimated to cost about £170,000, which would have fallen upon the rates, is to be held up until after the conclusion of the war. Aberdeen is following the same course. Permission may be sought to raise £450,000 for the purification of the Dee; but the works will not be begun until the war is over. A useful example is also being given by Dundee and Aberdeen in the matter of school buildings. The Dundee school board had intended to proceed with the erection of a new school and to make extensive alterations on an existing secondary institution. Both works will be suspended. The Aberdeen school board has postponed extensions and alterations on certain schools estimated to cost between £20,000 and £30,000.

The Minister for Works: You would not agree to that here.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Beyond that I have practically nothing to say. I think I have given back to the hon.

gentleman some facts and figures. Last session he picked upon us, and I think I have had a mild form of revenge upon him.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco) [9-45]: We have heard during this debate the usual class of criticism that we have had ever since this Government have been in power. The member for West Perth (Mr. Allen) started off to-night as usual by saying that he was going to offer some constructive criticism. When he finished his speech I found that all the suggestions he had made were that we should have a penny in the pound tax on wages, and that the Minister should visit his famous house in West Perth to see the sewerage connections. That is a sum total of the constructive criticism he put forward. During the whole debate the criticisms which have been levelled have been practically against State enterprises. That seems, as I interjected, the pet subject or bug-bear of hon. members on the opposite side of the House. I want hon. members to realise that State enterprises are undoubtedly included in the policy of the party which is sitting on this side of the House to-day. It is the policy of the Labour party and that policy was endorsed by the people when they returned the Government to power. Therefore, the Government have the right, and are justified in their action, of putting that policy into operation. Of course, hon. members on the other side of the House have a right to oppose it, but it is idle for them to continue this carping criticism against State enterprises, because this party is pledged to them and intends to carry them out, and it appears to me that the people of Australia are undoubtedly satisfied with this policy.

Mr. George: I do not think so.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: This is the general policy of the Labour party, not only here and not only throughout Australasia, but throughout the whole world where the Labour party exists. We find that at every consecutive election which has taken place in Australia the Labour party have been making enormous advances. They hold to-day the control of

power in five out of six States of Australia and in the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia itself.

Mr. George: But that will not be for much longer.

Mr. James Gardiner: Do you really think that is due to the State enterprises?

The Minister for Lands: Absolutely due to the policy.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I am convinced that the people endorse that policy. They knew when we came before them that this policy was going to be put into operation, and they continued to endorse it and to return Labour Governments to power even after they had already given them a term of office. We find that the electors of the Commonwealth when they rejected one Labour Government, namely the Fisher Government, only gave our opponents 12 months of office—and with that change of course went a change of policy—during which time great harm was done to many of the State enterprises which had been entered into; and yet after 12 months when the people had another opportunity of expressing their opinion through the ballot box they turned that party down, and returned to power the party which is wedded to State enterprises.

Mr. George: And they have regretted it ever since.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: That is purely an assertion of the hon. member. We have had two or three State elections since that time, and the results of these State elections demonstrate that the people did not regret that they had endorsed the principle for which the Labour Government stand. It is idle for hon. members to come forward with this carping criticism against State enterprises. The policy of State enterprises will live, as I said in a speech I made last session, when the hon. members and the party to which they belong will be entirely forgotten. The principle will, I say, continue.

Mr. James Gardiner: You do not, I suppose, object to criticism in regard to the management?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : I do not object to that, nor to criticisms of the way in which they are financed nor to anything of the kind. But I do say that to keep on continually harping on the subject in this way and saying that all our troubles are due to the fact that the Government have entered into State enterprises is of no assistance to the Government at the present time.

Mr. James Gardiner : The question of capitalisation ought to be taken into consideration.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : I do not object to any criticisms which have been brought forward which point out, perhaps, that better business methods might have been adopted.

Mr. George : You admit that. . . .

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : I do not admit that, but I do object to hon. members bringing forward this general class of criticism. What I do object to is, their trying to make the people of the State believe that the troubles that are existing to-day, financially and otherwise, are due to the fact that the Government have entered into the State enterprises. One would imagine that this State was entirely isolated from the rest of the world, that the great financial upheaval which has taken place throughout the world has not reached us here at all ; that we were cut off from it altogether and that our troubles have simply come upon us because we had a little capital invested in State enterprises and are not feeling the effects of the upheaval at all. One would imagine, too, that we have had no drought in the State. I believe I am correct in saying that we have had the most trying time of any part, at least of Australia. I say that there is no other State in the Commonwealth which has had such a continuous run of bad seasons as we have had, and which have culminated, as it did last year, in the most serious drought we have ever known in this State.

Mr. Heitmann : There is no other State which has struck such bad times. .

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : This period came too at a time when the settlers were all new on the land and had no time to get on their feet, and when the great bulk

of them was practically living on the assistance which was fully afforded to them by the Government. I think that is a fair statement of the case.

Mr. Taylor : South Australia was practically ruined through the drought.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : I believe that is so. There is no part of Australia which has had such a trying time and no part of Australia which was in such a bad position, owing to the newness of our settlers and to the impossibility of their being able to get on their feet during such bad times. I believe there is no part of Australia, however, which is going to get through it better than we are, that the wages of our working people have been kept up better in this State than in any other, that is taking them as a whole, and that the prices of commodities for the people have been kept at a more reasonable standard than elsewhere in Australia. I believe, too, that this is all due to the wise legislation which has been passed by the Government.

Mr. George : Incomes have gone down.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : I am sure that we have now come to the end of this levelling of prices. We find that another place has rejected the Bill which was to continue the Control of Trade in War Time Act, and that, therefore, this ceases to be law to-morrow. I believe that the State will now experience a rise in prices, and that this will demonstrate to another place and to the people in a very forcible manner the necessity for the legislation which was brought in by the Government at the commencement of the war and which was undoubtedly in the interests of the community. I feel sorry that another place took that drastic step and refused to continue that very necessary legislation. We have heard it said that the Government have exercised economy, but on every occasion when they did so by retiring what were undoubtedly superfluous officers, select committees have been appointed to inquire into the retirement. Is that the way to

encourage the Government to exercise economies?

Mr. Smith: You were not exercising economies.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It is all very well to say the Government are not exercising economies. I say, undoubtedly, that economy was exercised by the steps which were taken.

Mr. Smith: To retire officers who were quite capable of carrying out their duties?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: That may have been so. I do not say that they were not capable. I hope the hon. member will not try to make me say something which is farthest from my thoughts. I do not say that these officers were not capable of carrying out their duties. I say, only, that they were superfluous officers and that they were retired because there was nothing for them to do. They may have been able to carry out their duties in an admirable manner had the duties remained for them to carry out. The appointment of select committees on every occasion when some action is taken by the Government is doing something to retard the Government, and prevent them from exercising necessary economies.

Mr. Gilchrist: On how many occasions have select committees been appointed?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It appears that many of the hon. members who are criticising and crying out for economy desire that the Government should start and reduce the wages of the lower paid civil servants.

Mr. Smith: Rubbish.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: They asked the Government to begin by reducing those who are on the wages side, and to begin at the bottom of the ladder by cutting down the lower paid people, and leaving the higher paid officials to go on in their own sweet way irrespective of whether there is any work for them to do, thus gradually working up to the higher paid officials. I can prove that many people who are undoubtedly the supporters of our friends opposite in their private business have done that very thing in Perth during the last 12 months. I

will give a few instances to show what has been done by some of the large firms of employers in the City. It is a disgrace that they should take that action, and take advantage of practically helpless employees at a time like this. There is one firm in the City of Perth who has reduced its employees who were receiving over £1 a week by 33½ per cent. This is reliable information which I have gathered myself.

Mr. Willmott: That is worse than a reduction of 7·80 per cent.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: If the Government did anything of the kind we should hear a howl from our friends opposite. Another firm dismissed all their employees and closed down their factory. They re-opened it in a fortnight and re-engaged the dismissed employees, and reduced them from 20 per cent. to 25 per cent. on the salaries they were previously receiving. There is a firm of engineers which were bound by an award of the Arbitration Court. They reduced their employees by 1s. per day below the award, and were brought before the Arbitration Court and fined. There is a tea room proprietor in Perth who reduced his wages 25 per cent. below the award, and he was also brought before the Arbitration Court and fined. There were two or three other firms in the City which also reduced the salaries of the temporary staff, the married men 20 per cent. and the single men 25 per cent. They told the employees that if the business at the end of the year warranted it they would pay them the full amount, but they subsequently only re-paid 50 per cent. of the amount they had deducted. There are many firms who, since the Shop Assistants' Award was made, discharged all their senior employees and took on juniors in their place. In one case a saleswoman who had been 10 years in the employ of one firm, and had only been getting £1 a week, had her wages increased by the award to 34s. 6d., and she was dismissed a fortnight after the award became operative.

Mr. Smith: Give us the name of the firm.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : Such things are absolutely unfair. It seems to me that is the class of economy which our friends opposite desire the Government to carry out.

Mr. George : Do you mean to say that the bulk of the employers in Western Australia have done that ?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : A large number of them have done that.

Mr. George : Only a small minority of them can be said to have done that.

Mr. Nairn : You have no authority for making such a statement.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : I have every authority for saying so. I know of the cases and I can quote them as being correct. I have not made the statement without having good reasons for doing so. I believe that economy should be practised and there is one method by which the Government could bring it about, but our friends opposite never advocate it. I refer to the abolition of our State Governor. That is a plank in the platform of the Labour party right throughout Australia, and as I have already pointed out, though we have Labour Governments in five out of the six States, and a Labour Government in the Commonwealth, nothing has been done in the direction of abolishing the costly and unnecessary Government Houses of the States. No real attempt has been made to do away with them. It is all very well to say that we have not the power. We were told by the Home authorities some years ago, at a time when there was only one Labour Government in Australia—I refer to the Price Government and even that was not a purely Labour Government, it was a coalition Government—that when that Labour Government attempted to abolish the office of State Governor, no action would be taken unless the people of Australia as a whole were favourable to the change. The very fact that we have so many Labour Governments in power in Australia is a clear indication that the people of Australia believe that the expenditure upon State Governors and Government Houses is unnecessary and unwarranted. If some steps are not taken to bring about this

abolition we shall have the people of Australia rising up in their wrath and wiping out these offices.

Mr. Smith : Why does not your party do it ?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : That is what I want to know. Seeing that there are so many Labour Governments in power something should certainly be done.

Mr. Smith : Well, come over here.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : It was also one of the strong arguments put forward in favour of Federation that this expenditure would be wiped out and that there would be only one Governor and one Government House for Australia. Just a few words now with regard to the question of the sinking fund. I am pleased the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) is in his seat because I want to refer to what I consider is a most extraordinary legal opinion, which he gave us last evening. I admit I have had no legal training, but I do not think it requires much legal training to see the fallacy of the hon. member's argument. The Inscribed Stock Act states that the sinking fund shall be invested with the object of the final extinction of the debt. Those are the exact words and the member for Canning construes them into meaning that the sinking fund must be invested in our old stock to reduce the debt, and that it cannot be invested in a new stock.

Mr. Robinson : That is set out in the sections which follow.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : Let me point out to the hon. member that the sinking fund need not be invested in our old stock.

Mr. Robinson : Everybody knows that.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : The hon. member argued that we must invest it in our old stock to reduce the debt, otherwise it would increase the debt. If that argument is sound we cannot invest the sinking fund in any stock outside our old.

Mr. Robinson : No.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : I say, yes. The logical conclusion of the hon. member's argument is that we would have to invest it in our old stock for the purpose of reducing our debt. ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Mr. Robinson: Do you say that if you invest it in new stock you will not reduce the debt?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: We cannot invest it in anything that will earn money and which will have the effect of finally extinguishing the debt. I am showing that it is not always wise to follow legal opinions.

Mr. Robinson: If you set out to give legal opinions like that all the lawyers would soon grow rich.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Let me point out that to-day we have to use borrowed money for our sinking fund.

Mr. George: If you can get it.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: We can always rely upon the hon. member making some silly interjection. We have been able to get it, and whilst we have a deficit on revenue account, and whilst the revenue is not sufficient to meet the expenditure, we have to use borrowed money for the purpose of providing a sinking fund. Last year we paid something like £257,000 into our sinking fund. Our deficit was double that amount, so we were compelled to borrow money for the purpose of paying into the sinking fund.

Mr. Robinson: It is a deplorable state of affairs.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I admit it is deplorable but it has been done in Western Australia ever since we have had the Inscribed Stock Act and ever since we have had a national debt. If the hon. member will go back some years he will find that there are very few in which we have had surpluses, or in which we have even paid our way, and when we have a deficit we must use borrowed money to pay the sinking fund. If we must borrow it to pay sinking fund, is it not just as well and just as sound to say that we can issue fresh Treasury Bills to cover the amount of the sinking fund.

Mr. Smith: From your point of view.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: From anyone's point of view, if they look at it in a logical way, to say that we shall issue fresh stock for the sinking fund; so as to place fresh stock on the London market.

What difference is there? No difference whatever.

Mr. Robinson: Not according to that code of finance.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: That code of finance is sound.

Mr. Robinson: You know where it leads to. It leads to national bankruptcy.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I have read the opinion given by the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) to Tasmania on the question of sinking funds and I asked the hon. member whether he had taken into account the fact that we were using borrowed money for our sinking fund, and he said "No"; and his opinion is absolutely sound when the revenue and expenditure balance. When we have the revenue that we can take the sinking fund from, that is sound, but if we have to borrow money for the purpose of financing the sinking fund, it is immaterial whether we issue Treasury bills or inscribed stock to the trustees, or place it on the London market to raise the money.

Mr. Smith: Will the trustees accept it?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: If they will not the Treasurer has no power to compel them to do so, but I cannot see any reason for the trustees refusing to accept Treasury bills. The sinking fund should be an investment of the surplus.

Mr. George: If we have to wait for a surplus from your Government we will never have a sinking fund.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: When the hon. member's party were in office they put up some wonderful performances. Of all the criticism which has been offered to the Government there has been nothing in the way of advice as to how money should be raised during these trying times. That is the great problem which the Government have to face. It is, in fact, a problem which every Government in Australia has to face to-day, and if hon. members have any knowledge of the subject, they should place it at the disposal of the State. I have an idea, and I believe it is well worthy of being followed up—it will assist the Government far more than the

suggestion of the member for West Perth—of putting a penny stamp on the receipt for every pound of wages which is drawn by the working people. In my opinion the Commonwealth Government are not making the full use they should of their note issue. We find to-day that in practically every one of the countries engaged in the war gold has virtually gone out of use, that they are carrying on their affairs purely on paper money. Some months before the outbreak of war, Germany was gathering in all the gold possible. Large amounts of gold were leaving England and going to the continent, and the Government of England did not know where the gold was going. They imagined it was going to Russia, and found out some months afterwards that the money had been going to Germany. That money is now locked up in the German banks, and the whole of the commerce of that country is being carried on with paper money. England, France, and Russia are now awaking to the fact. England is starting to call in all the gold in the country, and only in yesterday's paper we found this information—

Those of your readers who contemplate travelling to London overland from Marseilles will be interested to learn that the French Government now insist upon the surrender of all gold (no matter of what country) in the possession of travellers before they leave France, and French notes at the rate of 25 francs to the pound are given in exchange. At existing rate of exchange this means a considerable loss, which can only be overcome by purchasing circular notes and the like. In Italy, Switzerland, and other European countries similar conditions obtain.

That is what is happening. Those countries realise that they have to get control of the whole of the gold, that for their internal trade gold is not necessary, and that it is far better to transact it on paper and keep the gold in their banks against the end of the war, or any crisis which may arise.

Mr. Willmott: Are not we keeping our gold here?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: We do not know. Gold is circulating very freely in Australia to-day. Not a week goes by but I get a gold coin of some description.

Mr. Bolton: You are jolly lucky.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: There is nothing whatever to stop people leaving Australia to-day, and carrying with them as much gold as they can get. No embargo has been placed on the circulation of gold in Australia. It is the bounden duty of the Commonwealth Government to call in that gold. The bringing of it in it will enable them to issue notes in its place, and by the issue of those notes they can make advances to the States.

Mr. Smith: Will the Commonwealth Government guarantee that one can get 20s. for an Australian note in London?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Why ask such a question? What has that to do with the problem I am dealing with? I am concerning myself about the gold in circulation in Australia. Australia has to be financed, and it seems, from what we can learn of the Premier's Conference, that it is going to be a hard problem, that it is impossible to go on the London market for money. What are we to do? There are but two things we can do. Either the Commonwealth Government have to do as I suggested and issue paper money for the purpose of carrying on, or else they have to amend the Act which imposes a tax on State notes, and allow the State Government to issue their own notes for the purpose of carrying on until the trouble is over. There is no other method open, unless we can borrow. If they can carry on the finances of the continental countries on paper, surely we in a State like this can carry on also. The question must be faced.

Mr. Smith: The South American States tried it.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Oh, why not let us go back to the Ark?

Mr. Allen: We might mistake you for Noah.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I believe this would be very wise on the part of the

Commonwealth Government. The whole of the currency is in their hands, and it is their duty to the people of Australia to see that the affairs of the State are carried on. It is impossible to sit down and say we cannot get money and therefore must close up all our enterprises. If the Commonwealth Government will not take action, the only alternative is to wipe out the tax on State notes and allow the State to issue its own notes.

Mr. Smith: They are not allowed to issue notes. You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: As a matter of fact, there is nothing to prevent notes being issued, except the ten per cent. tax.

Mr. George: And the provision of gold reserves.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The country has to be carried on, and if we cannot borrow money we cannot sit idly and allow affairs to drift.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Cannot we live within our means?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Yes, if we have means. The trouble is to raise those means. If the hon. member talks of the State living within its revenue to-day, he is talking nonsense, because we would have to close up practically all Government activities.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: State enterprises?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: We would have to close down at least half, because all our Government activities are carried on on loan moneys.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Is it necessary to have loan moneys to carry on State enterprises?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I am dealing with the whole of the State's activities. If we close down these we will do an injury to the State which will take years to remedy. For many years to come this State will have to be a borrowing State. If we imagined, with the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley), that we should close down borrowing and try to run

the State on revenue, we would hamper the State's development. In conclusion, I hope the Government will take notice of what I have said.

Mr. George: We will, certainly.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: And that they will endeavour to bring all the Governments in Australia together, with a view to approaching the Home Government on this question of State Governors, once again. I think the very fact that the people have returned Labour Governments to power in Australia is an indication that they desire that this unnecessary expenditure should cease. They realise that one Governor-General is sufficient, because all that is needed is one link between us and the old country. There is no necessity whatever for State Governors, or that we should go the expense of maintaining a State Government House. A lieutenant governor who has his own place of residence and who would not find it necessary to keep up an expensive establishment could carry out the duties equally as well as they are carried out by any State Governor. The position is unwarranted, especially seeing the trying times through which the whole of Australia is passing to-day. I trust the Government will take some steps in this direction.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [10.28]: I move—

That progress be reported and leave asked to sit again.

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

Ayes	16
Noes	18

Majority against .. 2

AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Gilchrist
Mr. Hickmott	(Teller).
Mr. Lefroy	

NOMS.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Alunsic
Mr. Chesson	Mr. O'Loghlin
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Foley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Green	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Johnston	
Mr. McDowall	(Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [10-33]: I am quite in accord with the Government that economy, wherever it can be exercised, is the proper thing at this particular period in the history of the State. At the same time, we need to exercise judicious economy because true economy consists in giving facilities where they are justified. Although I have a few remarks to make in regard to expenditure in the constituency I represent, I do not intend to advocate expenditure except where I think it would mean increased production, and would prove of considerable benefit, not only to the particular portion of the State concerned, but to the State as a whole. My request is for funds to be spent on what is the flower of the gold-fields of Western Australia to-day, that little gold mining centre which is attracting more attention in the financial markets at the present moment than any other part of Australia. We have in Westonia a mine which, as one can see by a glance at the quotations in the papers, ranks higher than any other mine in the Commonwealth to-day. I refer to the Edna May. Not only have we the Edna May, but in the adjoining property, the Edna May Deeps, there is a bore down to a depth of 400 feet and the gold proved in that bore assures that the life of the mine has been doubled. Westonia as a mining centre is now assured, and if the Edna May continues to maintain its profitable operations and return dividends the State will reap a large amount from the dividend tax. Adjoining this mine also is the Edna May Central which, with the Edna May Deeps, justifies the expectation that we shall get considerable wealth from these mines. Three miles west of the Edna May property there is Weston's

Reward where present developments show that we may expect another profit-bearing mine, and further west still, we have the Battler group of mines which should prove a payable proposition. That being the case I would point out that facilities are needed at Carrabin, the nearest railway siding. I am not asking for a railway from Carrabin to Westonia, but I ask that reasonable facilities should be provided at Carrabin in the way of protection for goods put off the trains at that station. A water supply is also needed and the road should be put in passable condition in order to reduce the present cost of operations on the field. The cost of living in that centre means a great deal to the industry and to the prospectors who are there.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: What is the length of the road?

Mr. HARRISON: About six miles. If expenditure proposed in directions other than this shows as good a prospect of proving profitable to the State as the outlay on the requirements I have indicated, I can say without hesitation that that money will be judiciously and wisely spent. The member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) prefaced his speech with the remark that he did not consider himself too highly as a critic of finance. A little later, however, he posed as a critic of finance to the extent of saying that if the whole of the money spent on agriculture had been devoted to mining it would have been better spent. If that policy had been adopted what would be the condition of our agricultural industry to-day? Even if we applied this principle to private business throughout Australia as a whole, it would be impossible to carry on because financial accommodation and promissory notes and loan funds of other descriptions are so largely availed of to carry on operations. It is wise to expend money obtained by borrowing when it means increasing the assets of the State and bringing about greater development. Western Australia, even to-day, is merely in the pioneering stage and we have to compete in the world's markets with older established producing countries.

We have to meet competition in the world's markets, not only with older established countries, but with countries where lower wages are paid, and if we wish to compete successfully we must provide up to date facilities. How could we provide these up to date facilities unless we had loan funds to assist us? It would be impossible to do so. Where is our new wealth coming from? What we have to aim at is to develop our productive resources to the utmost possible extent, but I ask can we borrow now at the same rate as we did two years ago?

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Not at the same rate.

Mr. HARRISON: The difficulty is that we will not be able to borrow at anything like the same rate now. That will affect the interest and sinking fund on these new amounts, and it will mean increasing the cost of production. Our main idea should be to develop all we know how, and to produce for all we are worth. What was it that the Prime Minister of England, Mr. Asquith, said in the course of a speech he made not long ago? He said "Produce, produce, produce." This to my mind applies more to Australia, or at all events just as much, than it does to England. If we are going to put our energies into developing the State it means that we cannot afford to invest our funds except in reproductive works, and we must see that our expenditure is wisely and justly laid out. Under these conditions can we continue to go into ventures such as have been gone into in the past? I say, let the past bury its dead. I only desire to refer to the past in order that lessons may be drawn from it for the future.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Are you referring to State enterprises?

Mr. HARRISON: I am referring to secret and unbusinesslike contracts. I agree with the hon. member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) when he stated that there are occasions, although they are rare, when it is legitimate and just for the Government to keep a hand on their knowledge so as not to let the outside world know what is going on if by letting them know it will de-

feat them in conserving the funds of the State. But when things such as have been done are done without the knowledge of Parliament, I say it is a mistake and that both Parliament and the State should be in full possession of all the information. It is wrong to continue a secretive policy of this kind. The country has a right to know and we have a right to know. I am referring particularly to the Nevanas case. If the object of the Minister was at the earliest possible moment to get these cattle killed, refrigerated, and canned for the purpose of supplying the Government he should have fully considered all the grounds, and known exactly what he was doing so that no trouble would occur afterwards.

Mr. Munsie: Do you really know that we have got into trouble as it is?

Mr. HARRISON: It appears to me that the Government have got into trouble.

The Minister for Works: Seeing that there is a committee sitting at the present time it is surely inadvisable to discuss the matter.

Mr. HARRISON: It seems to me that the Minister wanted to save time, and get these works finished at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. Munsie: A very laudable object too.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They have been a long time thinking about it—four years.

Mr. HARRISON: The past is only useful so far as it assists us in the future not to make further mistakes. If we are going to get good results from past experience we must take to heart the lessons which have come from that experience.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And yet they bought another State steamer.

Mr. HARRISON: I understand that that has been going on for some time.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Premier said "No" in answer to my question.

The Minister for Works: He did not reply to your question about that.

Mr. HARRISON: It does not seem to me to be good business.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Minister is only quibbling.

Mr. HARRISON: I trust that in future we shall know more about what is going on and what is being done about the finances than we have known in the past, so that all members of the House may be able to judge in what direction we are going.

Mr. George interjected.

The Minister for Works: You know everything which has been done so far as this Government are concerned. It is only a quibble.

Mr. George: What?

The Minister for Works: Every question you have asked has had a fair answer.

Mr. George: Rubbish.

Mr. HARRISON: We should endeavour as far as possible to save any unnecessary expense.

The Minister for Works: We have been trying to, but we have been pushed very strongly to incur this expenditure. They never take no for an answer.

Mr. HARRISON: I am quite certain that any expenditure incurred upon Westonia will bear fruit and give good results, otherwise I would not have approached the matter.

The Minister for Works: You cannot spend money and keep it.

Mr. HARRISON: If we keep money in our pockets we shall never get any benefit from it. We must use money if we are going to get anything out of it.

Mr. George: There is no reason for squandering it.

The Minister for Works: There is no squandering so far as we are concerned.

Mr. HARRISON: There is another matter which has been referred to. It appears that if there is some small damage done to a State school away in a country district this is reported to the Education department and a man is sent along to inspect. This man reports and another man is sent along to see what is required, and a further man is sent along to have the work done, while another man is sent to see that it is properly carried out and completed.

There should be something in the regulations of the Education department by which a State school teacher, or a man who is in a position of trust, should be able to incur some small expenditure for repairs without necessitating such a large amount of travelling as I have indicated and so much loss of time in inspections. We have some such system in our roads board, where we give every member power to spend up to a certain sum of money.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The department have school boards.

Mr. HARRISON: Written authority is given to have the work done, and this of course is passed in the usual way. I think that if the Minister would consider the matter he would see that the regulations should be altered in that respect, in order to give some trusted officer a certain amount of latitude to incur a small liability and avoid unnecessary expense and delay.

Mr. George: If he did you would have a lot of vacancies in the service.

Mr. HARRISON: If men are employed who do not give productive work for their salaries we are on losing ground. If that is the position why should we continue it? If we are doing things of this sort which we cannot afford why should we continue them? I think there is scope in Western Australia, with the population that we have, for every man, and there should be no necessity to keep men employed who are not giving sufficient return for the money they receive. If these men are not fully employed something should be done to give them further employment. If we are giving value in the shape of wages we should get an equivalent value in return in the shape of work. In a private business, if the employees did not work according to the wages they received it would probably lead to the bankruptcy of that firm. The State is after all only a bigger matter and just as in a private business it is necessary that the State should be run so that its business affairs are well conducted.

Mr. George: You have hit the right nail on the head.

Mr. HARRISON: There are other things upon which I intended to speak to-night, but they can be dealt with when they come up under their various headings. My principal object in speaking to-night was to place before the House the wants of that particular centre, so that justice may be done to it. The people concerned have been waiting long enough. If I did not do something, they would not know that they have a member. I speak more particularly as to railway facilities. In regard to roads, the Minister for Works has only recently made a grant for repairs. The granting of facilities of that kind represents money wisely spent.

The Minister for Works: There are 50 members of the House of the same opinion.

Mr. HARRISON: But there are many other things that my electors need. At present I am mentioning only immediate essentials. So far as this Parliament is concerned, essentials alone should be dealt with.

[The Speaker resumed the chair.]

Progress reported.

SELECT COMMITTEE, RETIREMENT OF C. F. GALE.

Further Message from Council.

Message from the Council received stating that a reply had not yet been received to the Council's Message dated the 7th September, requesting the Assembly to authorise the Hon. R. H. Underwood to give evidence before the select committee on the retirement of Mr. C. F. Gale.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 30th September, 1915.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

MOTION—POWER HOUSE, RETURN OF PAPERS.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East) [3.2]: I ask the permission of the House to submit a motion without notice. Yesterday when the leader of the House laid on the Table 127 files and six contracts in connection with the Perth power house, he intimated that amongst these files was a large number dealing specifically with arrangements and agreements in process made between the Commissioner of Railways and local authorities and private people, that these particular files were in daily use, and that if they were retained it would cause much inconvenience to the Commissioner. I have spent several hours in going through the files specified as being in daily use. My motive in rising is to ask the permission of the House to move, without notice, that the files in question should be returned to the Commissioner for Railways. They may be in daily use by him, but they are, I believe of not much use to us.

Leave given.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East) [3.5]: I have a list of the files here, some 59 altogether, and I do not suppose that hon. members desire that I should read it out. I therefore move—

That fifty-nine files in connection with the new power house, which were laid on the Table of the Legislative Council on the 29th September, 1915, be returned to the Commissioner of Railways forthwith.