

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 25th February, 1915.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Honorary Minister: By-laws of the Municipality of Carnarvon.

By the Attorney General: Further papers in connection with the Allatt case.

QUESTION—AGENCY GENERAL, SAVOY HOUSE.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, What has been the total cost to the State to date of Savoy House, London? 2, What is the annual rental of same? 3, When does the lease expire?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Purchase price, £15,000; alterations, furniture, etc., £2,640 1s. 4d.; total, £17,640 1s. 4d. 2, Ground rent is £600. 3, Crown lease expires 1957.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL ACT OFFENCE.

Allatt Case.

Hon. J. MITCHELL asked the Attorney General: Will he lay upon the Table of the House any further correspondence he may have in addition to that already before the House in connection with the Allatt case?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: Yes.

QUESTION—LANDS OFFICERS TRANSFERRED.

Hon. J. MITCHELL asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Have any officers of the Lands Department been transferred temporarily or permanently to any other Government Departments? 2, If so, how many, and to which Departments?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Forty-four. Temporarily transferred to other departments, as follows:—Farmers' Assistance Board, 25 (including 16 inspectors); Water Supply Department, 11; Taxation, 5; Workers' Homes Board, 2; Agricultural Department, 1.

QUESTION—WHEAT PRICE, GRAIN AND FOODSTUFF BOARD.

Mr. THOMSON asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact that the price fixed by the Grain and Foodstuff Board for wheat was less than the price ruling at the place where and at the time when the wheat was acquired? 2, If this is the case, will he request the Board to alter the price to that ruling at the time when and where it was acquired? 3, If the answer to Questions Nos. 1 and 2 is "No," will he advise the House what is the interpretation placed by the board on Subsection (3) of Section 13 of "The Grain and Foodstuff Act, 1915"?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Generally speaking—No. In a few cases, in certain places, the price fixed by the Board may have been slightly under the inflated price at the time of acquisition. 2, No, but the seller has the right of appeal, should he be dissatisfied, to the Royal Commission for the Control of Trade. 3, In forming one general basic price the Board took many factors into consideration, and had due regard to the context of Subsection (3) of Section 13 of "The Grain and Foodstuff Act."

QUESTION—MINERS' RELIEF SCHEME.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Honorary Minister: In regard to the Miners' Re-

lief scheme, which is being subsidised by the Government, will men suffering from the effect of mining, but who have left that occupation for some time, be eligible to apply for assistance?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister) replied: This is a matter which must first be considered by the Board appointed to administer the Miners' Relief scheme.

QUESTION—STEEL REINFORCEMENT FOR NEW GENERAL POST OFFICE.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it not a fact that exhaustive tests have been made by the officials of the Works Department as to the strength of the "Johnson" brand of steel reinforcement? 2, Is it manufactured locally? 3, What officer was it who specified "Clinton" reinforcement for the new post office building in Perth?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No; but tests are now being made by the Works Department, previous tests having been made by the Water Supply and Sewerage Department. 2, Yes. 3, Clinton's reinforcement was specified at the suggestion and with the approval of the Department of Home Affairs.

SELECT COMMITTEE, WHALING LICENSE.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Mr. HOLMAN the time for bringing up the report was extended until the 2nd March.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE, MONEY BILLS PROCEDURE.

Report presented.

Mr. HOLMAN brought up the report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to inquire into the procedure on Money Bills.

Report received and read.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1914-15.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Holman in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental, £93,092:

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [4.43]: In approaching the question of spending money, whether it be public funds or private funds the greatest care and the utmost circumspection are essential. One unfortunate event has led on to another so rapidly during the past seven months, that great trouble has been caused throughout the community. While it is true that to some extent we have suffered and are suffering on account of the war, there is also serious trouble arising from other quarters. We must all admit that The great duty of this Parliament is to provide work for the people: there can be no gainsaying that. To date, notwithstanding all that has been said, there has not been a great deal of unemployment. Unquestionably, we have had some trouble, and will until the war is over continue to meet with trouble, as regards unemployment. I submit that in considering the expenditure of public money, we should keep before us the great consideration that the State must find work for its people. With regard to the two proposals before the House yesterday, I am of opinion that the loan proposals are of far greater importance, and that the proper expenditure of loan funds is most likely to result in the greatest good to our people generally, and to those out of work particularly. The spending of money as proposed by these Loan Estimates will result in the providing of work far more speedily, and, moreover, the providing of more permanent work, than any other means can effect. The Premier has told us that the money represented by the Loan Estimates is available. The hon. gentleman has informed us that he has arranged for that money, and can obtain it. The works here proposed can, therefore, be put in hand right away. These Estimates include work for the farmer and for every other section of the community. If the works appearing on these Estimates are

put in hand at once, we need have no fear for the future of our wage earners for some considerable time. However, we cannot view the position to-day as we viewed it yesterday. Yesterday we passed a Bill setting up a new principle of taxation—the taxation of the many for the benefit of the few. No great good can come of a Bill of that nature. The railways mentioned in the Estimates are all urgently needed if the people are to remain on the land. Without those railways there can be no employment, and every man along the proposed route must suffer. Those railways should be built without delay. Unfortunately there is no railway for the South-West. The Busselton-Margaret River railway line should certainly have been included. We have already taken over 27 miles of a railway running from Karridale to a point where the Busselton-Margaret River line will junction. Can there be any sense in keeping a staff at Karridale to run this short length when, by building those few miles of railway, we could open up an immense area of fertile country? Our harbours, too, are essential, and we must keep on improving them at each of our established ports. I noticed provision made for abattoirs and freezing works at Wyndham. I am entirely in accord with that. We shall never have cheap and satisfactory meat in the metropolitan area until those works are completed. Out of this enormous sum, surely we can find money to carry those works, at any rate very far on the way. The sum of £60,000 is provided for a smelter at Ravenshorpe, but apart from this the amount to be expended on mining is much less than it should be. I object to some of the expenditure appearing under the heading of "Other Undertakings." Take, for instance, State hotels. Is this a time at which to build State hotels? Two are proposed for Corrigin and Bolgart. There can be very little business to be done at those centres in these times of depression.

The Attorney General: Bolgart is a very good centre. We have obtained a provisional license there.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But you should not have done so. At any rate I am going to vote against the item, for this is not the time to be building State hotels.

The Attorney General: It is just the time to keep public works going.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, special and necessary public works. This is neither special nor necessary. It ought not to appear on the Estimates. We have a sufficient number of hotels in the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Let them spend the profits of the State hotels on new hotels.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Perhaps that would be acceptable to all. In addition to the State hotels we have £100,000 for workers' homes. I am not sure that this is a time to set aside that amount of money for the purpose. Loan funds should be so expended as to give continuous work. When we build a railway we provide far more work for the residents along the line than for those who merely build the railway, but when we erect workers' homes we provide only temporary employment. We have built a large number of those homes, and to-day there are more houses in the metropolitan area than are required. I have no objection to the principle of building workers' homes, but there is a time for all things, and the obligation upon us to-day is to provide the maximum employment. The best thing that could be done with this £100,000 would be to give it to Mr. Paterson, to be loaned out through the Agricultural Bank to the people on the land. We have a large sum set aside for the implement works. It is gradually coming to be seen that they are not implement works at all, but merely repairing shops. They make a few agricultural implements, but only an insignificant number as compared with the repairs they carry out. They do the work and charge the departments anything they please. Wherever day labour is employed we have to pay through the nose, and I believe we are paying far more for the work done in those repair shops than is reasonable. I cannot see how 600 men can be employed repairing Government

machinery, dredges, and other plant of the class.

Mr. Bolton: That is a bald statement.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We have the balance sheet, which shows a loss, notwithstanding that they charge what they please for the work done. If Ministers were frank about the thing we should know just where we stand. We are to spend £26,000 on ferries. I suppose that is partly for the new boat which, I understand, is not as satisfactory as she might be. Sawmills are to absorb more money, and in fact all our trading concerns are provided for on these Estimates. Is this a time at which to extend operations in those directions? There is to be assistance to farmers, direct and through the Agricultural Bank, but this is very different from the expenditure under the headings to which I have referred. The farmers will be compelled to pay interest on the money loaned. I am sorry that more money is not to be found for the development of the South-West. The Minister will find down there ample scope for his energies and plenty of room for his mistakes as well as his successes.

The Minister for Lands: I have been kept pretty busy rectifying your mistakes to date.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I made no mistakes at all. It is ungenerous in the Minister to tell hon. members that he is still rectifying my mistakes.

The Minister for Mines: Nothing very serious; only a few minor mistakes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The inexperienced are ever willing to rush in where angels fear to tread. These gentlemen opposite are never tired of saying that those on this side made mistakes when in office. What does the hon. member for South Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) know about the South-West, outside the bowling green at Bunbury?

Mr. Bolton: I know what the farmers think of your mistakes, notwithstanding your halo.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We made no mistakes, although we did a vast amount of preliminary work in the South-West, improving the rivers, introducing tree-pullers, extending the operations of the

Agricultural Bank down there and appointing Mr. Connor, Mr. Moody, Mr. Scott, and other experts who are carrying on the great work of encouraging the settlers there.

Mr. Bolton: Do not forget the cows and goats you imported. Some of them required examining before they left the East.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member requires examining now. Everything we did down there is still going, although of course in a much smaller way. On these Estimates we have £5,000 set aside in order that the Minister may import cows from the East, cows not nearly as good as those I brought in. What, then, does the hon. member complain of? He does not know one end of a cow from the other. The state of the country to-day is due to the fact that the land settlement we initiated has been stopped,—not because of the drought, for it was stopped before the drought.

The Minister for Works: Do you believe that the drought did not stop it?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I say it stopped before the drought was on us.

The Minister for Works: The drought was in 1911-12.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I was drawn off the track by members saying I did nothing. In the past I was accused of doing too much. Let Ministers do one-hundredth part of what I did, and it would be satisfactory, but I do not wish to discuss the matter of the South-West further.

The Minister for Lands: We are not neglecting the South-West.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then why do you not give Sussex a shock?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Let us come to the railways and see what Ministers have done. We are asked to vote £2,850,000. This will mean £140,000 a year in interest. We must realise that all the works cannot be carried out at once, and we must realise that our financial position is deplorable. The member for Bunbury the other night said that we were taxed to the extent of 20s. per head, but if the hon. member will turn up the statement he will see that we are taxed very

much higher than that. That may be the amount in the column of taxation, but we are paying to the Treasury in various ways something like £16 per head per annum. Of course it is not in direct taxation.

The Minister for Lands: When you pay to the Midland Railway Company for services rendered, is that taxation?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is not taxation in the ordinary sense, but it is taxation when the charges are much higher than they ought to be; when they charge an excess rate. I want to know where this interest that I have pointed out is to come from. Yesterday we passed a Bill which will tax the people to the tune of £200,000, but without this Bill we could have found all the work that was required. Ministers have decided otherwise, and they are going to ask the people to pay both ways. Would it not have been better to have dealt with the Loan Estimates first, so that the House would have been in possession of the facts.

The Attorney General: The Taxation Bill was gone on with at the request of your leader.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am not going to oppose those Estimates. I am going to support them, but I want to point out what the expenditure and the taxation mean, and I want the Treasurer to say where he is going to get £140,000 additional interest from, in addition to the interest he will have to find on the loan. The Premier in bringing forward his taxation proposal was listening to the glamour of the noisy few. The Premier ought to be the first man to know how much loan money has been expended. In three years the Premier has spent loan money to the amount of £10,716,000, which means £33 per head of the population.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is the increase.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes; and during the three years when the leader of the Opposition was Premier, or had control, we borrowed £11 per head of the population, and people were more prosperous then than they have been since or are ever likely to be while the present Min-

istry remain on the Treasury bench. If we borrow this enormous sum we have to find the increased interest Bill, which in three years has amounted to 50 per cent. Is that not a serious matter?

The Minister for Lands: Does the hon. member advocate the stoppage of borrowing then?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not.

The Minister for Lands: Then what are we to do?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Return to the system of prosperity. The Ministers have borrowed in three years, money which means the expenditure of one-third of the total interest bill, and yet the people clamour for special taxation in order that they may have work. This investment of ten millions of money is producing very little additional profit while the interest bill has increased 50 per cent. The interest earned has not increased by one-tenth. Is that not a serious matter? Ministers know that we must have trouble to finance this country for a considerable time to come. The Federal Treasurer is everlastingly wanting more money from us, and his opportunity for direct taxation is restricted. Ministers must remember that they must have regard to economy, yet knowing all this, there is an additional expenditure in interest of half a million, and Ministers want the House to believe that they should have the right to go on spending in the same lavish way as in the past.

The Minister for Mines: Are you against borrowing?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: According to the Labour platform money must be borrowed for works that pay interest and sinking fund.

The Minister for Lands: Then you would stop constructing agricultural railways?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, there are paying agricultural lines. The result of the working of the spur lines is a profit to the railway system.

Mr. Bolton: You are absolutely wrong.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am not. The general railway system would not have had one-tenth of the hundreds of thousands of pounds of wheat which was car-

ried last year except for these spur lines. The method of calculation by the Railway Department is unfair. I have already stated that I support this loan expenditure as a means of finding work. It is the only way in which money should be spent to find work. If I had the opportunity of deciding between this means of finding work and the Government special tax I should support the loan money expenditure. Still in the expenditure of loan moneys we are entitled to have economy.

The Minister for Mines: Indicate in what direction.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: When lines were built in the days before the leader of the Opposition left office we added to the general indebtedness £3,000 for every mile of railway laid, and for rolling stock; in fact for all purposes, not only for the building of the lines.

The Minister for Mines: The building of the lines and the rolling stock?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, the equipment.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: We cannot get the trucks yet.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We find that immediately the present Ministers got control of the Treasury bench each mile of railway cost, not £3,000, but £6,000.

The Attorney General: Some of that £6,000 was spent in putting your lines in proper order.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That won't wash.

The Attorney General: They did wash before we took control; some of them washed away.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, half a million was spent in rolling stock which you did not provide.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We ordered it all.

The Minister for Lands: We had to place over 100 new engines on the railway system.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Suppose you had.

The Minister for Mines: That is responsible for a great deal of expenditure.

Hon. Frank Wilson: When we took office over 50 engines were lying in dock, and we had to rebuild them.

The Minister for Mines: Not a new engine was put on the road.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That does not make £3,000 a mile.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The expenditure by the Government on railways in three years was three and a half millions. I ask, why was it that the cost per mile went up to £6,000? If he cuts off his rolling stock altogether, we have £5,000 instead of £2,000 as in our time.

The Minister for Mines: Where do you suggest this has gone?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister is there to tell us.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Your confounded day labour system does this. Let a few contracts and see what a difference there will be.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister asks how it is this has happened, and where the money has gone. The loss is due to Ministerial incapacity. We know that one thing leads to another, one extravagance to another, one stupidity to another, and that all these mistakes have to be paid for. There are thousands of items of extravagance. Show me where there is not extravagance? There is waste all along the line. They have done their work under the day labour system, and this is the source of all their financial troubles. They are paying far more for all services than they should pay. If the Minister will inquire he will find that the York to Greenhills and the Greenhills to Quairading lines cost per mile £1,426, under our system, and that the Quairading-Nunagin line cost £2,000 under that of the late Minister for Works, making a difference of £600. The grade between Quairading and Nunagin is a very easy one indeed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Our grades on the lines were heavier than those met with by this Government.

The Minister for Mines: If so, then you have some sort of a case; but I do not think it is so.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This Government spent £600 more per mile, and provided exactly the same conveniences as were provided by the late Government.

The Minister for Mines: Not the same conveniences.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: And our railways did better work. There are the same rails, the same sleepers, the same ballast and the same culverts, and yet there is this difference in cost of construction. Then we have opened 112 miles of railway during 1914.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They have kept back the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes. This railway line ought to have been constructed long ago; it has been dragging on for three years under the day labour system. We do not know what the cost has been, but we know what the cost to the settlers has been. For a year, at least, the settlers had had to pay high freights because the work has not been completed. If the Minister continues to stick to the day labour system, the country must continue to pay; and as long as the Minister holds to this system, so long will the country have to pay twice as much as it should. I believe this line, however, is to be opened on the 1st March. I congratulate the hon. Mr. Patrick, to whose interest in the line this is due. I advise the Government to go back to the system which obtained before their time. If men are wanting work, let the Government get contracts going and absorb those who are out of employment. Before a Labour Minister went into the Public Works Department, the work for the most part was let by contract. The method was instituted of having a day labour system in competition with a contract system. We found that was an excellent means of getting good work done at reasonable cost. The present Ministers, however, abandoned the contract system and fell back upon the day labour system, with the result we have seen. The Attorney General asks about trading concerns, State steamers, the saw mills, the brick yards and so forth. Thousands of pounds have been spent on these concerns, and here again we are losing a great deal of money. Ministers do not hesitate to interfere with the activities of other people. They believe in bleeding the fat man, with the exception, perhaps, of the Min-

ister for Mines, who, according to his statement last night will not do this. Ministers interfere with these activities, and yet offer no substitute in return. If they were to offer some return for the work they deter people from doing, there might be something in it. I would like to point out that if we allow the Government to go on in this extravagant fashion, spending twice as much money as they should in providing the conveniences that we must have, we shall be for the next 30 years, until the loans are paid off, compelled to pay far more than is reasonable. Of course we cannot build a railway line at greatly increased cost without having to pay higher rates for using that line. Hon. members of both sides of the House should insist on the Government building these lines cheaper and insist upon the contract system being adopted, as the day labour system is so unsatisfactory. Ministers ought to consider the fact that our wheat growers have sold two million pounds worth of wheat less this year than they did last year. Farmers, therefore, are £2,000,000 worse off than if they had last year's crop.

The Attorney General: And yet you expect the country to be as buoyant as before.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The pastoralists are also £300,000 or £400,000 worse off than they were.

The Minister for Mines: But you suggest that all the troubles of the State are due to the Government. Surely this £2,000,000 has something to do with them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I say that the Government must see that these people receive some consideration. They cannot be expected to pay the same amount of taxation and bear the same burdens as they could in normal times.

Mr. Foley: You are not blaming the Labour Government for the bad season.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Oh, no; but I wish to point out that the Government must give the people time to recover. When we considered additional taxation the other night, every member on the

other side of the Chamber jumped at the chance of piling a tax on the people. Now, in authorising this expenditure, we are of course building up further contributions from the people. There is no doubt that the State is suffering from financial exhaustion. This is due very largely to the extravagance of the Government.

The Attorney General: To the bad season.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The financial exhaustion is due to the Government, as is also the want of money at the Treasury. It is also due to the contracts which they made with Bethell over the pownallising of sleepers. It is also due to their cattle dealing and to their countless blunders, as well as to the want of interest they have shown in the administration of the affairs of the country.

Mr. Foley: Would you be prepared to put on a tax on education if it would reduce the deficit.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am sorry to hear the hon. member say he believes in a tax on education.

Mr. Foley: Would your party be prepared to pay a tax on every child attending school if it would do away with the deficit?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Why, we should be taxing the baby. Indeed, under the Bill passed through last night we should be taking the pennies from babies every time they were taken to a picture show.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is dealing with the Loan Estimates. The Bill passed through last night should not be discussed again.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But for that Bill I should have been still more actively supporting the Loan proposals of the Government. I do support the Loan proposals, but I wish to give my reasons why I find it difficult to do so. I am surprised that members of this House have shown people so little consideration. Not only members sitting opposite, but members of the Country Party, think there is no end to our ability to pay. Responsibilities have been heaped upon the people year by year ever since the

Government came into power. We have exhausted, I believe, our right to tax for some time to come. I do not think we should be expected to face additional taxation. I would remind hon. members, particularly those sitting on my left, that this sort of thing will probably go on for another three years.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: What has additional taxation got to do with the Loan Estimates?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The leader of the Country party told the House last night that he would give all his time to saving the State. If the Country Party will but look into the financial administration of the Government they will realize that they could keep them up to the collar if they would only sit in direct opposition to the Government. Think of the effect if a solid body of 24 members were to oppose the 25 on the side of the Government. We should then be listened to, and economy would be practised, and right would be done. But we are not listened to. Our voices are not even heard by members opposite. They know they can beat us every time. It is unfortunate that the only one body of the House standing between the wreckers and the people is this small body—the Liberal Party.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You might well say small; it is the first time you have been correct.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It will not be always so. As our friends become more experienced they will see more deeply into the control of Ministers and be able to show Ministers just what they are made of. It is not, of course, a question of sentiment. It is a serious business. It is the business of the head as well as of the heart. Of course, no one can help admiring the heart of the leader of the Country Party.

Mr. Foley: Do you reckon he spoke aright?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I did not say so. The country is looking for sound administration, and demands it. The country also requires the Premier to go carefully into the expenditure of this money.

The Premier: We are all sound.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Hon. members do not like the truth. They do not want to be reminded of their extravagances. It is the duty of hon. members when occasion offers to put up with criticism. These Estimates provide an opportunity for criticism all along the line. Every item of the Estimates might well be criticised. The powellising contract with Bethell, the State trams, and numerous other items might be criticised.

Mr. Foley: And the phosphate company?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, and the phosphate company. We are not criticising the Government unnecessarily, and we are going to pass the Loan Estimates. I do hope that in the expenditure of the money due regard will be given to economy, and that the best possible results will be got for every pound spent. I have pointed out where extravagance is to be found, and I demand that the Premier change his ways. He should spend his money more carefully.

Mr. Heitmann: And give up the drink.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This is not a question of German lager?

Mr. Heitmann: You are not prepared to come outside and make that remark, you dirty skunk.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must withdraw.

Mr. Heitmann: There is an animal in America which exudes vile stuff—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Heitmann: I will punch him on the nose if he comes outside.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member objects to the remark of another hon. member, he should call my attention to it. I will not allow to pass any remark to which another member takes exception.

Mr. Heitmann: I apologise to the Chair.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I had no intention of hurting the hon. member's feelings.

Mr. Heitmann: It is your usual way. It is worthy of the *West Australian*.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I had no intention of hurting the hon. member's feelings.

Mr. Heitmann: Then why the reference?

Hon. Frank Wilson: You made the first reference to liquor yourself.

Mr. Heitmann: And you repeated it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Oh, go and bag yourself.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Now this incident has blown over, may I, in conclusion, say I have never seen Estimates that have provided more generally for the needs of the State than do these. I congratulate the Premier to that extent. He has endeavoured to meet the wants of every class of the community, and in doing that he is entirely right. As soon as the Estimates are through, I trust the works will be gone on with in order that the much needed employment may be found. The expenditure will relieve the situation for every class of the community.

The Minister for Works: A lot of the money has been spent.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The sum of £1,900,000 up to the 1st January. It is a considerable amount, but it was badly needed. I believe we will have a good season and that when the weather breaks, as the Honorary Minister would say, and the result of the crop is in the pockets of the people, there will not be so much need for State expenditure.

Mr. Willmott: It is a long way to Tipperary.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The expenditure is required just now, but I believe that relief from some of our financial troubles is in sight.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [5.35]: I notice that the Government propose to spend half a million on providing assistance for those settlers who have suffered through the drought. Quite recently we passed a Bill providing for the giving of this assistance, but I am sorry to say that from the answers given by the Minister for Lands to my

questions yesterday, it appears that a large number of our settlers are not to get the assistance promised by the Government, approved by all parties, and which could and should be given to them under the Act.

The Premier: It will be given to all who come under the Act.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I welcome that assurance, but it appears from the statements of the Minister for Lands that the Farmers' Assistance Board, with the approval of the Government, is going to put itself above the climatic conditions and say, "We draw a line along the Great Southern railway; there is no drought west of that line." Although, unfortunately, a fair proportion of the people had an utter failure of crops west of the Great Southern railway during August, September, and October, still, as far as I can judge, a large number of them, without any proper inquiry, are being refused assistance.

Mr. Willmott: Some of my constituents were flooded out, yet the board would not help them.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have they fixed a hard and fast boundary?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I do not know what the boundary is, but from the replies given by the Minister it appears to be the Great Southern railway. The questions I asked had general reference to the districts west of the Great Southern, and the replies of the Minister for Lands conveyed to me the impression that assistance would not be given to those people.

The Premier: How do you infer that from the answer given?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I asked the Minister was the Farmers' Assistance Board refusing to grant assistance to those settlers who need it at Darkan and other districts west of the Great Southern railway, and the Minister's reply was, "Yes, if such settlers have not suffered from drought or other adverse conditions."

The Minister for Lands: If I went outside that I would be outside the Act.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It is only those suffering from drought or other adverse conditions who have applied, and I can give specific instances of men who, I am satisfied, would be assisted if any inquiry was made.

The Minister for Lands: In their own applications they have not been able to prove that they suffered from drought or other adverse conditions.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, they have. At any rate, what do the Government expect? When an application from a reasonable farmer is received, how can the Government say, without getting a report, that it is an unreasonable application. The board simply takes up the position that because a man lives west of the Great Southern railway there is no drought there and he cannot be assisted.

The Minister for Lands: That is your imagination.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I appeal to any intelligent member to read the questions and the answers which I received and see if any other construction can be placed on them. I further asked was the board aware that many settlers in the districts mentioned had a failure of crops last year owing to the bad season, and that they are eligible for assistance under the Industries Assistance Act?

The Premier: They are not.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: They are. They have had a failure of crops owing to the drought, although I admit the drought was not as general there as in districts further east.

The Premier: It has been the best season they ever had.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In some localities, but not right through. The Premier travelled down there a little time since, and I am sure it surprised him, as it did me, to see some very good crops and alongside of them crops which, put in a bit later in the season, had failed absolutely.

The Premier: You are now proving why people should not receive assistance. Their failure has been due, not to the season, but to bad farming.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, it was a question of luck as to when the crop was put in, and when the rain fell.

The Premier: Does that not happen every season?

Mr. Thomson: Surely they are entitled to receive assistance.

The Premier: Yes, if you say the industry should be everywhere subsidised without consideration.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The wish of the people of the State is that those settlers who have had a failure of crop through the dry season should receive assistance. While I wish to emphasise the point that the number of failures west of the Great Southern railway was very much less than in the dry portions of the State, I want an assurance from the Premier that applications for assistance from men who have had a failure of crop owing to the dry season, will be inquired into on their merits, and approved if, after such inquiry, the Government hold that they should be approved.

The Premier: If they come under the Act they will get consideration.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: They are not getting it.

The Premier: They do not come under the Act.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: They do if they have had failure on account of drought or other adverse conditions. Yet they are getting no assistance at all, and their applications have been refused simply because they live in such and such a district. However, to revert: I asked the Minister yesterday, was the board aware that many settlers in the districts mentioned had a failure last year owing to the bad season, and that they are eligible for assistance under the Industries Assistance Act; and the Minister replied, "No." And this assurance of the Minister comes six or eight weeks before those settlers should be putting in their crops.

The Minister for Lands: Because, like you, the men cannot make a good case.

Mr. Thomson: Is that the way the board is dealing with all the cases?

The Minister for Lands: Yes, they must come under the Act.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Forms were sent to the roads boards in those districts to distribute to settlers requiring assistance under the Act. Those forms were filled in by the settlers, who are now expecting to receive an intimation as to the assistance they require. I am glad to say not many of them require hay, although a number require seed wheat and manure. At this stage, after the Government have distributed the application forms in the district, the board, without any inquiry, as admitted by the Minister, says, "You are not eligible; you are living in the wrong district." While I admit that the drought is not so general in those districts, still these are cases that have been refused, but which should not have been refused, and it gives me great anxiety and pain to see small settlers, who have worked hard and put their confidence in the Government—

Mr. Allen: That is where they made the mistake.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Having their applications turned down without proper inquiry. I am certain that if the Minister for Lands could see those men on their farms, he would realise that they are of the proper type to be assisted, and that the board is making a mistake in the attitude it is taking up.

The Premier: For the purpose of your argument, then, the Act should always be in operation.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I have a report of the Premier's speech at Northam on the 1st October last in regard to the assistance to be given to agriculturists in this bad season, a speech which I circulated, and one reason why I am here to-day is because I did that, and did it effectively. Some of the people concerned gave me their confidence, and even if it is not palatable to the Government I must see that the matter is explained and fully ventilated. When that is done, the Government will surely see that the people in whose behalf I am appealing are worthy of the assistance which was pro-

mised them. I do not want their applications to be refused without inquiry, and this is what the Minister for Lands admitted is being done.

The Minister for Lands: I did not.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: When I asked the Minister the question as to why assistance was being refused without proper inquiry, the reply was "Answered by reply to question No. 3," and that reply was to the effect that the Government were not aware that many settlers who had selected land in certain areas west of the Great Southern railway would be unable to crop the prepared land on their holdings this year unless they received some assistance to do so.

The Premier: We were not aware that they would not be able to crop without assistance.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The board were aware of it, otherwise they would not have sent the applications to the roads board.

The Minister for Lands: How could we know they required assistance unless they filled in the forms.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The board could not know of the position of individuals unless they obtained a report from the officials of the department. The Government have inspectors in that district, and surely it is only reasonable that cases of this kind should be referred to the district inspector for a report.

The Minister for Lands: In some cases farmers make mistakes, you know.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: A man may be a good farmer, and yet he may be a poor clerk.

The Premier: They never err on the side that is likely to do them harm.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: They do. I have in my electorate a man who has one of the largest families I ever heard of.

Mr. Bolton: How many are there in it?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If I tell the hon. member I will disclose the man's identity.

Mr. Thomas: Tell us, we ought to know.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The man has 17 children.

The Premier: He certainly needs some help.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Well, he is not getting it. He filled in a form asking for assistance; so that he might purchase stores, and the board granted him £1 worth per month. Goodness only knows how they expected him to carry on with that limited quantity of stores. In this case the application was made for £1 a week.

Member: Cannot his children help in?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: One or two of the sons have gone to the war and left orders for their salaries to be drawn by their parents. But we have the position that a man is getting £1 a month from the Farmers' Assistance Board of Western Australia. The intention clearly was to apply for £1 a week.

The Premier: How long has the man been there?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: For six or seven years, and he has been fighting the poison plant, in addition to being oppressed by an unfairly high price which he had to pay for his land, and a reduction of which price he has not been able to bring about. Just because of a clerical error in the application, he is compelled to accept £1 a month, and the Government, for some extraordinary reason which I cannot understand, will not have that altered. This man was told that in a district like Darkan he was lucky to get any help at all, and that too without any inspection or proper inquiry into his case. I can assure members that Darkan is an excellent district and is going ahead.

The Premier: There are thousands in the community in the same position.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am complaining of the answers given by the Minister to my questions, which show that due inquiry was not made into the applications from that particular district.

The Premier: He is getting £1 a month.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: And that is an admission that he ought to get help and it should be on an adequate scale.

The Minister said yesterday that the board did not consider this an adequate sum to support at least eight persons who had no other means of subsistence. I would like to read to the Premier what I read to these people some time ago on the subject of the Government's willingness to assist the agriculturists. What I read to them was an extract from a speech delivered by the Premier in the Northam town hall on the 1st October. This was what the Premier said—

The Government were willing to assist the genuine agriculturists and no man genuinely trying to make a living for himself and family would have to leave his holding so long as the Government got the support of the people. The Government did get the support of the people of the district where I read the extract. The Premier went on—

They would see that the farmer had all that was necessary to enable him to remain on his land and to resume production next season as if nothing had happened.

The Premier: You do not infer from that that I am going to relieve families of their responsibilities.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Premier would not make such a suggestion if he knew this particular family. I give him my assurance that they are very worthy people. The point I want to emphasise is that in the eastern and the dry districts we have a large number of settlers who need help in consequence of the dry seasons which have been experienced. In the westward and better watered districts, we have a smaller number who need help, and I think the Premier will accept, as a fair proposition, that there are settlers on the west side of the Great Southern railway who need assistance, and who are eligible to receive it under the Industries Assistance Act. These people have had practically no return from their holdings this year, and their applications are being refused without proper inquiry. That surely was not the wish of this House, and I do not think it is the wish of the Government. The Bill provides that those people should be assisted. Surely

the Minister does not take up the position that it does not.

The Minister for Lands: If they need assistance they will get it, but the board say they do not.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The conditions are that the settler must suffer from drought or other adverse conditions. I say they have suffered in a minor degree from the effects of the drought. I admit it has not been felt as severely as in some of the districts where every settler had a failure. I am of the opinion that the reason why this curtailment is being carried into effect is because the Government have been compelled, possibly by circumstances beyond their control, to reduce the amount of assistance they originally intended to give.

The Minister for Lands: That is not so.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Then we still have this position, that in reply to a deputation at Geraldton on the 30th September, the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Drew, said that the Government were alive to the seriousness of the position, and were taking steps to cope with it. He added that it was estimated that it would require a million and a half to finance the farmers until the next season. Although the season has turned out worse than was expected on 30th September last, and consequently we might expect more and not less assistance, we find that in the Estimates for the current financial year, there is a provision for half a million pounds only for assistance to farmers. When Mr. Drew mentioned that a million and a half would be required to finance the farmers, it is very unlikely that he had regard to any money being paid for land rents, whereas, out of the £500,000 provided in the Estimates for assistance to farmers, I should imagine that probably £150,000 would be paid into revenue that half year for land rents by the Farmers' Assistance Board. We are reducing the amount of £500,000 available for farmers who need it by that amount. Of course £350,000 is also being provided for the Agricultural Bank. I have no desire to embarrass the Government; quite the reverse, but

I am determined, so long as I am here, to always bring forward matters of this kind, especially where the interests of the people who trusted me and who supported the Government loyally, demand it. So far as the westward portion of the Great Southern railway is concerned, during the past few years there has been an unfortunate tendency for some of the properties to develop into sheep runs. The smaller settlers are not as numerous as they were a few years ago, and those who are there are having a very hard struggle to make their farms profitable. Many of these people have worked hard, and they are prepared now to crop, if the Government will give them the seed wheat and the manure necessary to enable them to do so. I urge the Government to consider the cases of these people on their merits, and if they are eligible—I know in some cases they are eligible and worthy of assistance under the Act which was recently passed—a fair deal and adequate assistance should be given to them so that every acre of productive land possible may be cropped in the coming season.

Mr. THOMAS (Bunbury) [6.1]: In listening to the wild waste of verbiage indulged in by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) I was pleased to note one brief lucid interval, and that was when he spoke of the neglected South-West. To do him credit, although when he had the power he did nothing to help the South-West, he has, since leaving office, always advocated its claims.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I did more than the present Government have done in that direction.

Mr. THOMAS: As far as advocacy is concerned, I thank the hon. member. We have in the South-West a territory which has never been a trouble to the Government. There have been no droughts or failures or wild clamourings for assistance, and there is no portion of the State which has received less attention in the way of development from any Government than the South-West.

The Premier: There is not the least doubt about that.

Mr. THOMAS: I do not take exception to the expenditure of money to develop the wheat areas.

The Premier: If all this money could be transferred from the Eastern areas to the South-West, we could provide for three times the population.

Mr. THOMAS: Then why does not the Premier grasp the opportunity and evidence a desire to do something?

The Premier: Did not we introduce an Irrigation Bill to enable us to do something?

Mr. THOMAS: Yes, but I see no expenditure of that kind provided for in the Loan Estimates. In spending the vast sums of money we are to develop the agricultural areas, it is possible we are branching out too much in one direction and not making sufficient investment in the safer and surer portions of the State. Money spent on the wheat areas is somewhat of a gamble, but money spent on the South-West is a safe, sure and sound investment which will be of benefit for all time.

The Premier: Look at the amount per individual you have to spend in the first instance.

Mr. THOMAS: Yes; but look at the small area required in the South-West to make a living.

The Premier: You do not suggest that the land is held in small areas?

Mr. THOMAS: That is a matter which can be overcome. A friend of mine has 25 acres not far from Bunbury. He has put in a little plant to irrigate a few acres where he grows a potato crop, wheat, oats, and runs dairy cows and poultry. He has a home which any one of us would be pleased to live in, and though he is not utilising the whole of the 25 acres, he is making a splendid living.

The Minister for Lands: There are scores of such instances in the South-West.

Mr. THOMAS: The great possibility of the South-West is that so many people can live and prosper on small areas. Why does not the Minister submit a scheme in this direction? While other Ministers have been in office, the same complaints have been raised, year after year. Min-

isters visit the South-West and see the beautiful soil, proclaim that it is fit to grow anything, and then return home and forget all about it.

The Premier: The best soil carries the heaviest timber.

Mr. THOMAS: I am satisfied the Premier and Minister for Lands earnestly believe that more should be done for the South-West, but I want them to get beyond the sympathy stage.

The Premier: Would you ask us to withhold money from the wheat belt and go on with this?

Mr. THOMAS: If I remained in this House until I was as old as Methuselah, there would still be the same old arguments about spending the money elsewhere. The time will never come when the money will not be required somewhere else.

Mr. Allen: There is no time like the present.

Mr. THOMAS: Quite so.

The Premier: You know it is impossible to do it this year.

Mr. THOMAS: That is a fairly strong argument at present, but I hope the Government will keep this matter in mind. While something more than has been done ought to be done, the position is a difficult one. When the Premier was speaking on the Loan Estimates, I had a little passage at arms with him, and I wish to point out that there was a misunderstanding on my part. When he commenced to speak, the Loan Estimates had only just been placed before us. I noticed that £15,000 was provided for the harbour at Bunbury and £30,000 for the harbour at Albany, and by a number of interjections I pointed out that I considered we were being unfairly treated. I have since discovered that instead of £15,000 being provided for the Bunbury harbour during the next 12 months, there is a sum of £56,000.

Mr. Thomson: Too much.

Mr. Willmott: Not one penny.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott) who appreciates the difficulty of the position speaks with some authority. I did not wish to cast any reflection on the member for Albany

(Mr. Price) or his port. I merely interjected on the spur of the moment that I thought we were not getting our fair due. I should be pleased to see the member for Albany get £200,000, and should be as happy to see that port as the one I represent prosper. A great factor in the development of this State is that every port we are using should be developed as much as possible.

The Premier: We can do with some more ports too.

Mr. THOMAS: I do not think the Premier understood the position when I made my interjections or he would have put me right. He said Bunbury did not deserve the same as Albany because we were exporting a national asset, and were merely getting something of our own in return. If the Premier wishes to talk about exporting national assets, he might include the goldfields. I am pleased that, among the few portions of the State which during the past half year have been able to take an optimistic view of the outlook, is Bunbury; we have had a prosperous time. I always feel justified in advocating the development of our harbour and the provision of facilities because Bunbury's record has been one of continuous progress. The possibilities of the district justify us in claiming with no uncertain voice our right to proper facilities. During the past year there have entered the port of Bunbury 203 vessels, compared with 176 during the previous year. There has been an increase in the export of coal, notwithstanding the difficulties consequent on the lack of a deep water berth and other facilities to give that quick despatch which is so essential in the bunkering business. Unfortunately, we in Bunbury are unable at present to provide the necessary facilities. The export of coal increased by 15,000 tons last year, and during the same period the tonnage exported from the port totalled 443,000 tons. That is greater than the tonnage exported from Fremantle itself. There are only three ports in Australia which stand ahead of Bunbury in total export tonnage.

The Minister for Works: Quote the receipts and not the tonnage.

Mr. THOMAS: With a port showing such returns, we are justified in asking the Government to stretch a point and provide the requisite facilities as quickly as possible. Instead of Bunbury exporting 32,000 tons of coal the quantity should be 132,000. The demand exists and we have the supply of coal at Collie. There are 350 million tons of coal in sight at Collie, and we could therefore continue to export a million tons a year for the next 350 years if we only had the facilities to do the trade.

Mr. Bolton: And the sale for it.

Mr. THOMAS: The demand is there; ships call in and in many instances have to leave without being able to secure coal.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: The quantity of coal in sight at Collie is 500 million tons.

Mr. THOMAS: Then it would last for 500 instead of 350 years. Last year we had an increased tonnage of 62,000 tons, showing that in every direction there has been a general increase.

The Premier: I am afraid there will not be this year.

Mr. THOMAS: It cannot be expected, but Bunbury will be able to hold its end up fairly well. The gross receipts from the harbour last year amounted to £32,000, an increase of £5,000 over the preceding year, and after paying interest, sinking fund and all charges for repairs, the harbour shows a clear profit of £10,174 which goes into Consolidated Revenue. The total capitalisation on the work is £229,000, and the return is better than that shown by the Fremantle harbour in proportion to the amount of capital invested.

The Premier: Surely Bunbury does not take credit for that.

Mr. THOMAS: It is the result of our geographical position and natural advantages.

The Premier: Who pays that money?

Mr. THOMAS: The people who use the port. It is the wealth surrounding my electorate and of the South-West which brings this prosperity, and demands that every possible facility should be provided for the port, a demand which ought to be satisfied.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. THOMAS: Before tea an hon. member interjected that the trade in connection with the Bunbury harbour was decreasing, that it was, in fact, a dying asset. I think that such a remark can only come from some hon. member who is not really familiar with the facts of the case. Unfortunately, too often these remarks are made. I would remind hon. members that for years past there has been a continual increase in trade in Bunbury. Instead of there being any probability of our trade falling off, there is every possibility of a continual increase going on for many years to come. For instance, when our harbour facilities are such that we can cope with the fruit trade, it has been stated, so I am told by the Fruit Commissioner, that half the export of fruit from Western Australia must of necessity go through Bunbury. In addition to that, I am pleased and delighted to be able to say that the Premier is making very substantial provision for carrying on the construction of the Wagin-Westward railway. When that is constructed it will also bring an enormously increased trade to Bunbury. One of the most productive districts in our State will be touched by this railway, the natural port of which will be Bunbury. We have also the increased development going on in the electorate of the hon. member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott) and in portion of the electorate of the leader of the Opposition. It is said that all roads lead to Rome, but in these districts all roads lead to Bunbury. In the face of such possibilities as these, who can say that Bunbury has not a reliable and certain future ahead of it? To show further how much we contribute to the wealth and revenue of the State, I want to tell the House that our receipts at Bunbury for the carriage of goods alone during the past year have increased by £35,000. It does not appear from this as if we were going backwards. The total receipts in Perth for the carriage of goods on railways amounted to £138,000; receipts in Fremantle amounted to £142,000; whereas receipts in Bunbury amounted to

£169,000. The receipts for the carriage of goods in Bunbury was, therefore, £30,000 more than those for Perth or Fremantle. Does it not seem, therefore, that we are not altogether resting? If we go ahead in our trade in every direction in leaps and bounds, does it not point to the fact that in future, if not in the past, the Government should pay a great deal more attention to our districts than they have been doing? Where every other section of the community shows a decrease, with the exception of the gold-fields community, Bunbury is showing a steady increase.

Mr. Heitmann: Not all portions of the State.

Mr. THOMAS: At all events a big portion of the State is on the down grade, but in our direction the increases have been phenomenal. It speaks volumes for a little place like Bunbury that the receipts on the carriage of goods on the railways at that place should exceed the receipts for the metropolis by over £30,000. I do not wish it to be assumed, in my criticism of the Government for not spending all the money in the South-West I would like them to do, that I am altogether dissatisfied. I wish to express my gratitude to the Premier for having placed such a substantial sum of money upon the Estimates for the construction of the Wagin-Westward line. A little over three years ago he promised me that, if returned to power, this work would be carried out. To-day I have the gratification of seeing that promise about to materialise. I am also pleased to see that an amount has been placed upon the Estimates for the construction of our harbour. Nearly the whole of that money will be spent in wages, or a very big proportion of it, and the remainder will be paid out by way of railway freights. This, therefore, is an expenditure upon which the Government can embark with every confidence. On the total expenditure that it is proposed to make to put the first portion of the work into order, the sum of £200,000, we will be able to pay interest and sinking fund out of the present profits we are making. I trust

that nothing will intervene to prevent the work being expeditiously carried out.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [7.35]: Following upon the remarks of the hon. member for Bunbury and the conclusive figures given by him in respect to the magnificent export trade from Bunbury, a few words from me as to the country from which this wealth comes would, I think, be appropriate. To put the coal trade for the time being on one side, we find that the bulk of this export trade is derived from our magnificent forests in the far south. I do not intend to-night to deal with the forestry question. Those hon. members who are frightened that our forests are being worked out too rapidly and think that in a few years we shall have no timber left, I ask to come down into the karri country and spend a week there, and I feel sure that they will return with very different ideas as to the vast wealth that we have in that portion of the State. Most hon. members who have been down there will admit that where that timber grows we have absolutely the finest land in the State for dairying and other purposes that require an assured rainfall. We have beautiful country there. We have country with running brooks that will allow many hundreds and thousands of acres to be irrigated. We have a 50 inch rainfall and what is more, we have fruit land there which has proved itself. I should like to say a few words with regard to the fruit industry and the development of agriculture. There are over 20,000 acres under fruit at the present time, mostly in apples, and there has been an increase of over 1,000 acres during the past year. The hon. member for Bunbury said that the Government had not gone in for developing the South-West as they might have done. Private enterprise has done all this, with small assistance from the Agricultural Bank.

The Minister for Lands: Private enterprise is cultivating all the land in the State.

Mr. WILLMOTT: It only shows what private enterprise has done.

The Premier: The difference is made up entirely by what the Government have spent down there.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Of this 20,000 acres, at the present time there are only 10,000 acres which are producing or bearing fruit. The cost of putting in these 20,000 acres was over half a million. I am sorry that the Agricultural Bank does not consider that orchards are safe investments for Government funds. Considerably over half a million of private capital has gone into this industry. The fruit production is over 20,000 tons today, or $1\frac{1}{4}$ million cases of fruit. What will the production be when this other 10,000 acres reaches the profit making stage? I venture to say that it will then be between three and four million cases of fruit.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It will be nothing approaching the value of the wool from the North-West.

Mr. WILLMOTT: What steps, I ask, are being taken to cope with this increase, and the enormous increase which must naturally follow from the large planting which has been going on? Central markets and cold storage on a large scale must be provided. I understand that the Government have already purchased land near Market street, and that it is their intention to proceed with the work.

The Minister for Lands: The money is on the Estimates.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am pleased to hear it. I only hope that the Minister in charge of the work will see that these cool stores are built on up-to-date lines. The old system with huge rooms, and few of them at that, is out of date. It is as dead as Julius Caesar. What we want is a number of small rooms with varying temperatures to deal with the different classes of fruit. If this is done it will be of the greatest possible value to orchardists. If, on the other hand, the stores are to be built on the old lines with large rooms at the same temperature, it will of course mean that orchardists will have to suffer, because pears and fruits of that description will not

keep at the same temperature as apples. There is another thing. Suitable trucks are badly needed. At the present time the fruit is put into D trucks, or bogeys, and when it arrives at its destination, and one opens the doors, a blast of hot air rushes out. The fruit, in fact, is par-boiled when it reaches its destination. What is needed are side-louvre trucks, with upward louvres and insulated areas. They are not expensive to build, and I trust that the Minister in charge of this particular work will see that when new trucks are built, due attention is given to the class of them. Let us have these upward louvre trucks with insulated areas. They have proved themselves most satisfactory in the Eastern States, and I am certain will prove themselves equally satisfactory upon the lines in this State. The hon. member for Bunbury mentioned the export trade in connection with the despatch of fruit from Bunbury. Bunbury is the natural port for the orchards in the vicinity of and to the south of Bridgetown. When one bears in mind that last year Bunbury, under the most disadvantageous conditions, exported 127,000 cases of fruit, one may realise what the trade is likely to be in a few years. I should say, considerably over half a million cases. New markets are continually being opened, and I hope that when the war is over Europe will again become a large consumer of Western Australian fruit. The Far East markets, again, are geographically ours. Singapore, Java, Colombo, and Madras, I maintain, all belong to Western Australia. Beyond question, they are ours geographically.

The Premier: One of the advantages accruing to the fruit growing industry from the establishment of chilling works in the North-West, is that the steamers which will carry meat down here will carry fruit back.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am extremely pleased to hear it. Members representing the northern portion of the State will admit that at the present time the condition in which fruit arrives at our northern ports is far from what it should be; and especially is there com-

plaint on the score of pillage. Indeed, complaints are so numerous that growers feel very dubious indeed about sending fruit to the North-West.

The Premier: It serves them right; they are so prejudiced against the "Western Australia."

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): They prefer to ship by the black labour boats.

The Minister for Lands: What about the markets in the Eastern States?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I will deal with that point later. We have an advantage of five days over Adelaide geographically, and even more over Melbourne and Hobart. That advantage is of considerable importance. It means that our fruit can remain five days longer on the trees than can Eastern Australian fruit; and, as regards the earlier boats, it means that our fruit has five days more to colour up and five days more to mature before being packed. I wish to emphasise that this represents a material advantage over the Eastern States, so far as the early boats are concerned. Again, our fruit is the last to be put on board, Fremantle being the last port of call; and it is the first to be discharged on the steamer's arrival say in London. The last factor represents yet another advantage, enabling us to skim the cream of the market; and I am proud to say that up to the present Western Australian growers have sent home fruit of such prime quality, and so well packed, as to realise far better prices than those brought by fruit sent from elsewhere. There is yet another advantage enjoyed by the Western Australian fruitgrower. He has 20 per cent. less risk in case of a breakdown—say, a breakdown of the refrigerating machinery. We have the pleasure of paying the same freights, but at the same time we undoubtedly run 20 per cent. less risk than that incurred by Eastern States consignors. Again, the opening of the Panama Canal will attract Eastern States fruit to America, thereby affording us a better chance in the Home and European markets. Thus the opening of the Panama Canal tends to relieve us of a good deal of the competition we

have to face at the present time. The 90 million people of the United States and Canada will consume a great deal of the fruit grown in the Eastern States.

Mr. Green: What about California? California supplies the world with fruit.

Mr. WILLMOTT: A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. We supply America with fruit at a time when America has no fruit of its own. Keen business men here in Australia—they are friends of mine—know to within a few hundred cases every year what fruit is in the cold stores of America. Further, let me point out to hon. members unacquainted with the subject that the cold storage of America is limited, and that therefore Australia has an excellent chance, now the Panama Canal is open, of creating a big trade with the United States. South Africa will absorb large quantities of our fruit. The South African dealers take a certain proportion of our fruit now, but their methods are not those to which the Western Australian fruitgrower has been accustomed. The methods of the South African fruit dealers are altogether different from our methods, and we shall have to fall into line with their methods if we want to do a big trade with South Africa. The South African dealer does not like treating on the commission system; he prefers to buy right out. At the present time I am inclined to say that if the South African dealers are prepared to take the risk and at the same time are prepared to pay a fair price for our fruit, we may well allow them to make the extra profit, if any.

Mr. Green: There is a big future for Tasmania fruit in South America.

Mr. WILLMOTT: It has been stated in a certain journal that a large proportion of this year's Western Australian fruit crop is being sought after and bought up by an Eastern States buyer. But that buyer has, I understand, already been overloaded. The journal I refer to asserts that the man could not get all he required, that the growers were reticent in supplying him with the fruit he wanted. I may say I know the buyer personally. I offered him a line of fruit

myself, early apples; and he replied, "No; I am full up." That does not look as if our growers have been reticent in supplying that buyer.

The Minister for Lands. Are you speaking of the South Australian man or of the Victorian?

Mr. WILLMOTT: The South Australian. He wanted 20,000 cases of fruit; not 20,000 cases of early apples. He was overloaded here, and that is proved by the fact that prices dropped from 6s. 3d. per case to 5s. in three weeks. If that buyer had been searching for fruit his natural course would have been to raise his price; but, instead, he lowered it.

The Minister for Lands: He was here some time before the growers responded.

Mr. WILLMOTT: We growers have to be cautious. We do not rush the first man who makes us an offer. We wanted to know first who this gentleman was. We like to be assured that the name a buyer is going to put in the south-east corner of his cheque will be duly honoured, before we let him have our fruit. I am thankful to acknowledge that this gentleman's name was perfectly good.

The Minister for Lands: His name was certified by the leader of the South Australian Government.

Mr. WILLMOTT: As for cold storing our late varieties, I ask, where are growers to cold store at the present time? Where are the cold stores? At present there is not anything like sufficient spare to cold store our late varieties, notwithstanding the fact that in this particular year our late varieties are very short. The fruitgrowers are not whining. We have heard a good deal from certain hon. members about the whining of the farmers; and I repeat, the fruitgrowers are not whining. Indeed, all that the fruit-grower asks is reasonable attention paid to his wants. He wants quicker transit as soon as ever he can get it, and he also wants lime. I was indeed glad to hear from the Minister for Mines that the Government Geologist is reporting on the lime question, and I hope that as soon as ever his report has been considered the Government will take steps to open up one or more lime deposits. It has occurred

to me that some of the revenue to be derived from the Bill before the Assembly last night might profitably be devoted to opening up one or two lime deposits; and I commend that view to the Government. The spread of diseases such as fruit fly, and the methods to be adopted to overcome that fearful pest in particular, would take too long to discuss now. I trust that the new scheme propounded by the Commissioner for Fruit Industries will prove satisfactory both to the commercial growers and to the department. Anyone who has gone through the orchards in the neighbourhood of Kalamunda and seen the fearful havoc wrought by the fruit fly, who has seen hundreds of cases, or even thousands, boiled daily, will admit that nothing but the most drastic measures will meet the necessities of the case. I shall not dwell longer on this subject. I only hope the Minister for Lands will note the few little points I have endeavoured to make, and that the hon. gentleman will give them his earliest and best attention.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [8.56]: There are just one or two matters I wish to touch upon in connection with the Loan Estimates. One of these is the improvement of the Albany harbour. At first sight, perhaps, it may appear strange that a member representing a purely agricultural district should rise to speak on the subject of improvement of a harbour situated entirely outside his electorate. However, I can assure hon. members that the improvement of the Albany harbour is a matter of vital importance to the farmers of my constituency. We have heard a good deal from the Government as to their favouring decentralisation, and I can assure Ministers that I shall strongly support any Government making decentralisation a prominent plank of their platform. While not wishing for a moment to contend that a certain amount of money should not be devoted to improvement of the Fremantle harbour, I certainly consider that harbour is receiving the lion's share. All I ask for Albany harbour is that it should be supplied with the same facilities for handling wheat

as have been created at Fremantle. I desire to quote a few figures which possibly may surprise members, and which I can assure the Committee considerably surprised the farmers of my constituency. The price received by the farmer for his wheat is based on the port of shipment. Unfortunately for my constituents, that is Fremantle. As regards that port, I will quote figures showing that although the railway rates apparently leave a margin in favour of Albany, yet owing to the lack of handling facilities at that port—such facilities as exist at Fremantle—my constituents are losing $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. on every bushel of wheat they grow. The railway freight from Katanning to Albany is 9s. 5d. per ton, while from Katanning to Fremantle it is 13s. 2d. That represents a difference of 3s. 9d. in favour of Albany; and, in view of that difference, people ask me, "What do you complain about?" My complaint has no reference to the Railway Department, but I do complain regarding the lack of handling facilities at Albany. Last year there were exported from the port of Albany 201,901 bags of wheat. That $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. a bushel on wheat alone sent over the wharves at Albany represents a loss to the people in my constituency of £3,311, or roughly, five per cent. of the money which the Government have provided for harbour facilities at that port. Last year we organised a large deputation, one of the largest which ever waited on the then Minister for Works, Mr. Johnson, and drew his attention to the fact that though we were providing £65,000 for harbour improvements at Albany, when those improvements were finished the producer would be in the same position as before. I want to impress on the Government that when they have money available they will immediately proceed with the second portion of the harbour improvement scheme there and provide proper handling facilities. The member for Albany will no doubt be prepared for fight for that port.

Mr. Price: I am fighting pretty well too.

Mr. THOMSON: I am only dealing with it so far as it affects my own con-

stituency, and I know that we are losing a considerable sum of money. With regard to that deputation to which I have referred, the Minister then said it was absolutely necessary for him to build the jetty 20 feet wide before he could proceed with the construction of the other portion which would make the jetty 40 feet. That was a lame excuse. He might just as well have said that he did not have the money available. I have no hesitation in saying that within the particular zone of which Albany is the harbour, we are easily losing £20,000 per annum by reason of the absence of proper facilities.

The Premier: You are getting it all back; I am simply pouring money into you.

Mr. THOMSON: If it were not for the Great Southern line this year, the railways would not be paying as well as they are doing. I would like to make some reference to the workers' homes. It will be remembered that I asked the Premier some questions as to whether it was a fact that applications were being received and approved for workers' homes under the leasehold part of the Act, and if so, why the same treatment was not being extended to applicants under the freehold part of the Act. According to the Loan Estimates there remains £22,000 still unexpended. Why are the people who are desirous of building under the freehold part of the Act not receiving the same privileges and consideration as those who are applying under Part 3? In my district there have been a good many applications. A constituent of mine at Tambellup some 12 months ago applied under the freehold part, and the application was practically approved, but he was unable to get his home started under that part of the Act. Yet to-day, according to the reply which the Premier gave to my questions, workers' homes are still in course of erection under Part 3.

The Premier: Only under commitments.

Mr. THOMSON: It might be news to the Premier to learn that there was a possibility of workers' homes being closed

down in a certain town, but the foundations of nine or ten of them were put in, so that afterwards the work could be carried on.

The Premier: Do you mean that they were put in so that we would be compelled to carry on the work? If so, it is absolutely incorrect. The foundations could only be put in after the applications had been received and approved by the board.

Mr. THOMSON: Under Part 3?

The Premier: Under any part.

Mr. THOMSON: If the Government are building homes under Part 3, others who apply under Part 4 have the right to have the same privilege extended to them. The Premier, in answer to my question, stated that applications were not being invited under Part 4 of the Act, as it was more difficult to control expenditure where dwellings were erected by contractors than where the buildings were erected and the cost of wages and material were controlled by the board. When a contract is let, a man who is having his house built knows what it is going to cost.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): But he does not know what he is going to get.

Mr. THOMSON: The Honorary Minister must have very little confidence in the supervisors of the Government.

The Minister for Mines: Look at this building; it was erected under contract.

Mr. THOMSON: I will guarantee that if tenders were called for the construction of the workers' homes which today are being built departmentally it would be found that they could be erected more economically.

The Premier: Cheap and nasty.

Mr. THOMSON: That is an absurd statement, and it is a reflection on the administrative officers of the Works Department. While I think it is unwise to carry on the construction of workers' homes at the present time, if the Government are providing money for the erection of these places, those who are desirous of having homes built under the freehold system, should be entitled to the same consideration as those who are

granted the privilege under the leasehold system. I notice that under development of agriculture, a balance of £32,000 remains unexpended, the items including grain sheds, sale yards, and land resumption. All I hope is that if there is any money available, the Government will take into consideration the advisableness of erecting grain sheds at Albany so that the 1¼d. loss to which I have referred may go into the pockets of the producers. With regard to the rabbit-proof fence, I notice there appears a sum of £500 on the Estimates. I asked the Minister of Lands a few days ago a question referring to the treatment of rabbits commercially. The answer I got was that the matter was receiving consideration. It is a subject which has been before the Minister for a considerable time, and I hope the department will not take too long to consider it.

The Minister for Lands: You know a lot of agriculturists are opposed to your idea. The Royal Agricultural Society objected to a regulation which your leader wanted to put through some time ago.

Mr. THOMSON: A large section in my district were anxious that it should go through.

The Minister for Lands: I want to find out which section is in the majority and I shall support the majority.

The Premier: If the majority are in favour of it, we will take the fence down.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not want the fence to be taken down. The remarks of the member for Williams-Narrogin regarding assistance to settlers have my endorsement. In my opinion the Assistance Board is under-staffed at the present time. There are countless instances where settlers have written to the board and have received no reply.

The Minister for Lands: Because the Bill did not go through the Council quickly enough.

Mr. THOMSON: It is customary at any rate for an acknowledgment to be sent, and while I urge that the staff should be increased, I think at the same time the State might be divided into sec-

tions so that the work of the board might be facilitated.

Mr. McDowall: What about economy?

Mr. THOMSON: We might transfer officers from departments which are not so busy. The board has a huge task ahead of it, and the members of it are working at high pressure.

The Minister for Lands: How would dividing the State into sections facilitate the matter?

Mr. THOMSON: The different members might attend to different sections.

The Minister for Lands: We have 30 men now engaged on this work.

Mr. THOMSON: And it cannot be coped with.

The Minister for Lands: It can.

Mr. THOMSON: Then why all these complaints?

The Premier: We had arrears to pick up.

Mr. THOMSON: The neglect on the part of the board in the way of answering letters promptly shows that additional officers are required. There should not be the delay which takes place now. Settlers want to know whether they are going to get assistance or not.

The Premier: What can they complain about when the season is over?

Mr. THOMSON: We want them to have the seed wheat and manures so that they may be ready for the coming season.

Mr. PRICE (Albany) [8.16]: I thank the hon. member for having advocated the claims of Albany. It is a new experience to find members supporting those claims. I do not wish it to be thought that I am handing over my duties to the representative of another district, but whilst feeling grateful to the Government for what has been done at Albany, I desire to endorse the remarks of the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) in which he pointed out the necessity for continuing the work already begun.

The Minister for Lands: It has not been stopped.

Mr. PRICE: No, but I desire to emphasise the necessity for continuing it. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas)

compared the value of the trade of Bunbury with that transacted in other ports. If we were to take the trade of the respective ports as the basis upon which to determine the volume of Government work to be carried out in those ports, Bunbury would not be receiving £200,000 as against Albany's £70,000; because, whereas the total trade of the port of Bunbury in 1914 was £888,000, that of Albany was just under £700,000. Again, whereas the great bulk of Bunbury's trade consisted of the export of timber and coal, the great bulk of the trade of Albany consisted of imports. The actual figures are: Imports—Albany, £250,000; Bunbury, £88,000. Exports—Albany, £420,000; Bunbury, £800,000. Again, in Customs and Excise, which is a fair criterion of the trade of a port—

The Premier: Oh no.

Mr. Price: Customs and Excise show whether it is imports or exports.

The Premier: We do not build up a country for the purpose of bringing in supplies.

Mr. PRICE: But we must build up a port for the purpose. It may be said neither do we build up a country by exporting its natural resources, except in respect to wheat and wool. In the case of coal or timber the day must come when the export ceases.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We have about 500 years' supply of coal.

Mr. PRICE: It may be so, but certainly the timber is not going to last for 500 years. I have no desire to cry down our coal deposits, but every ton of coal and every stick of timber which goes out of the country leaves the country so much the poorer.

The Premier: No.

Mr. PRICE: The coal is not being replaced. If we send out a bag of wheat or a bale of wood this year it is replaced before next year.

The Minister for Lands: And we can replace the timber.

Mr. PRICE: However, whereas the trade of the one port is made up almost entirely of exports, the trade of the other is largely imports. Our railways are

benefiting by that fact, and the country is benefiting, instead of being left that much poorer.

The Premier: Everything we take out of the ground is replaced; the gold and the coal is replaced by trade.

Mr. PRICE: The produce is never returned, but if we send out wheat and wool it may be replaced. Every ounce of gold or ton of coal sent out leaves the country poorer. The trade of Albany will continue to increase for all time, or at least until the country is fully developed, but as our timber forests are depleted so the export of timber will decrease. Although £70,000 is made available for improvements at the port of Albany this will by no means meet the requirements of that port, for long before the money is expended it will be made apparent to the Government that they must do still more in that direction. I do not intend to stress this, because the Premier knows that I appreciate to the full the good work done down there, during the past 12 months particularly, and I am convinced that the work begun will be continued. I wish to bring forward the necessity for assisting settlers in that district in the same way as settlers in the drier districts have been and are being assisted. The question of whether the farmers in the Albany district have been affected by the drought is only one of degree. Some three years ago we had down there a flood which washed away practically the whole of the potato crop. Following on that we had a drought which struck the farmers very heavily. Although repeated applications have been made for assistance, we are told—and I have letters to that effect from the board—that no assistance can be rendered to the potato growers, that the board is only authorised to render assistance to the wheat growers.

The Minister for Lands: You are not suffering from drought down there.

Mr. PRICE: The potato growers down there have suffered from drought in exactly the same manner as the wheat growers. It is manifestly unfair that they should not have any assistance.

The Minister for Lands: It is only a question of convincing the board that they are suffering.

Mr. PRICE: The board has had convincing evidence on the point. If the board is determined not to be convinced, no amount of evidence will suffice.

The Premier: There is not the money in the world to provide for all the wants of everybody who asks.

Mr. PRICE: No, but we understand there is a little money available to assist those really in need. It is those I am pleading for. Following on the flood of three years ago assistance was rendered to certain potato growers in my district. Some of them were not worthy of that assistance, while many others proved eminently worthy of it by doing all they could to repay the department. I think the board should act with a little discretion and in a spirit of justice, and not turn down reasonable applications for assistance. I notice here an item of £350,000 for the Water Supply and Sewerage Department. I sincerely hope it will be expended in a more satisfactory manner than was the money expended in my district by the department in connection with the Torbay-Grassmere drainage scheme. The officers of the board controlling that scheme have made it quite evident that they are either incompetent or absolutely careless in carrying out their work. The Minister for Lands knows something about this scheme, for he has been over it, and I am satisfied that not even he is prepared to say that the work has been carried out satisfactorily. I would like to be assured that the huge sum of money herein set apart for that department is going to be spent more satisfactorily than the £9,000 expended by the same department on the Torbay-Grassmere scheme. A number of settlers down there were suffering in consequence of flood waters. The drainage scheme was inaugurated by the department.

The Minister for Lands: The settlers were suffering from the flood waters at one time of the year, and from salt water at another.

Mr. PRICE: That is the explanation put forward by the departmental officers. It is a good old standby. As a matter of fact the settlers suffered from salt water twice in a period of 10 years, but some of them have suffered from flood waters every year. A drainage scheme was entered upon and what was the result? It drained a huge area of land held by a private owner who is putting it to no use. About 20 per cent. of the settlers received a slight benefit from the scheme, and the other 80 per cent., many of whom prior to the inauguration of the scheme were not affected by flood waters, now have the water carried down on to their land and for two years they have been unable to get their crops off.

The Premier: Was not that inside the drainage area?

Mr. PRICE: No, the officers of the department drained a huge area of private land outside the area and the water from it has flooded the land of the very people who previously were not affected. A more disgraceful exhibition of incompetency or carelessness could not be found in this State.

Mr. Taylor: Perhaps a bit of both.

Mr. PRICE: It may be.

The Minister for Lands: I certainly shall not endorse that opinion.

Mr. PRICE: I do not expect the Minister to do so; he was Minister for Works when the scheme was carried out.

The Minister for Lands: I went down and inspected the work.

Mr. PRICE: Yes, but the Minister is not prepared to say that the scheme is satisfactory.

The Minister for Lands: From the settlers' point of view, I am prepared to admit that. Their trouble is that we asked them to pay the rates.

Mr. PRICE: The trouble is that they want the water taken off their land.

The Minister for Lands: Previously they opened the bar and let the water out.

Mr. PRICE: Previously they received £50 per annum for opening the bar. Now they are asked to pay 1s. 6d. per

acre and their land is flooded through the incompetency or carelessness of the department. I sincerely hope that the Minister for Mines who is now in charge of the Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department will take some action in regard to this matter. For two years I have been endeavouring to obtain some satisfaction for the settlers. The ex-Minister for Works saw the difficulties under which the settlers are endeavouring to cultivate their land. Only a few weeks ago a deputation waited on the Premier and pointed out that the holdings of many of the settlers, prior to the inauguration of the scheme, were free from water, but to day they are being flooded out. One of the largest potato growers has not been able to get a ton of potatoes for two years. Last year he cropped ten acres and the only return he secured was a few bags dug by hand and carried off on the men's backs. I again congratulate the Government on their actions in connection with the Albany harbour improvements, and again deplore the fact that I have not been able to secure some satisfaction in regard to the Torbay-Grassmere drainage scheme. May I urge on the Minister in charge of the department the need for a little investigation regarding the qualifications of the engineers of the department. If the £350,000 provided on these Estimates is to be expended in the same manner as the £9,000 spent on the Torbay-Grassmere scheme, it would be far better if the Estimates were not passed. It would have been far better for many of the settlers in this district if not one penny of that £9,000 had been spent on the drainage scheme. In regard to assistance to settlers, the Minister should treat those in the wetter portions of the South-West just the same as those in the wheat belt. I can see no reason why any different treatment should be meted out to them. If either requires assistance, it is the duty of the Government to grant it insofar as the finances will permit. So far assistance has been given almost solely to the wheat grower, to the detriment and in many instances at the expense of

the settlers in the South-Western portion of the State.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [8.36]: I desire to bear testimony to the work being done by the Farmers' Assistance Board. I am led to do this in consequence of having heard many complaints which I think are not justified. When we remember that the board have not really had a chance to put into operation the scheme outlined in the Act, and that the work has been accumulating and has assumed gigantic proportions, some word should be said to exonerate those officers from the responsibility for the delay. In many cases the trouble which has arisen through settlers not getting the assistance they consider they are entitled to has been due to their own inability to state their cases properly. I have handled some score of cases and I have found the board most willing to meet any just request provided the settler was able to prove that he was entitled to receive assistance. I question whether any member of the civil service is doing such strenuous work as the chairman of the board, Mr. Sutton. I have called at his office on several occasions at a quarter to eight in the morning and have found him working at his desk. It is due to these officers that someone should say a word in their defence. I regret that no provision is made for the erection of a maternity hospital. It is the Government's avowed intention not to build this hospital at present.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There is a nucleus provided under "buildings."

Mr. GRIFFITHS: So long as there is a nucleus for a hospital which will prove a training ground to supplement the bush nursing scheme, I am satisfied.

Hon. Frank Wilson: This is a misnomer, because it is intended to establish a ward at the Perth Public Hospital.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Much suffering and many deaths have been occasioned through the lack of nursing facilities, and I hope the Government will endeavour to speedily supply the want.

The Minister for Works: There will always be a difficulty so long as the Health Act remains as it is.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: That could be altered by regulation.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [8.40]: After the lucid speech of the member for Northam, the handsome apology to the Government from the member for Bunbury, and the defence by the member for Albany of the import as against the export trade, one feels rather diffident in adding anything to the debate.

The Minister for Mines: One feels a bit mixed in his political economy after listening to it all.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: After a microscopic investigation of the Loan Estimates, I am somewhat disappointed to find that they do not come quite up to my expectations.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): They would not be much good if they did.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The first consideration of members ought to be to initiate and provide the necessary funds as far as possible for those works which will be of greatest advantage to the community generally. We do not find any very great evidence of this in the Estimates now before us, inasmuch as the great district, to which the member for Nelson so eloquently and gracefully referred, appears to have been neglected in its entirety. I am a great believer in the possibilities of that portion of the State, and I think an effort should be made to assist in the opening up and development of the south-western areas, in order, not only that we might expeditiously settle people on those lands to start new occupations and open up new avenues of employment, but also—

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why did not you do so during the last 20 years?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Why does not the Minister rectify our errors if we made any.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I do not know that you made an error.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have been trying to impress that upon the hon. member for a considerable time. This

district requires more attention, not only that we might settle and develop it—

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): We have been about 90 years trying to settle it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then the hon. member should be eligible for an old age pension. There is a dual object in opening up the south-western districts in that we can there settle almost unlimited numbers of people in new avenues of occupation and create wealth to supply the requirements of the State, and also, I hope, swell the export trade. I have been examining the Estimates with a double magnifying glass, and I find no evidence of any such intention. Although I may be charged with being parochial, I fail to see where there is any evidence of building the railway line I have referred to by interjection on many occasions, namely the Margaret River railway, which would add so much to the value of the State.

Mr. Taylor: It has been passed.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Where is the money provided for commencing the work? I cannot find it. The construction of that railway which has been promised for four consecutive years is still further to be deferred until 1916. Possibly it will not be constructed then.

Mr. Taylor: If I had known as much about that country before the railway was passed I would have strongly opposed it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If that is the way the hon. member feels I would advise him to take a trip down to that portion of the State. I am not approaching this subject so much from the point of view of my own electorate. The Government have already evidenced their faith in that portion of the State, inasmuch as they have purchased the Margaret River to Flinders Bay railway, and a jetty which originally belonged to Millars' Timber Trading Co. That expenditure is absolutely useless. Ministers will admit that they cannot get sufficient revenue from the line to pay for axle grease.

Mr. Taylor: If the Government had not bought it, what would the company have done?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They would have ripped it up and taken it elsewhere and built a railway line for their timber trade. The Government have realised the importance of that portion of the State in the direction I have indicated, and we have purchased that line which, however, will never be profitable. The large areas round there will never be settled until the line is coupled up with the railway system of the State. The Government are making a mistake and doing an injustice to that portion of the State and are retarding the development of the country. The possibility of employing those who are at present out of work has been frequently mentioned. Many of those men would be suitable for work of this description. I had expected that some provision would have been made in the Estimates to carry out the oft-repeated pledge given in regard to the construction of the line. Further, we can employ thousands of hewers down there. All the sleepers that Western Australia requires for the next three or four years can be easily obtained from a country which has largely been designated as cut-out timber country. There is another direction in which I think neglect has been shown, and where I think the Minister for Lands will admit his promises have been absolutely—I will not say repudiated—set on one side for the time being. There is nothing in the Estimates in fulfilment of the promise he made to provide better shipping facilities at Busselton.

The Minister for Lands: I never made such a promise.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister promised a deputation at Busselton, and it appeared in print, that he would make provision on the Estimates for these facilities.

The Minister for Lands: How could I make provision? That is absolutely incorrect. I said I would recommend that provision should be made. I have no power to make provision.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Who has power if he has not?

The Minister for Lands: The Treasurer has.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Am I to understand that the Treasurer crossed the item out?

The Minister for Lands: You can understand that I recommended what I promised to recommend.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am to understand that the small sum of money which he promised those interested in that district should be provided, for the purpose of giving the extra facilities they want so badly at the jetty, was crossed out by the Treasurer. The Minister had full power, if necessary, to have made a start with the work and then to have put the amount on his Estimates, as has frequently been done in other cases. I say that this district has been absolutely neglected. I protest not so much on account of its being my district, but because I believe the development of that great area will be set back accordingly, and that the opening up of the South-West is being indefinitely postponed. We see items of every description on these Estimates to provide for other works which are not so necessary, or which will not bring anything like the benefit to the State, as those works to which I have referred. Of course the Esperance railway is provided for.

Mr. Green: Hear, hear! We have been waiting 15 or 20 years for it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Oh, yes; it must be provided for, notwithstanding the fact that, as far as the agricultural point of view is concerned, it is a comparatively new project, notwithstanding the fact that on more than one occasion we had it absolutely demonstrated that it is a very doubtful proposition, and notwithstanding, further, that the Government must know that they will have extreme difficulty in finding the large sum of money which will be necessary to build that undertaking. The object of the Government ought to be to commence and finish works, not to drag them on, as the Wongan Hills-Mullewa has been dragged on for the past three years. The settlers are sick at heart because of the charges that are being made for the carriage of material.

The Minister for Lands: We went about three times as fast as you did. Your record is 25 miles of railway in 11 months.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister is speaking without his book. His railway construction has not been anything like as complete, or expeditious as the railway construction of the previous Administration, and besides it has been twice as costly. Here we have a railway which has been completed, as hon. members know, for the past 12 months, and it is absolutely unusable for a large number of the settlers at the present time, and the traffic which ought to be carried over it is diverted to a private concern, to wit, the Midland railway line. There are just grounds for complaint in this direction, and I want some definite announcement from the Government as to when they intend to throw this railway open. We have heard that it is to be taken over by the Working Railways from the 1st of next month, in order that the settlers may have their produce and requirements carried to them at the same reasonable rates that settlers in other portions of the agricultural areas have their goods carried. I want to know if this line is to be thrown open for through traffic. Are we going to have through traffic for the goldfields carried over it?

The Minister for Lands: Certainly, we are.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then why are restrictions imposed, and why is it said that it is going to be thrown open for local traffic only?

Mr. Green: It is only ready for that so far.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: "The conveyance of goods and traffic generally and for local passenger traffic only until further notice." This is the restriction that is being imposed. Does that mean that we cannot book through by this railway to the Murchison fields?

The Minister for Lands: All goods can be booked through.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Through to the Murchison goldfields?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And fire-wood and timber can be loaded up and sent right through to the fields?

The Minister for Lands: The only difficulty is that we have no accommodation for passengers as yet. There have to be refreshment rooms and other provisions made before we can adequately supply the requirements of passengers.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It could be understood by the settlers that they could if they wished to make use of this line. Why prevent them?

The Minister for Lands: We have had a good deal of that already.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Would it be reasonable to expect any one living say at Northam, and wishing to go to the Murchison fields, that he should be prohibited from going over this railway, and should be obliged to go right round through Midland Junction and Geraldton in order to reach his destination.

The Minister for Lands: We are carrying local traffic now.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: According to the Minister's explanation that sort of traffic to the Murchison would not be taken.

The Minister for Lands: They would have to take their own risk of a slow goods train.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then let them take the risk, and let them know that they have to provide themselves with refreshments for the journey. If an individual is permitted to travel through I suppose he will have to pay two railway charges. He will have to book through from Wongan Hills to Mullewa, or from Goomalling to Mullewa, and then from Mullewa to the Murchison. I do not think it is right. The Government should not put the settlers, and others who are desirous of utilising the railway, to larger expense than necessary. The settlers have been penalised by being obliged to pay for the last 12 months excessive rates, amounting to something like ten times as much as they need have paid on any portion of the Government railway system. It is just about up to the Government to give them every facility they can possibly provide, notwithstanding

that these may be deficient to some extent in the direction the Minister has indicated. I do not wish to labour the question. I realise that possibly one-half of the money appearing on the Estimates has already been expended, and that no amount of debate here will serve any purpose of reducing the Estimates, though it may be the means of ventilating some grievances I have taken the opportunity of pointing out where I think the Estimates err. Let me congratulate the Government upon one item at any rate, and that is that even at the eleventh hour they have repented of their lack of judgment, and of their misdeeds, and provided a sum of money for the establishment of canning and chilling works at Wyndham. It is a project which means much to the people of the State, and more especially to the crowded citizens in the metropolitan area and those upon the goldfields. It is a scheme which ought to have been initiated long ago, and one for which I provided money on our Loan Estimates when we occupied the Treasury benches. I say at once that I regret exceedingly that the money was not found before I went out of office, and that I was vastly disappointed to find the work had not been put into operation on my return from the coronation ceremony in London. The scheme was condemned utterly by the late Minister for Works (Hon. W. D. Johnson) after his memorable trip to the North-West.

The Minister for Lands: He condemns it to-day on your lines.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: On my lines? On what lines is he going to oppose it? He does not know on what lines I was going.

The Minister for Lands: Oh, yes, I do.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am commending the Minister for having repented but he will not accept my congratulations. The report is in print, and every one can see and read for himself the drastic comments of condemnation he made on the subject of chilling and canning works at our northern ports.

The Minister for Lands: That is incorrect.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is not incorrect; he generally condemned it utterly.

The Minister for Lands: Has he condemned your scheme?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister condemned any scheme of chilling works. He advised the export of our cattle on the hoof to the adjacent islands as being preferable.

The Minister for Lands: You are at least getting a scheme that is workable.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What rubbish. The Government are coming in at the eleventh hour, and to use a common expression, are just about going to miss the 'bus. The Port Darwin freezing works are started. Year in and year out I have pointed out the danger to my friends opposite, but they have pig-headedly stuck to the report of the hon. gentleman. After this has been pointed out time and again, year in and year out, we find the freezing works at Port Darwin actually in hand; and, of course, the people establishing the works are taking the ordinary business precaution of securing supplies of cattle. The result is that two-thirds of the Northern Territory cattle, from which we have been accustomed in the past to draw a fair proportion of our requirements, and to which we looked to supply our proposed freezing works at Wyndham to a large extent, are now contracted away to the works being established at Port Darwin.

The Minister for Lands: The people owning the freezing works at Port Darwin are not buying stock from the stations.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am advised that a large number of the East Kimberley cattle—our own cattle—are also contracted away to be treated at Port Darwin. Can anyone conceive of a more emphatic blunder than that of the present Government. Still, is it not in keeping with nearly everything that my friends opposite do?

Mr. Green: The case being as you state, will you oppose the erection of the works?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No; most decidedly not.

Mr. Green: Why not?

Mr. Allen: It is his own policy.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is my policy. I am simply pointing out how, if the works should prove a failure, the hon. member must not blame my policy, but must blame the dilatoriness of the Government, and the report of the present Minister for Lands. That report is largely the cause of the Government's blunder.

Mr. Heitmann: You advocated freezing works at Wyndham in 1908.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes; but the hon. member forgets that sometimes one cannot get a vote through the House, and then again it was suggested that the works should be erected by financing the cattle owners, who were prepared—or so they said—to find a certain amount of the capital required to establish the works. Then, later, it was discovered that the cattle owners could not raise the capital; and we decided to make freezing works at Wyndham a part of the Government policy. Meantime, of course, a couple of years had gone by; but these delays will take place. It is most unfortunate, however, that it should have needed four years to convince our friends opposite of the desirableness of establishing freezing works at Wyndham. I am afraid it will take many years, even if the works be now established expeditiously, before we can overcome the fact that a large proportion of the trade has already been annexed by the people operating at Port Darwin.

The Premier: Port Darwin cannot compete against Wyndham.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The people of Port Darwin are already competing.

The Premier: No. They have not got a water supply yet.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Government have not secured a water supply at Wyndham yet.

The Premier: We can get one, though.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The people at Port Darwin can get one, also. Let the Premier make no mistake about that. At any rate, those people have started the erection of their works. The Premier has come in late, and I cannot go

over all the ground again; but I will say the fact remains that again the Government have blundered, and again is the State going to pay for the loss arising from Ministers' error of judgment. I know that the Committee are about tired of these Estimates, and want to get them through. At any rate, I know the Premier wants to get them through; and I know also that no amount of debate on our side of the House will alter one iota of those Estimates. I recognise that some of the items—very few indeed—might perhaps be objected to and argued against; but taking them right through, as we cannot add to the Estimates in order to make the very necessary provision which has so long been promised to the South-West, I am content to let the subject go with the few remarks I have made.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [9.5]: I have no desire to delay the passage of the Loan Estimates, but I wish to express my extreme surprise at hearing hon. members opposite, both Liberal and Country party, and also members on this side of the House representing ports and agricultural areas, finding fault with these Estimates on the score that the Government have been niggardly in expenditure on those hon. members' various constituencies. Anyone perusing these Estimates will see at the first glance that if all the money directly and indirectly appropriated to the agricultural areas of Western Australia be taken out, the Estimates would be diminished by 75 or 80 per cent.

Hon. J. Mitchell: If you took out the agriculturists, the State would be diminished by 75 or 80 per cent.

Mr. TAYLOR: If the agriculturists were taken out of this Assembly, it might be a good thing for the State. Let us just analyse these Estimates briefly. Without entering into details, it will be seen that while certain hon. members are quarrelling with the Government for not doing enough for the agriculturists, other hon. members are quarrelling with the Government on the score that enough is not being done for the ports. Let us take some of the figures. Here is an item of

£930,500 practically all for the advancement of the agricultural areas, and for the improvement of the ports represented by certain hon. members sitting opposite. Let us take water and sewerage, and see once more how the agricultural areas and the goldfields stand respectively. There is nothing like the proper proportion. Now, let us come to the direct Vote for the industry which I have the honour to represent so far as the Mt. Margaret district is concerned. The whole of the Vote for the goldfields amounts to only £108,000; and of that £108,000 no less than £60,000 is set down practically for the purchase of ore; so that the Government will receive that amount back.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You do not object to that, surely?

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not object to that, but I do object to only £48,000 out of Estimates of over £2,000,000 being granted to the goldfields of Western Australia. Deducting that amount of £60,000 from the total of £108,000, I find that only £48,000 is to be applied to the development of our gold mining industry.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But what about the £60,000?

Mr. TAYLOR: That is allotted to the establishment of a State smelter at Ravensthorpe, to advances against ore, and to working expenses in connection with the smelter. All the money advanced against ore will be returned.

Hon. J. Mitchell: And so will the money advanced to the farmers.

Mr. TAYLOR: The smelting works will, I think, prove a paying proposition; and therefore I am entitled to deduct that amount of £60,000, leaving only £48,000 for the whole of the goldfields; and yet hon. members opposite take up hours and hours of the time of this Committee and of the House in bringing Ministers to book for their Estimates.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We have been only two hours on these Loan Estimates.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not say that there is no room for complaint, but what room there is with the goldfields representatives. If the goldfields representatives took the Government to task in the same way as other hon. members do, this ses-

sion would not be finished by the close of the financial year, at the end of June; because justification would be with the goldfields members. We are not alone generous in letting agricultural members and the representatives of ports have all the money on the Estimates, but also generous in letting those hon. members monopolise the financial debates. Indeed, our generosity is unlimited. I want to tell the hon. members concerned that after this session I, personally, shall not be content to sit silent when questions are brought up as to the agricultural areas or the ports of this State not getting their fair share. In future, I shall tell hon. members my opinion straight out, and quite without any hesitation. I do not propose for the future to sit silently listening to carping criticism of hon. members who have no justification for taking such a tone. The Government build works in the constituencies of those members, and the works pay neither interest nor sinking fund, and hence the deficit. And then there is carping criticism on the score of the deficit.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Where are those non-paying works?

Mr. TAYLOR: In the agricultural areas. Where else could they be? I do not wish to detain the Committee longer. I conclude by pointing out to hon. members opposite, in particular, that they have no justification whatever for finding fault with the liberality of these Estimates towards their various constituencies.

Mr. HICKMOTT (Pingelly) [9.12]: Under the heading of additions and improvements to opened railways, there is an item which I hope is discussable. I have been a patient listener for the last fortnight to various debates, and last night I heard one hon. member remark that there was a good deal of work available for unskilled labour. There is just one little matter in my district requiring the attention of the Government at the present time, and affording opportunity for the employment of skilled labour. Perhaps the present Minister for Lands will be able to bear me out in my contention. I refer to the Pingelly railway

station. Hon. members who know that station are aware that a considerable volume of work is transacted there, and I am sure they will agree with me that the station building is a terribly ramshackle pigeon-hole of a place for the staff to work in, and is really a disgrace to the management of the railways.

Mr. Smith: It is as bad as the head office.

Mr. HICKMOTT: I desire to bring the matter under the notice of the Minister for Railways. Plans and specifications, I believe, have been drawn up, and estimates framed, for the work; and the present is an opportune time to get the Pingelly railway station constructed for the coming harvest. When the item comes up I may further urge the Government to proceed with the work. I have no desire to delay the Committee with a long speech on the Estimates generally; but this little item I should like to impress upon the memory of the Minister for Railways.

Mr. HEITMANN (Geraldton) [9.14]: Like most of the speakers, I have no intention of occupying the time of the Committee at any length. The member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) has taken a hint. I noted that the hon. member complained of the amount of money being spent on the agricultural industry, and I should like to point out to him that he does not appear to realise that the agricultural industry, as regards development, is in the same position to-day as the mining industry of ten or 15 years ago. The cry at one time was that too much money was being spent on mining. However, at that time it was necessary, in order to develop the mining industry, that large amounts of money should be spent on the goldfields. The period during which money was lavished on the goldfields is clear to my recollection.

Mr. Taylor: Take the totals spent on agriculture and on mining respectively, since the inception of the two industries.

Mr. HEITMANN: It is recognised that the one industry requires from the State an amount of money vastly in excess of that which the other requires.

Years ago grants were made in a lavish fashion and when Sir John Forrest visited Cue he gave £500 to the recreation ground for a start. On a subsequent occasion when Sir Walter James was Treasurer assistance was asked for the mechanics' institute, and inquiries revealed the fact that, in spite of it being a mere barn of a place, grants to the amount of £1,250 had up to then been made towards its support. Every industry in those days came in for a fair share of Government support. In regard to the Estimates which we have before us, I am not going to make any complaints. I have always been prepared to bear with the Government in bad times as I expect them to bear with me in my electorate in good times. I have always held that the political opinions of people in a district should not influence the expenditure of public funds. I cannot be accused of having acted in that way in this House, and it cannot be said that I have ever favoured the policy of roads and bridges.

Mr. Taylor: Why do Ministers trot about doubtful electorates and make promises at election time?

Mr. HEITMANN: In theory I believe that is so, but it has not been my experience in actual practice. I remember two elections held in Geraldton when the present Premier positively refused to grant something which, in my opinion, was justified, and he declared that he would not take the request into consideration until the elections were over. It will be noticed that in the column dealing with harbours there is no sum provided for Geraldton. For some time the Government have been concerned in considering the question of providing means for giving greater shipping facilities at this important port. A promise was made a little while ago that within a few months something would be done, and had it not been for the stringency of the money market I believe that an amount would have been placed on the Estimates. It might be said that the Government were prepared to find money to spend at Albany and Bunbury, but I agree with the leader of the Opposition when he stated that it is unwise to spend a small sum of money on huge works

which cannot be completed for many years. In regard to Geraldton I recognise that the expenditure of a few thousand pounds would mean that the money would be practically wasted for many years to come, inasmuch as before the first ship could be handled in the new harbour, an expenditure of £300,000 would be required. Therefore, to spend £10,000 or £20,000 in dredging at the present time would mean that later on the work would have to be undertaken again. There is great need in that port for better shipping facilities. For the business man who might clamour for a scheme at one end of a town or the other I have no interest whatever, but as far as the producer and the genuine development of the State are concerned, it is the duty of the Government to do everything possible to open up the waterways. At Geraldton we have a port which will serve what I believe to be the finest belt of wheat country in Western Australia. With the opening of the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway the traffic will increase rapidly. There are 100 miles of wheat country along that line which will use Geraldton as its port. We have four other lines going out from Geraldton into wheat country, and in addition we have an important mining district in the Murchison. The work of making a harbour at Geraldton, therefore, must be undertaken to provide the facilities which will be required in the not distant future. Reference has been made by various speakers to items coming under the division of water supply, and the member for Albany complained that in one part of his electorate they were flooded out with salt water. He is extremely fortunate that that flooding out occurred in only one part of his district and at only one period of the year. We in Geraldton have a water supply which was provided for us by the Government and which is managed by the Government, but which is paid for by the people—a supply which is as salt as the water from the sea. It contains up to now 600 grains of salt per gallon. Seaweed is also running out of the taps and when the water is turned on in private houses the people have to

leave because the smell is terrible. When we contract to supply a corporation with a certain commodity the person who receives that commodity should not be called upon to pay unless the conditions are fulfilled. It might be said that the people of Geraldton agreed to accept this particular supply, but that was only because a difficulty had been experienced in obtaining an adequate supply of potable water. The fault for the defective supply lies with the departmental officers. Not being satisfied with the supply which was originally provided, they are now pumping sea water so as to augment it, and this is what the people of Geraldton are being asked to pay for.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Were the people satisfied with the supply?

Mr. Thomas: Did they not know about it before they agreed to take it?

Mr. HEITMANN: Years ago the question of providing an adequate supply was investigated, but the subject was then dropped. Suddenly the department came along with what is known as the Grimshaw Valley scheme, and the people were glad and prepared to pay for it. Gradually, however, the quality became bad until at the present time it is unfit for use. The Minister might say that the consumption has increased during the past few months, but that is because of the dryness of the season and the necessity which has arisen to use more water in laying the dust in the streets.

Mr. Smith: Why do they not sell it as mineral water?

Mr. HEITMANN: The Minister could make as much by selling it as mineral water because it has certain aperient properties. The people of Geraldton have declined to pay for this water and summonses have been issued in great numbers. The services of auctioneers will be required in Geraldton at no distant date because distraint will be levied as the people are determined not to pay. Rather are they prepared to fight the matter and contest it in a higher court. It is only fair that as the Government contracted to supply fair quality water, that contract should be carried out. I simply rose to draw attention to these two important

matters and to ask that they might receive the close attention of the Government.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM (Greenough) [9.28]. Notwithstanding the fact that the member for Mt. Margaret accused members representing agricultural districts of having a monopoly of the debate I should like to say a few words on the Estimates on this occasion. The member for Mt. Margaret also stated that the representatives of the agricultural districts should not complain about the items in regard to harbours which appear on the Estimates because 80 per cent. of the loan funds were being devoted towards the agricultural industry and the development of harbours. Some of the ports, especially Geraldton, are of equal use to the gold mining industry as to the agriculturists. For instance, all the machinery for the Murchison goldfield is landed through Geraldton, and therefore it is of as much advantage to the people of that field as to the agriculturists in the Victoria district that up-to-date facilities should be provided at that port. In the Victoria district we have one of the largest and best of our wheat-growing areas. Several railways connect there, and still more lines are required to open up additional areas of wheat-growing land. To a deputation which waited upon him recently, the Premier admitted the necessity for a complete scheme of work in connection with the Geraldton harbour. Explaining that the scheme would involve an expenditure of £420,000, he said that as funds were short it would have to stand over for a little time, and that meanwhile it would be useless to spend small sums of money on the harbour. If that scheme could be put in hand at once, a considerable saving would be effected, because it could be carried out more economically at the present time than will be possible later on. Still, in view of the Premier's explanation, the people of the Victoria district are prepared to wait for the complete scheme, but we all sincerely hope that the Government will not lose sight of its importance. Additional accommodation should be pro-

vided on some of our existing railways in the shape of necessary sidings. I am not finding fault with any of the items on the Estimates. I am only sorry that some of them cannot be added to, and I hope fuller provision will be made in the near future.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [9.34]: A perusal of these Estimates serves to suggest that in their drafting some attention was paid to certain remarks I made on a previous occasion. One of the chief factors leading to more prosperous conditions in the near future is the assistance the Government are going to give to agriculture by entering on a bold scheme of providing food supplies, horse feed, seed and manures in an endeavour to increase the production of the State. The whole of our muscle, energy, ability and brains ought to work for the future development of all production, whether it be a bag of flour capable of turning out 200 loaves of bread, a side of leather from which so many boots and shoes can be produced, an acre of land which can be made to grow so many extra bushels or a gold mine which by assistance can double its yield. All these should be developed to the best of our ability. If we are going to reap a benefit from the European war it is up to all the Commonwealth, and this State in particular, to increase production as much as possible and make this a country renowned for its productive capacity. Throughout the Estimates, except in respect to the assistance to be rendered to agriculturists all over the State, Avon is conspicuous by its absence. Notwithstanding that certain works are urgently required in Avon, in view of the financial situation I am not going to ask that those works be put in hand. Tammin, one of the leading stations on the Eastern Railway, has been sadly neglected in regard to a platform. The traffic returns of that centre fully warrant a platform for the passengers getting in and out of the trains. One or two successful claims by injured passengers would represent more than the cost of putting up a substantial platform. I know the standing reply is that the trans-Austra-

lian railway will come through there in the near future, and that the present is not an opportune time for incurring the expenditure. However, I hope the Minister for Railways will bear this question in mind. Again, railway communication between Yorkkraine and North Baandee was promised long ago.

The Minister for Works: When?

Mr. HARRISON: Some years ago, when the settlement was first made.

The Minister for Works: The Dowerin-Merredin railway was to have served those people, but it was taken too far over.

Mr. HARRISON: Railway communication was promised by the present Premier.

Mr. Piesse: As soon as funds would permit.

Mr. HARRISON: Certain goldfields members are for ever declaring that we in the agricultural districts are getting too much assistance from the Government. Had it not been for the adverse climatic conditions the farmers would never have asked for that assistance. Again, had those climatic conditions adversely affected the goldfields, we would certainly have heard from the goldfields members. One phase of the question seldom borne in mind is the toil and the amount of capital the farmer has to put in before getting any return. How many goldfields members know that 120 square feet of land has to be gone over six times with three to six-horse teams hauling implements that have cost from £6 10s. to £150 for a pennyworth of wheat gross? If a prospector had no better incentive than that, he would abandon his show. Gold mining has certainly helped to make Western Australia what it is. Without doubt gold is the greatest stimulant to commercial activity yet discovered; but as a basis of national wealth it cannot be compared with agriculture. Agriculturists have no right to try to prevent the development of gold production, but neither have goldfields members any right to cast a slur upon the representatives of the farmers.

Mr. McDowall: We do not.

Mr. HARRISON: It had been my intention to stress the point that Avon seems to have been entirely overlooked in these Estimates. However, I hope that on some future occasion it will receive the prominence it deserves.

Vote put and passed.

Vote — *Railways and Tramways*, £888,464:

Item, Additions and Improvements to opened railways. £100,000:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I understand there is no stationmaster's dwelling on the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line.

The Minister for Works: That question is being dealt with.

[*Mr. McDowall took the Chair.*]

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Does this vote include a sum for an overhead bridge at the Melbourne road crossing?

The Premier: No.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is a very necessary work.

The Premier: It is not essential, and cannot be put in hand at this stage. We can carry on a little longer without it.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Over three years ago the land was resumed, plans were approved and the money provided out of revenue. Unquestionably it is an urgent work.

The Premier: It will stand over for the time being.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I protest against so urgent a work being allowed to stand over. If only on account of the danger to life, it is very improper to delay it any longer. Level crossings should not be tolerated over a double line and much less between shunting and goods yards.

The Minister for Works: That is the reason why the Trans-Australian route should be on the south side of the river.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I agree with that. It is the Minister's duty to protect life and facilitate traffic and only a comparatively small expenditure would be incurred by this work.

The PREMIER: I have not the slightest intention to provide the money at pres-

ent to construct this bridge. There are other works more urgent. We are now removing the running sheds from West Perth and rearranging the yards and it will be preferable to await the completion of the arrangement before we decide upon building this bridge. The new bridge will not facilitate the public to any great extent.

Mr. Allen: Yes, it will.

The PREMIER: If the crossing were closed, it would not cause very great inconvenience. A bridge is also required at East Perth, but I have to spend the money where it will provide the greatest convenience for the greatest number of people. Under the rearrangement an overhead bridge at Melbourne-road might not be necessary.

Mr. ALLEN: I appreciate the Premier's candour, but do not agree that the work is not urgent. The City Council have many times urged the provision of a bridge. Time-keepers have prepared returns showing that as many as a dozen vehicles have been delayed at the crossing, some of them for as long as 20 minutes. Many went to the subway at West Perth or took the William-street route rather than wait. We have been promised a rearrangement of the yards for three years. How long will it be before the scheme is completed? The bridge might not return any revenue but it would convenience a large number of business people.

The PREMIER: It may be inconvenient for a man to have to wait 20 minutes before being able to cross the line, but it is better that he should do so than that funds should be expended at such a time on work that is not essential. I am cutting out unnecessary works wherever it is possible to carry on with existing facilities. The level crossing has sufficed in the past and can be used for another year or two. Railway improvements are being effected but no alterations in the way of regrading the West Perth-Leederville hill or the laying down of sidings will be undertaken until the running sheds have been removed to East Perth.

Mr. Allen: When will that be?

The PREMIER: A fair number of hands are employed and it will not be long.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: When considering the construction of a bridge at Melbourne-road will the Premier bear in mind the question of making it wide enough to carry the trams, if necessary?

The PREMIER: I think that will be essential. We are too prone to build overhead bridges at every street crossing suitable only for light traffic, instead of having fewer bridges suitable for all purposes. A bridge at Melbourne-road should be capable of carrying all traffic.

Mr. THOMSON: The Broomehill station is in a very dilapidated condition. Ordinary conveniences should be provided. Trains arrive at 11 p.m. from Albany and 3 a.m. on the opposite journey, and yet there is no waiting room for ladies or shelter for intending passengers. At Tambellup an overhead footbridge is required. Not long ago a man was killed in the railway yard at that place. These two items would provide a little employment for skilled men and I commend them to the Minister's consideration.

Item, Tramways, Perth Electric, £23,000:

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Some time ago it was suggested that the tram lines should be removed from Hay-street and one track laid in Murray-street and the other in St. George's-terrace. Against the latter proposal a protest was entered. Is any portion of this amount intended for this work?

Mr. ALLEN: Working men travelling on concession tickets often find it impossible to catch a car at a few minutes before 8 a.m., in consequence of it being overcrowded, and when they are picked up a few minutes after the hour they are charged the ordinary fare.

The Premier: They ought to catch an earlier tram.

Mr. ALLEN: If a man is there in readiness to catch a car at the proper hour, and the car, through being overcrowded, does not stop for him, what is he to do?

The PREMIER: The men referred to by the hon. member evidently go to catch

the latest possible car on which they can travel with a workman's ticket. The remedy is to catch an earlier car. In West Perth they have not much to complain about.

Mr. Allen: It is the worst service of all. You ought to give the conductors a little discretionary power.

The PREMIER: I cannot alter the system until the new power house is provided. In reply to the member for Perth, no amount has been provided for this financial year, but soon after its close it will be necessary to do something with the Hay-street track. It will not be too safe after the wet weather sets in and we shall have to relay it, or rearrange the routes. We have not decided that matter definitely, but I think cars going west will probably take the Murray-street route and those going east will run through Hay-street. There will be very little, if any, inconvenience to the public, if the tram is running in Murray-street up to probably about Havelock-street, and joins the Hay-street traffic again at Barrack-street or Hill-street. That will be better for the traffic and tramway operations as well. It is a matter we have yet to consider, but the Commissioner recommends it.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Will Parliament have an opportunity of discussing it before anything is done?

The PREMIER: Parliament will have an opportunity of discussing the matter after it is done. I think it is essentially a matter for the tramway operations. We cannot hold up urgent work for the purpose of calling Parliament together, and allowing members to discuss matters about which they know little. It is a matter for expert opinion and expert advice. We are not going to take any one of the tram lines out of the city of Perth.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Will the local authorities know before the system is altered.

The PREMIER: They know everything.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Harbours and Rivers, £159,487*—agreed to.

Vote—*Water Supply and Sewerage*,
£307,359:

Item, Metropolitan Water Supply,
£80,000:

Mr. ALLEN: I am glad to see that money has been placed on the Estimates for the Canning water scheme, and I congratulate the Government upon taking the matter seriously in hand. The previous Administration neglected it, and it has remained for this Government to carry out the work.

The Premier: You know what it is going to cost.

Mr. ALLEN: There is a sum of £80,000 down here. When is the Premier going to start on it?

The Premier: The people in the metropolitan area will have to carry the burden.

Mr. ALLEN: It does not matter who carries it. A good water supply is one of the essential necessities. This is a work which will provide an avenue for the absorption of a great many of the unemployed. Of course we want as much as possible of the material required to be supplied locally.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I take it that £45,886 of the £80,000 has already been spent. I would like to know what balance will be available for expenditure on the Canning reservoir.

The Premier: The column referred to by the hon. member is accepted as a commitment. Works have been taken in hand and we are committed to go on with them.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: There is a sum of £80,000 for the commencement of the metropolitan water scheme.

The Premier: We have not that amount left.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: If ever there was a work that was absolutely necessary it is one to provide a good hills water supply for the metropolitan area. The water at present given to the people is something not to be talked loudly about. It is a pity the scheme was not commenced many years ago, for I daresay it will take a long time to complete. I should like to know what money it is proposed to spend on it during this financial year. It has been reported that in many

places in the metropolitan area meters are not supplied, and that people have carte-blanche to use the water as they like. Even now there is scarcely sufficient water for the streets or for the park.

Mr. Heitmann: Some of the meters supplied are trick meters.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: We are told that this is to be the commencement of the Canning scheme, and as a representative of the metropolitan area I am very pleased to see it.

The Premier: Twenty-five thousand pounds has been spent to the end of December.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Then the balance of £55,000 will be available for the commencement of the reservoir.

The Premier: It was available for water supply purposes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Of this sum of £80,000, £41,000 is for general improvements to the larger mains in the metropolitan area, for the purpose of improving the system generally and for increasing the pressure of services in the more outlying portions of the metropolis. Amongst these general improvements are new sections of mains for increasing the quantity of Mundaring water which can be drawn from Guildford into Mt. Eliza, the cost of same being £13,000. The sum of £11,000 is for connecting Perth, Claremont, and Fremantle water supplies, and £12,000 for the continuation of the new leading mains from Oxford-street to Beaufort-street. There is a new main now nearly completed, and in course of construction to Beaufort-street. The additional work on existing service reservoirs accounts for £4,000; £11,000 is for reticulation and extensions generally; £5,000 is for the purchase and fixing of new meters; and £3,500 for the purchase and installation of a new pump at Loftus-street. There is a fairly large percentage of meters supplied.

The Premier: They are the best revenue-earning concerns I have met with.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They are pretty costly, of course, but I believe they will repay themselves.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: How much will that leave?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That leaves £12,000 for this financial year.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Will that carry on the reservoir till the end of June.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not anticipate that we shall spend even that amount. The engineer for the metropolitan area has had the matter in hand for some considerable time past, but he has not yet been in a position to submit a definite proposal to the Government. It is going to be a very big undertaking, and will probably cost from £900,000 to £1,000,000.

The Premier: It is estimated to cost over £1,000,000.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: An undertaking of that magnitude cannot be rushed into without the fullest possible information being obtained before a decision is arrived at. There is a certain amount of expenditure going on all the time. The engineers are looking into the whole proposal, and the engineer in charge expects to be in a position within the next month or so, to submit his definite proposal for the consideration of the Government.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Will Parliament be consulted before starting works which will cost a million pounds?

Hon. J. D. Connolly: They are being consulted now.

The Premier: If you do not want it, reduce the item.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We want to see the plans.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The hon. member has seen the plans already; they are in the office.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think it is a question that requires a great deal of Parliamentary discussion, because there are no two opinions as to the needs for an adequate supply of water from the hills.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But there is no question about the cost.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The alternative schemes are so few that there is very little choice in that direction either. In any case the work will not have advanced very much before next session, when we will be in a position to submit

final proposals. There will be some part of the money expended before that.

Mr. FOLEY: In connection with storm water drainage, the people in the districts of the metropolitan area in which I reside have no such drainage, although they have to pay rates.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: It is for the local authorities to connect you up.

Mr. FOLEY: But there is no storm water drainage to connect up with.

The Premier: There must be.

Mr. FOLEY: They could, of course, take it away down to Loftus-street, but that would involve spending thousands of pounds to connect the particular part of the district in which I live. What benefit do we get for the tax imposed?

Mr. GREEN: I should like again to ask whether there is any prospect of the abolition of meter rents on the goldfields, seeing that meter rents are not charged in the metropolitan area. The Government must recognise the justice of my contention.

The Premier: The Government can do anything if they are given the money to do it with.

Mr. Foley: Some consumers have paid for their meters over and over again.

Mr. GREEN: There is a good deal of irritation in Kalgoorlie and Boulder because of this discrimination against the goldfields. It would be equally just to charge the purchaser of sugar an amount for hire of the scales on which the sugar is weighed, as to charge rent for the meter that measures the water used.

The CHAIRMAN: Before the discussion proceeds further, I wish to say that I have now allowed discussion on two questions which are not within the Loan Estimates, and I find these discussions are dragged out to an undue length. Therefore, I shall allow no more irrelevant discussion.

Item, Water Supply in agricultural districts, including drainage and irrigation, £20,000:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In respect of this expenditure the Government will expect from the farmers a return sufficient to meet interest and sinking fund. Is the charge for water to be on the present

scale? If so, the scale will be far too high. The Government ought not to endeavour to make a profit on this expenditure.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member is somewhat worried as to the payments which may be made by the farmers; and the Government, and especially the Treasurer, are also very much worried about those payments. However, this item has nothing to do with extensions from the goldfields water scheme, which are covered by the previous item on these Estimates. The present item represents large expenditure which produces no return: the sinking of tanks, wells, and bores all over the country. It is incurred more especially in those districts in which the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) placed settlers without making any provision for water supply. The water from the tanks, wells, and bores constructed out of this expenditure is free to all, no charge whatever being made for it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The previous Government spent £60,00 on the same work.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Development of goldfields and mineral resources, £108,000:

Item, Erection of State batteries and provision of treatment plant, £21,000:

Mr. FOLEY: Can the Minister state the amount of money spent during the past two years in the granting of cartage subsidies to men working shows situated at long distances from the State batteries? When the previous crushing charges were in operation, battery managers were allowed some discretion in respect of such subsidies or rebates.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Was that not in Mr. Gregory's time?

Mr. FOLEY: Yes; and had it not been for Mr. Gregory's hoodwinking the prospectors, the original charges would still be in force.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not able to give offhand the information desired, but, as the hon. member knows, the cartage subsidy applied mostly to new districts and trial crushings. That subsidy is not continued after a trial

crushing has afforded some idea of what the stone from a show is worth. Last year's expenditure in this connection was between £900 and £1,000.

Mr. FOLEY: If the Minister had the figures available, he could have stated what advances have been made to prospectors, and he could have shown that the legitimate prospector has returned a good deal of money to the department.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Development of Agriculture, £930,500:

Item, Abattoirs, cold storage, freezing, chilling, and canning works, Wyndham, refrigerating works, export dépôt, grain sheds, and sale yards, £32,000:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: On this item, I wish to ask the Minister whether he can tell us what is happening at Guildford, what amount has been spent there, and whether any amounts are on these Estimates for further works there; also what he intends to do about abattoirs for the metropolitan area?

Mr. MALE: For the freezing works at Wyndham the amount provided is not very large. The probable cost of the works will run into the best part of £100,000.

The Premier: You cannot get everything done for £100,000.

Mr. MALE: It would be interesting to know to what extent we are committing the country and when the works are likely to be completed. We might also be given some information as to the intention of the Government regarding the management of the works. When the works are completed it will also be necessary to charter refrigerating steamers for carrying meat supplies to Britain, because more meat will be handled than will be required in our own market.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The fact that this question has been under consideration for a number of years is evidence of the difficulty in dealing with a proposition of this nature. Plans are now being prepared, and on the question of the price depends whether we will proceed further with them. We are opening up negotiations with a view of seeing how the works can be conducted,

how the purchasing can be done at this end, what conditions can be made with the pastoralists, and how we shall overcome the difficulty of shipping and marketing at the other end. Cabinet is giving very careful consideration to the matter. If the price is all right and the negotiations are satisfactory, there is a possibility that the works may be ready by next year. Negotiations have not proceeded far enough to enable a more definite statement to be made. That the works at Port Darwin will interfere materially with those at Wyndham is not correct and that the people who are erecting works at Port Darwin have been purchasing stations and stock in Western Australia is also not correct. The two people are separate and distinct. One company are erecting works under agreement with the Federal Government and there are certain individuals who have been buying the stations and the cattle. It will be found to be a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence with these people, inasmuch as when they discover they can take stock to Wyndham at a lower cost than to Port Darwin, I am inclined to think they will send the stock to Wyndham.

Mr. MALE: The reply which the Minister has made is what I desired to hear, and what the country had the right to know. We are convinced of the necessity for providing freezing, canning, and chilling works at Wyndham providing we can arrange some definite scheme which will prove a profitable one. We can hardly expect the Minister to tell us with whom he is negotiating.

The Premier: Do you anticipate that it will be profitable from the point of view of the Treasury?

Mr. MALE: If the scheme is properly carried out and handled it should be profitable, not only from the point of view of the working and running of the freezing works, but from the point of view of the State generally and particularly of the pastoralists of that portion of the State.

The Premier: After allowing for the capital outlay?

Mr. MALE: I do not know what the capital outlay will be. Provided the Port Darwin works did not unduly interfere with the trade in that portion of the State, then undoubtedly the Wyndham works, if properly launched, will be a reasonably profitable undertaking. There will then be an inducement for the people in that portion of the State to increase their herds considerably in excess of what they are at the present time. It will also be an inducement for them to improve the stock. The present Minister for Lands came back from there and told us the class of stock being bred was not fit for the export trade. Until there is an inducement, by the initiation of an export trade, to improve and increase our herds, it cannot be done.

The Premier: If, when we have spent the money, the cattle growers do not respond, what shall we do?

Mr. MALE: But they will respond.

The Premier: Will they not be prejudiced against the works being State-owned?

Mr. MALE: No.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Do not you refuse to travel on the State steamers?

Mr. MALE: Not when their running suits my convenience.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You said you would not travel on a State steamer.

Mr. MALE: I never did.

Mr. Foley: Do not you think it is a good opportunity for private enterprise to erect the freezing works?

Mr. MALE: It is so good an opportunity that private enterprise is actually erecting freezing works at Port Darwin.

Mr. Foley: American private enterprise.

Mr. MALE: No, it is English capital.

Mr. Foley: Americans own all the herds.

Mr. MALE: No, it is English capital.

The Minister for Lands: But the freezing works represent American capital.

Mr. MALE: They are being erected by the cold storage company. The hon. member has said that the Darwin works will not affect the Wyndham works. I

agree that Wyndham has advantages over Darwin; but the people who have put their capital into this private enterprise in the Northern Territory have also put capital into stations in this State, and I understand that the erection of the freezing works is being carried out by a different company. At the same time there are, between the different companies, financial arrangements which will influence the produce of those stations into the works at Darwin. If the Government can treat the meat at Wyndham at a lower price, and to better advantage, I have no doubt they will ultimately divert a lot of that trade to Wyndham.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): What did your Government do?

Mr. MALE: They lost several seats at the 1911 elections through the members of the present Government, and their followers, declaring to the electors that it was an iniquitous thing to allow the erection of freezing works at Wyndham.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: And the same thing occurred at the 1908 general election.

The Premier: It is not correct. We objected to the giving of a subsidy to a private company.

Mr. MALE: The present Government are to be congratulated on having come round to our views and realised the necessity for erecting these works. It would be well if, when the negotiations are complete, the Minister would let the country know exactly what he intends to do in the matter. The erection of freezing works has been hung up too long. It would be much better if we could treat at Wyndham the cattle we are to-day exporting.

Mr. ALLEN: What is being done in regard to the cold storage markets at West Perth? In reply to a deputation the present Minister for Lands said the Government were taking the matter in hand seriously, and that an officer was to be sent to the Eastern States to investigate. I see no provision here.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have an officer in the Eastern States making investigations. On his return he will prepare plans and when they are ready I am prepared to take the advice of fruit growers so that we can evolve something up to date. This vote is to provide for expenditure to the 30th June, and only a small outlay will be incurred during that period.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Roads and Bridges, Public Buildings, etc., £134,000:*

Item, Public Buildings, £85,000:

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: What amount is provided for a maternity hospital, and is it to be an adjunct of the Perth Public Hospital or a proper women's hospital, as was definitely promised? This work should have been carried out two or three years ago. It was proposed that the Government should pay a certain amount towards extending the House of Mercy. In the country there is a crying need for trained midwifery nurses.

Mr. Foley: Maternity wards are being erected in many places.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am speaking of the training of nurses in this branch of work.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): We are training 30 a year.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Women in the country cannot leave their children but must be attended in their own homes. The erection of this hospital should be commenced at once, in order that nurses might have an opportunity to receive their training in this State. In order to receive training to satisfy the requirements of the Australian Trained Nurses' Association, they have to go to the Eastern States. A sum of £900 was collected by the women of Perth towards a memorial hospital, and they were willing to devote it to an extension of the House of Mercy, but the Premier promised them that a large hospital would be built.

Mr. SMITH: I endorse the remarks of the member for Perth. The Government should reconsider their decision in regard to providing a maternity ward at the

Perth Public Hospital, and should erect a maternity hospital. Will the Minister say whether this item includes an amount for a building to house Government staffs? The ex-Minister for Works gave us to understand that there was a scheme to erect Government offices, and if that is so will the Government give us an opportunity to inspect the plans?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of this amount, £2,000 is for a maternity hospital.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: What is the total estimated cost?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It depends where the hospital will be. If I had my way, it would be at the Perth Public Hospital at a cost of £6,000. Towards new Government offices, £3,500 is provided. It is impossible to lay the plans on the Table, because the architects are engaged in preparing them.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: What arrangements have been made in regard to the maternity hospital? Is it intended to merely have a maternity ward at the Perth Public Hospital?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It had been decided to build a temporary ward at the Perth Public Hospital, but since then representations have been made to the Government and are now being considered.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Wherever you put it, do not have it there.

Item, Perth-Fremantle Road, reinstatement, £29,000:

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Does the Minister intend to carry out the declared policy of the ex-Minister for Works in regard to the allocation of the cost of reconstructing the Perth-Fremantle road? It was intended to charge the Perth City Council one-third of the amount. Since then the council, although they receive practically no rates from abutting properties, have undertaken the construction of their portion at a cost of £3,000 or £4,000. Is it intended to still charge them with one-third of the cost of the road?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I intend to follow the policy of the Government and not that of the late Minister

for Works in regard to repayment on the construction of the Perth-Fremantle road. The Government have extended the period of repayment from 10 to 15 years. In regard to the money expended by the Perth City Council, this matter will be considered by Cabinet at an early date. The towns of Perth and Fremantle will benefit more by the construction of the road than any other district in between.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: How are you to get the money?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We will keep it out of their subsidies if we cannot get it otherwise.

Vote put and passed.

Vote — *Other State undertakings*, £225,715:

Item, Agricultural Implement Works—Foundry, Meter and General Workshops, £15,000:

Mr. ALLEN: Do the Government propose to manufacture their own meters? There is in my electorate a meter factory which was established by a gentleman in England who sent out capital for the purpose. If the Government are going to make their own meters this enterprise will be affected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is the intention of the Government ultimately to manufacture their own meters. At the present time arrangements are made to supply them and this gentleman can be taken into consideration with others.

Mr. Allen: Will the Government be prepared to make the present proprietor an offer for the plant?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot give that undertaking.

Mr. ALLEN: I protest against the Government coming into these enterprises. It is manifestly unfair and will only retard the progress of the State. This gentleman has sent out a considerable sum of money for the establishment of the works here.

The Premier: Merely to supply Government requirements.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He was encouraged to come here.

Mr. ALLEN: It is only on a par with other cases. It is no inducement for

English or any other capital to start an enterprise in this State, because the Government, immediately a business begins to pay, commence in competition against it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They have done that all round.

Mr. FOLEY: I heard the hon. member when he spoke on a similar item say that private enterprise should be encouraged. So far as the firm that he mentioned goes, I believe it was encouraged to come here by the present leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Certainly.

Mr. FOLEY: The proprietor was told that when the contract was finished steps would be taken to see that he got more work.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Certainly.

Mr. FOLEY: Was the leader of the Opposition conserving the interests of the firm or those of the State?

Hon. Frank Wilson: The interests of the State.

The Premier: Then why worry about the firm?

Mr. FOLEY: If we are considering the interests of the State it means that any man can get a little pettifogging contract, and that once he puts up machinery the State must keep that man going for all time. I am led to believe on good authority that the present firm, after the State had given it every consideration, did not in return consider the State, for when a contract for meters was finished and tenders were called for more the firm immediately jumped the price up 10s. a meter.

Mr. Allen. You are often led astray.

Mr. FOLEY: I defy the leader of the Opposition or the member for West Perth to disprove my statement.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What rubbish.

Mr. FOLEY: I want to see every industry encouraged.

Mr. Allen: The more small firms we have the better.

Mr. FOLEY: But I do not see why any firm should turn round and treat the Government as this firm has done. If this sort of thing is allowed I say that

the Government are not conserving the best interests of the State. If Australian industries are to be worked on those lines, let us get the goods from anywhere.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: There is a sum of £11,000 provided for brick works, which have been practically under construction for a number of years. I think they have only produced some 40,000 bricks.

The Minister for Works: If you had been present the other night you would have heard the number of bricks they have produced.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I should like to hear from the Minister some further details as to costs, and as to how it is proposed to expend this money. I protest against the item altogether, especially in view of the fact that we are to spend money on producing bricks which are not wanted at the present time.

Mr. Smith: And bricks that are very suitable for fowl houses.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I protest against the extra expenditure upon this unnecessary work.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Approximately the cost to date is £25,000. By the end of March, it is hoped, we shall be able to turn out some bricks to be used in public building works. No bricks have yet been produced from the Hoffman kiln. Owing to the war there has been delay in the receipt of some machinery. This has just arrived.

Item, Workers' homes, working capital, £100,000:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Is this amount required to complete workers' homes in hand at the present time? I understand it was the intention of the Government not to embark on further expenditure in this connection.

The PREMIER: As the hon. member may see by a return which has been placed in his hands, £72,000 had been expended in this connection at the end of December last.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: What is to be done with the balance, £28,000?

The Premier: There are certain commitments.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Where are these homes to be built?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In various parts of the State—Geraldton, Narrogin, and the metropolitan area. They are already started.

Vote put and passed.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

All Stages.

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

In accordance with the resolutions adopted in Committee of Supply and Ways and Means leave obtained to introduce the Appropriation Bill, which was read a first time.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [11.15] in moving the second reading said: This is the usual Bill which is introduced after the Revenue Estimates and the Loan Estimates have passed this Chamber. An Appropriation Bill accompanies those Estimates to another place. Hon. members will observe that attached to the Appropriation Bill is what is generally known as the Excess Bill, the purpose of which is to adjust the expenditure under Treasurer's Advance Account for the previous financial year. This expenditure, in accordance with the previous Appropriation Act, must be adjusted before the 30th June, 1915; or I may put it that the expenditure in question had to be submitted to Parliament prior to the expiration of the current financial year. That is now provided for. Otherwise, the form of this measure is exactly similar to that of every preceding Appropriation Bill. Although there is an increase of £100,000 in the amount of "Advance to Treasurer" under this Bill, hon. members on turning to page 3 will see it is clear that the £119,170 authorised in the early part of the session for "Special Advances" forms portion of the total

"Advance to Treasurer." Last year Parliament provided £223,145 under a special Act, and £250,000 under the Appropriation Act; and there was nothing to indicate that these could not be treated as two distinct authorities. However, in asking for £350,000 this year, I have made the position clear; and I may add that from experience it is realised that a lesser sum than £350,000 would be inadequate. Perhaps it may not seem necessary to mention the increase at all, but I give hon. members the information in case they may desire it. I wish to explain, further, that the Treasurer's Advance Account is now charged with all excess on revenue items as well as on loan items. If before the close of this financial year it should be found necessary to excess any item of either the Loan Estimates or the Revenue Estimates, such excess must be charged against some account; and the practice is to charge against the Treasurer's Advance Account. On some occasions we have found it a somewhat difficult matter to keep within the exact amount provided for this purpose by the Appropriation Act.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You did not succeed last time, according to the Auditor General.

The PREMIER: There has been difficulty because we have introduced a new system in the departments which renders it more difficult. We do not like the making of transfers from one item to another. The practice has been where, for example, under a division £1,000 was provided for salary and £500 for incidentals, and the salary item required to be excessed whilst there was a balance remaining of the incidentals item, simply to transfer that balance, without making any provision such as establishing a further fund for salaries. Parliament never intended that Votes should be cut about in that fashion, which, moreover, allowed the actual expenditure to be covered up or hidden, if that procedure was deemed expedient.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But the thing comes up again.

The PREMIER: I am speaking of the methods adopted.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Your methods are no good.

The PREMIER: We have compelled all departments to keep within the amounts provided on the Estimates. If a department wishes to exceed a Vote passed by Parliament, then reasons must be put up and authority obtained for such excessing, instead of resorting to the method of transfer, which formerly was adopted without the knowledge of the Treasurer, whose business is to control expenditure, under the direction of Parliament. Under the system we have introduced, not an item can be exceeded to the extent of even a single pound without the Treasurer's prior sanction; and then such excess is charged against the Treasurer's Advance. Formerly, the practice was, as I say, simply to transfer; and that practice is wrong inasmuch as it takes the control of the purse-strings away, firstly from the Treasurer, and secondly from Parliament. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. McDowall in the chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Schedules A. B. C. D—agreed to.

Schedule E.—Advance to Treasurer:

The PREMIER: In accordance with the statement I made when we discussed the question of increases to public servants, I have provided the amount shown in this schedule, and it will include the payment of expenses of an unforeseen nature, also increases of salaries in accordance with the decisions of the Appeal Board chargeable against the Consolidated Revenue Fund or the General Loan Fund.

Schedule passed.

Schedule F.—Excess:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In this schedule under the heading of the Premier's office" there is an item "Secretary—payment in lieu of 12 weeks' leave, £115." Does that refer to the late secretary?

The PREMIER: The amount is in lieu of leave which had accrued while the officer occupied the position of secretary to the Premier; he was treated as any other officer would have been treated.

Mr. SMITH: Is he the same secretary who is shown under "London Agency—contingencies" to be receiving £154? The Premier might improve the schedule if he gave the names of the officers.

The PREMIER: No; that is Mr. Hare, the ex-secretary.

Schedule put and passed.

Schedule G—agreed to.

Preamble, title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL.—VERMIN BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Request for Conference.

Message received from the Council as follows:—"The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly in reply to Message No. 39 that it is willing to grant a free conference respecting the Vermin Boards Act Amendment Bill, and has appointed the Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom, Hon. J. Duffell, and the Colonial Secretary managers for the Legislative Council, and the President's room as the place, and 4.45 p.m. on Tuesday, 2nd March, as the time to receive the managers of the Legislative Assembly."

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [11.30]: I move—

That a Message be transmitted to the Council acquainting them that the Assembly would be adjourned over Tuesday, and requesting that the Conference may be held on Wednesday, 3rd March, at 4.45 p.m.

Question passed.

BILL.—LOAN, £2,850,000.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for resumption from the 23rd February, of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.
Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [11.33]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday next.

Question passed.

House adjourned at 11.35 p.m.

QUESTION—LOAN MONEY AND INTEREST.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What is the total amount of loan money borrowed by this State to the 31st December, 1914? 2, The interest paid in connection with loans for the year 1914?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, £33,927,231 7s. 3d. (excluding £1,566,000 borrowed from the Savings Bank on account of the Agricultural Bank). 2, £1,169,947 2s. 1d.

QUESTION—CONTROL OF TRADE COMMISSION.

Travelling Allowance.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM asked the Colonial Secretary: What is the travelling allowance to the members of the Board appointed under the Control of Trade in War Time Act?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Civil Service scale.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 2nd March, 1915.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Bunbury Harbour Board, fifth annual report with financial statement and Auditor General's report. 2, Moola Bulla Cattle Station, financial statement for year ended 30th June, 1914, and Auditor General's report.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. J. F. ALLEN, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to the Hon. R. J. Lynn on the ground of urgent private business; and on motion by Hon. J. CORNELL, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to the Hon. J. E. Dodd on the ground of ill-health.

MOTION—STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

To print Balance Sheets.

On motion by Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East), resolved: "That it be an instruction to the Printing Committee that all existing and future balance sheets of State trading concerns, with the reports of the Auditor General, if any, on same, should be printed as Parliamentary papers."