

rest and others, including myself, bought the land for £300 and converted it into a reserve. Mr. Baglin is right in his contention and no such building should be erected within 100 yards of the foreshore. I do not think any lessee of land at Point Walter should be placed in such a position as to have greater control over the river frontage than anyone else.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.1]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 8th November.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.2 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 27th October, 1921.

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

QUESTION—WAR SERVICE HOMES STAFF.

Mr. MULLANY (for Mr. Teesdale) asked the Premier: 1, Are the Government aware that there are 53 returned soldiers under notice of dismissal from the War Service Homes staff on the 2nd November, thus adding to the already over-supplied labour market? 2, In view of the proposed transfer of the functions of the above board to the State Workers' Homes Board, will he, whilst in Melbourne, do all in his power to facilitate the continuation of part of the 114 homes now applied for, thus providing the

continuous service of the employees pending the transfer? 3, Will he give an assurance that preference to returned men will still be observed if the suggested transfer is finalised?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: 1, It is understood that a number have received notice. 2, Every facility and co-operation will be given by the State in having the work continued. 3, Yes. Preference to returned soldiers is the policy of the Government.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Mullany, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Durack (Kimberley) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—BUILDING SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of five amendments made by the Legislative Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

No. 1—Clause 2, Subclause 3, after the word "all," in line 2, insert the words "estates and interests in":

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This amendment merely defines more clearly the meaning of "property." 1 move—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 2—Clause 2, Subclause 3, after the word "any," in line 9, insert the word "transfer":

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This is a desirable amendment because "conveyance" has a different meaning here from "transfer," whereas in England "conveyance" means the same thing as "transfer" means in Australia. I move—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 3—Clause 2, Subclause 3, in line 22 strike out the words "such fees as may be prescribed by the Governor," and insert the words "such fees (if any) as may be prescribed by the Governor, but not to exceed such fees as for the time being are payable on transmissions under the Transfer of Land Act":

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not know that this amendment is really necessary, but it clearly protects building societies. The clause as framed in this Chamber provided

that the societies should be charged only the actual cost of transfers. The Council's amendment prevents the Government from going beyond the charges under the Transfer of Land Act. Of course, it was not likely that the fees under this Bill would amount to the ordinary cost of transfer. I move—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 4—Clause 3, strike out the words "coming into operation of the principal," in line 4, and insert the words "commencement of this":

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This amendment is consequential. I move—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 5—Clause 4, after the word "Act," in line 5, insert the words "or is intended to carry out such objects as aforesaid":

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This also may be regarded as a consequential amendment. I move—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

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

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Legislative Council.

BILL—HOSPITALS.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. T. Brown—Beverley) [4.44] in moving the second reading said: This Bill represents the first piece of comprehensive legislation dealing with all hospitals operating in the State. The measure relating to hospitals passed in 1894 applies only to the two public hospitals in Perth and Fremantle. The Act in question is largely devoted to specifying who shall be regarded as subscribers, and in laying down the procedure to be observed by the boards of management of the institutions. Thus, existing legislation applies to only two hospitals out of the total of 51 operating in the State. Of these 51, there are 26 managed by committees, and 22 managed by the Medical Department. The Children's Hospital is incorporated, and has a committee of management, who own the property. The 22 hospitals controlled by the Medical Department include the King Edward Memorial Hospital at

Subiaco, and the Wooroloo Sanatorium. There is no clear line of demarcation determining what shall be regarded as a Government hospital, or a general hospital managed by a committee. Under the Bill it is the intention to leave it open for all hospitals to be managed by boards. There are in the various districts different classes of hospitals. In the debate on the Estimates last night it was mentioned that there is no uniformity in the management of hospitals and in the application of subsidies. If the Bill be passed, it will bring about uniformity of administration and uniformity also in the application of the subsidies provided by the Government for the hospitals. Of the hospitals in the Eastern States, very many are managed by committees. In this State the reverse obtains. We have many hospitals managed by the Government, and in consequence the cost to the State is proportionately high. The existing method of subsidising our hospitals is unfair. We may have a Government hospital in one town, and alongside of it a committee hospital, the Government hospital being supported by the Government, but the committee hospital being merely subsidised, with the result that the local residents have to contribute a considerable proportion of the cost of administration of that institution. And this anomaly obtains: Those who make sacrifices in contributing directly to the maintenance of the committee hospital, have also to subscribe by way of taxation to the maintenance of the Government hospital. It is considered that all the hospitals should be administered by boards on a uniform system. We should then have uniformity in allotting Government subsidies to the hospitals. The main purpose of the Bill is to ensure that hospitals shall be the concern of elected boards. The State will be cut up into so many hospital districts. In defining a district there may be included in the area one or two districts under local authorities, one perhaps being under a municipality, and the adjoining district administered by a road board. Provision is made in the Bill for such districts to be taken together in a certain area for the purpose of controlling hospitals. The board will be made up of representatives from each district. The Bill is taken from the New Zealand Act, which has proved entirely satisfactory. In South Australia the legislation dealing with hospitals gives to the Principal Medical Officer absolute power to raise the necessary funds by imposing a tax on the local authorities. That is a very drastic power to repose in one man, especially when it is remembered that there is no appeal, except to the Minister. In the past we have had no systematic scale on which subsidies should be allotted to hospitals. In consequence many anomalies exist. Under the Bill the State will be divided into hospital districts, and proper allocations of subsidies will be made to each district. In the past the subsidies paid to hospitals in the city and towns has been large in proportion to country hospitals.

Mr. Harrison: Hear, hear!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: While we think that unfair, it must be remembered that a number of patients from country districts are admitted to the Perth Public Hospital and the Fremantle Hospital and the Children's Hospital, and many of those people are treated free. In consequence, necessarily, the cost of administration of those institutions has to be largely borne by the Government. Under the Bill that difficulty will be overcome, as I will explain later. In each hospital district there will be a board elected by the ratepayers. The method of election will be similar to that set down in the Road Districts Act and the Municipal Corporations Act.

Mr. Harrison: On the same day as the municipal and road board elections?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. Munsie: Will it not be possible to have a board drawn from a municipal district and a road board district?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes. In that event the representatives of the municipal area will be elected on the municipal election day, while those representing the road board district will be elected on the road board election day. The board will be elected annually.

Mr. Marshall: On the ratepayers' roll?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: Rather a restricted vote, is it not?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Oh, no. I do not think you can expect anything more than that. The taxpayers will be taxed for the support of the hospitals, and so they should be entitled to vote.

Mr. Pickering: But some of the ratepayers will be in the road board district outside the municipal area.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That will be a subsidiary district, and the roll for that district will be used.

Mr. Boyland: Do you tax only the ratepayers?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes. I should like very much to be able to give everybody a vote, and to be able to tax everybody for the maintenance of hospitals, but that is almost impossible; it would entail an enormous amount of machinery.

Mr. Chesson: You will never make a success of it until you do that.

Mr. Marshall: It will never apply up our way.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If hon. members can assist me to overcome the difficulty, I will willingly agree to attempt it; but I have gone into the question with the officials of the Taxation Department, and we cannot find any method of doing it. I will not say that it is impossible, but it has been suggested in this House time after time, yet nothing has ever come of it.

Mr. Chesson: Those people get a benefit from the hospitals, and ought to be made to subscribe.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is so, but the hon. member will see that where there is a society subscribing so much weekly

to the local hospital, the Government will subsidise the subscriptions. That is provided for in the Bill. It is clearly defined that when a person enters a hospital and remains there for a given period, the district whence that person came will be held responsible for the maintenance of that person while in hospital. The members of the board will be elected according to the population and the property value of the district. Under this system a board will consist of not less than five nor more than 20 members. The number will vary according to population, and also vary in accordance with the value of the property in those areas.

Mr. Mann: Is there any provision for subscribers to vote?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No. Members will be elected annually and the machinery of the local bodies will be used for the elections. It is unnecessary for me to explain this matter, because hon. members are acquainted with the Municipalities Act and the Road Districts Act. A board will be charged with the management and control of the hospitals within its district, and it will take over the existing hospital. The board will be given power to establish a new hospital wherever it is thought that such a hospital is necessary. The Bill does not include those hospitals which are carried on for private gain. Power is given to the various boards to raise sums of money with which to build new hospitals if such hospitals are required, and they are also given power to raise money to build maternity homes. There is provision in Clause 45 for the limitation of subsidies which are to be paid by the Government in each instance.

Mr. Harrison: It is absolutely essential that maternity hospitals should be separate from the others.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is the position now. The Bill will give the boards power to raise money to build hospitals, and it also gives them power to control hospitals. They will appoint their own medical officers and the whole of the staff, and they will have the whole of the responsibility of the administration. In the past there has been a certain amount of dissatisfaction where we have had district medical officers appointed in different towns. In most cases where the district medical officer agrees to take over a hospital in a district, it is done by arrangement, and one of the conditions is that no other doctor shall be allowed to follow a patient into the hospital, whether it be an assisted or a Government hospital. In the case of the Government hospitals, these medical practitioners are not permitted to follow their patients into it. Under the Bill it will be left to the board to make arrangements whereby it will be possible for this to be done.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you personally approve of a doctor following his patient into a hospital?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do, and if the Bill does not pass through Parliament, I intend to make such arrangements so

that where there is more than one doctor in the town, and that doctor is attending a patient, it will be possible for him to follow his patient to the hospital. Cases of this description have occurred. For instance, doctors may be in a town, one being the district medical officer who controls the hospital, and the other a private practitioner. The latter may be attending a patient. I know how I would feel if I were under that practitioner, and I was aware that the accommodation in the hospital was suitable for me, and that I could get there the careful attention which it was necessary I should have. I know too how I would feel if my medical adviser suggested that I should go into the hospital, and if he were precluded from giving me the attention that I required from him. That position has often arisen. The difficulty can be overcome, and it will be overcome, even if the Bill does not become law this session. Of course if the measure is passed the matter will be left entirely to the boards.

Mr. Willcock: Suppose the boards say they will not allow it?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That then will be a matter for the ratepayers; they will be able to deal with the board.

Mr. Willcock: There might be a different policy in each town.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Whatever the district says shall be done must be done. The boards will be appointed by the electors, and the electors will exercise their wise judgment in the choice that they make. There have been cases where private practitioners have interfered with the management of the hospital. This of course they had no right to do, and that is the reason why objection to their entering hospitals exists to-day. There are instances where district medical officers have been appointed, and have been given a subsidy, and there is another doctor in the district acting as a private practitioner. This doctor would attend to indigent cases for nothing provided he was appointed the district medical officer, thereby enabling him to become the superior medical man in the town.

Mr. Pickering: Boards will be elected for only 12 months, and if their work is not satisfactory, the personnel can be changed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is so. The Bill does not apply to infectious diseases hospitals established under Part XI. of the Health Act, nor to any institution established under the Lunacy Act. Of course the King Edward Hospital will be under the control of the Government as at present, and also the Wooroloo Sanatorium. The financial provisions of the Bill are set out in Part VI. If hon. members turn to Clause 45, they will see that it deals with the subsidies to be paid. The subsidy is not to exceed 10s. for every pound of the value of all devises or bequests. In the case of voluntary contributions, or gifts of money, land or other property, the subsidy will be 24s. in the pound.

Mr. Harrison: Is that for everything or furnishing only?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This relates to gifts of money, land or other property. The subsidy will be one pound for every pound levied or requisitioned by the board from contributory local authorities under the provisions set out.

Mr. Pickering: This will not be for maintenance.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No. Maintenance is dealt with later on. Then there is provision for a subsidy of 5s. for every pound collected on account of fees for the relief or maintenance of patients. In the past we have had to write off a large amount each year in this respect. I have included this subsidy for the purpose of encouraging boards to see that patients able to pay shall be made to pay. It will be to the interests of the boards to collect fees from those who are able to pay. On the other hand, in regard to benefit societies or committees, these bodies pay so much towards the upkeep of an institution in a manner similar to the course adopted by the workers. Contributions are made to a fund and payments are made from that fund towards the maintenance of the patients sent by those bodies to the institutions. Under the heading of "Miscellaneous" we provide 5s. in the pound for every pound collected in that way.

Mr. Latham: This does not bind the Government to give any subsidy.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It all depends on the amount that is needed. There is an amount determined in accordance with the schedule for all moneys levied for expenditure, other than capital expenditure. It is clearly set down in the schedule that where the rate in the pound on the annual value is not less than 3d., and the rate in the pound on the unimproved capital value is not less than three-eighths of a penny, the subsidy for each pound of contributions levied or requisitioned from the local authority shall be £1 17s. 6d.

Hon. T. Walker: It may be much less.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The maximum as I have said, is 3d. on the annual value and three-eighths of a penny on the unimproved capital value. No local body can rate higher than that for the upkeep of any hospital. If they only need a certain sum, it will not be necessary to strike more than the lower sum, and we will subsidise accordingly. If they strike the higher rate, we subsidise them to the extent of 37s. 6d. in the pound. The figures which appear in the schedule will vary from time to time. In some country districts there may not be any necessity at all for rating. The amounts which they may be able to collect may be sufficient to cover maintenance and administration costs, without the necessity to strike a rate. If it be only a minor sum that is needed to make up the cost of administration—if a board should be short at the end of the year—the local authorities will have

the power to allocate the sum required from its revenue.

Mr. Marshall: They do that now in some cases.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Beverley to-day is paying £44 a year out of its rates to the hospital committee. York has a Government hospital entirely supported by the Government; yet the sister town has a hospital maintained by the subscriptions of the people and a road board contribution of £34.

Mr. Latham: People at Beverley get the benefit of the York hospital.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We have often to take some patients from the hon. member's town.

Mr. Latham: And we take some of yours.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Under this system it might not be necessary to strike a rate at all. Where a large bequest is made, the subsidy will not exceed £500, but the hospitals will not be bound down to the conditions of the bequest in respect to the Government subsidy.

Mr. Pickering: That is, the subsidy is not to be governed by the bequest in any way.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is so. There is a provision whereby a board, in the event of under-rating for the year and finding themselves short of funds at the end of the financial year, may obtain an advance from the Government up to two-thirds of the actual anticipated expenditure for the following year. In this way they will be able to tide over until they can collect the rate imposed to meet the cost of administration for the year. Similar provision is made in most of the local governing Acts and it will apply under this measure. The local governing bodies shall, at the beginning of each financial year, make out a statement showing their expenditure for the year, in order that the districts contributing to that centre will be in a position to calculate exactly what rate they will have to strike to raise the sum necessary for the upkeep of the hospital. Power is given for hospital boards to raise loans, but the customary provision for the submission of the question of raising loans to the ratepayers is not included. If a board desire to make additions to a hospital, or to build another hospital in the district—a maternity hospital may be required in addition to a general hospital—they will notify each of the contributing districts that a loan is required, and if any objection is raised that objection will be voiced to the Minister, who will decide whether or not the loan shall be raised. It is the experience of all hospitals that patients from outside districts seek treatment. Under this Bill the board of the district in which a patient is resident will be responsible for his maintenance in the hospital. Provision is made that a person must have resided in the district for a certain period.

Mr. Teesdale: But such a person might not go back to the district from which he came.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We cannot control people who are here to-day and gone to-morrow. We have provided for the payment of subsidies, and this money will be available for the maintenance of indigent cases. I know of patients who have come to the Perth Public Hospital and to the Children's Hospital from Jarrahdale, Pingelly, Beverley and other country centres. At present no one is responsible for their maintenance while in hospital, and often they have to be treated free of cost. Under this Bill the board of the district to which the patient belongs will be responsible for the maintenance.

Mr. Teesdale: Still, such a patient might not intend to return to that particular district.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We cannot control birds of passage.

Mr. Pickering: What would be the scale of charges?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: A scale of charges will be fixed by each hospital board. The Government will have nothing to do with that.

Mr. Pickering: Will the board pay according to their own scale or according to the scale of the hospital to which the patient is sent?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: According to the scale of the hospital in which the patient is treated.

Mr. Mann: A country board might repudiate the charge and say it is too high.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In that case appeal could be made to the Minister. Any board could appeal to the Minister and he will have the power to decide. Under the Bill the Government will be empowered to exempt certain hospitals if necessary. It may be found that a certain hospital is badly managed, or that something is wrong. In such a case the Government would be able to take over the hospital for all time, if necessary, or for a period, and exercise the same powers as will be conferred upon the local governing bodies with regard to the imposition of taxation and matters of control. Such a contingency may never occur, but it is wise to make provision to meet possible cases. The measure embraces the usual provisions for making regulations and by-laws. In all probability the people in the city may take exception to this Bill, because of the fear that it will involve additional taxation, but I think that the Bill will be welcomed by the residents of the country.

Mr. Marshall: No, you will get opposition from my district.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It would be foolish of the country people to oppose this measure. I quite expect some opposition in the city, because the people will argue that they are being asked to raise more money by way of taxation, and that the hospitals will cost more than they are costing at present. The cost of the administration of the Perth Public Hospital and the Children's Hospital is something like £39,000 a year. This cost

would be materially reduced under this measure, because those patients coming from outside districts would have to be maintained by the boards of their respective districts. This will lead to a reduction in the maintenance costs of the metropolitan hospitals. Further, we are offering a subsidy on the maintenance fees collected and the managing committees will thus have some encouragement to collect these fees. Many hospital committees do not make any special effort in this direction. I estimate that we shall be able to save a sum in the vicinity of £5,000 or £6,000 by way of subsidy to the Perth Public and Children's Hospitals. Of course I cannot say that this saving will be actually realised, because the amounts raised by the hospitals may be larger than we anticipate and involve a heavier subsidy. However, there will be some saving. I want members to realise that this Bill will not remove the responsibility for our hospitals from the shoulders of the Government. We will retain control of the whole of the hospitals, have power to inspect them at any time, and assist them wherever assistance is necessary. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1921-22.

In Committee of Supply.

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

Department of Agriculture (Hon. H. K. Maley, Minister), the Colonial Secretary, Hon. F. T. Brown, in charge of the Votes.

Vote—Agriculture generally, £59,883:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. T. Brown—Beverley) [5.28]: I regret that the Minister for Agriculture is not present, because he would have liked the opportunity to introduce the Estimates dealing with the important department under his control. This is one of the most important departments, for we are depending so much upon land settlement, as well as mining and other industries, to pull us out of our financial difficulties. The State has derived very great benefit from the services of the experts of this department, whose advice to the people on the land has proved very valuable. In the past, however, we have not derived so much benefit from the expert knowledge of these officers as we should have done, but alterations have been made whereby the position of Under-Secretary has been abolished and a Director of Agriculture appointed in lieu. In Mr. Sutton there is not the slightest doubt that we have a good man, possessed of a wide knowledge of agriculture in this State. During the short period he has occupied the position of Director, he has accomplished a lot of good work by visiting the various country districts. In addition to the Director of Agriculture several officers have been appointed to assist in that

direction. Being a farmer myself I have noticed from time to time how vital it is that we should understand more about the soil we are cultivating. There is something we should know that we do not know. We should endeavour to find out what it is we take from the soil that should be put back again. On many farms in Western Australia, in which land has been cultivated for a certain period, the crops begin to deteriorate, and the average in bushels per acre is nothing like as good as it was in the first years of cultivation. This shows that we are taking something out of the soil that should be replaced.

Mr. Lambert: If you take a shilling out of your pocket it has to be put back.

Hon. T. Walker: Does not the remedy lie in the rotation of crops? Is that not the theory?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We are taking something out of the soil, and it is necessary that we should have sound advice to place us on the right path in remedying this position without having to go to great expense in conducting experiments. In the past, farmers have had to experiment for themselves to a great extent to find out how they could improve their soil. I have done so myself. It is only recently I have found out by having a rotation of crops and by planting crops of peas, following on a crop of wheat, that great advantage could be gained. I have also noticed an improvement in the feed after the crop is over, when the land has been treated in this way. To crop land by this method is rather too expensive for most farmers. The poor farmer cannot afford to do it. Furthermore, to get the best results it is necessary also to carry stock, and many farmers are unable to afford to grow peas and other fodder especially for stock. We should be able to devise some means whereby we can procure a manure that will put back into the soil that which we take out of it by the growing of crops. During the last few months I have noticed that land, which 5 years ago was growing from 25 to 30 bushels to the acre, is not likely to-day to yield more than from 5 to 8 bushels. I have been informed by the owners of these properties that the crops have been going back for the last three or four years, notwithstanding the fact that the land has been carefully fallowed and prepared, and the crops have only been put in in alternate years. In Mr. Sutton we have a good man, as well as other officers who are making a study of this important question dealing with the soil. It is the intention of the Government to allow these officers to be out of town as often as possible in order that they may go amongst the farmers, and endeavour to point out to them some means by which the growing qualities of their land can be improved, and brought back to the same state of richness as when it was first put under crop. Although we have made fair advances in agriculture during the last 10 or 15 years, we are not as far advanced as we ought to be. Our acreage under grain is not increasing to a

great extent. This is regrettable. I take it this is due to a lack of capital possessed by the farmer, who is therefore not able to improve his properties or place as much land under crop as he would otherwise do. During the last few years it has become more expensive to put in crops. Machinery has gone up in price, as has the stock required to work the machinery. Wages have increased and manures are more expensive to buy. The farmer is therefore not in a position to put as much land under cultivation as could be desired. It is due to the Government to do all they possibly can to assist in increasing the area under cultivation from year to year. When we look at the statistics we are astounded to see the quantity of cereals that we import annually from the Eastern States. For the year ended 30th June last we imported goods to the value of £747,908 from the Eastern States, principally made up of butter substitute for butter, cheese, eggs, fish, honey, meat, bacon, ham, etc. This has been going on for a number of years. We are importing more to-day from the Eastern States than we did seven years ago. We should do our best to alter that position. We have the land and the rainfall, and I cannot see why we should not grow all the products required for Western Australia without having to import them. The same thing applies to fruit. We are importing dried fruits, currants, dates, raisins and so forth from the Eastern States; last year the amount involved was £58,069. We are sending out to the Eastern States almost every year over £5,000,000 for products which should be grown in the State. The quantity of butter produced by the factories in Western Australia has increased during the last year, and two more butter factories have been established. The number of subscribers to the Busselton butter factory has increased by 55 during the year. This factory is producing butter of good quality and in increasing quantities. The same thing, I believe, will apply to our other butter factories. There are fewer pigs bred in Western Australia to-day than heretofore. This is no doubt due largely to the high price of wheat. Although pig farmers are able to get good prices for their produce they do not care to go in for that class of stock just now. At one time every farmer kept pigs, but the position is not so to-day. When the price of wheat drops, no doubt farmers will devote more attention to mixed farming and go in more for pigs than they do to-day. Even with wheat at its present price it should pay farmers to breed pigs, because bacon and pork are fairly dear to the consumer, and I think if they would breed pigs they would find that they would get a reasonable return for their labours. The fruit industry suffered badly during the war, and last year was affected by the railway strike. Large quantities of fruit went to waste, or were destroyed because of the difficulty of getting the product to market. Nevertheless, the amount of fruit grown last year was in excess of that grown the year

before, while the acreage under fruit trees has also increased, and many more orchards are now coming into bearing. In the near future there should be a large quantity of fruit available for export. Fortunately we are practically free from disease in our orchards. This is due to the stringent regulations which have been imposed, and to the care that has been taken in regard to imports. I regret that the same care has not been taken in respect to the stock that has been brought to the State. There are several kinds of diseases amongst our stock which have undoubtedly been brought here. There is that disease which exists among sheep in the South-West and the Great Southern districts. Sheep that appear to be all right to-day may be found dead to-morrow. No one seems to have discovered the cause or the remedy, or to know anything about this disease. In my opinion it is a disease which was imported into the State, and that it started alongside a paddock in which had been placed some sheep that were imported some years ago. If due precautions had been taken at the time possibly the disease could have been stamped out. When I attended the Agricultural conference in the Eastern States, some members made representations with a view to the removal of the restrictions regarding the importation of stock and fruit into Western Australia. I opposed any such proposition and fortunately it was not agreed to. We cannot be too strict in regard to our importations, and we should do everything we can to prevent disease from coming to Western Australia. The estimates have been reduced by a fair amount.

Mr. Pickering: I hope without impairing the efficiency of the department.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There have been several alterations in the staff.

Hon. P. Collier: Only by transfer to other departments.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Not altogether. Reductions have been made in the staff, and part of the money saved has been allocated in other directions in the department. Whilst our officers are not being starved, I should be glad to see more money allocated to the Minister for Agriculture. The department is an important one, and there should be a sum set apart each year with the object of specially assisting men on the land and giving them the best of advice. If they had been given good advice in the past many of them would have made a success of their farming operations instead of possibly a failure. I have much pleasure in commending the Estimates to the Committee.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [5.45]: I am pleased that the Agricultural Department are alive to the necessity to-day of keeping more in step with the trend of modern knowledge and teaching as they apply, or should apply, to farming. Most regrettable is the colossal ignorance usually shown here as regards the ordinary, every-day ap-

plication of science to the practice of Western Australian farming. If there were a considerable sum of money spent in this direction, it would be money well applied. In the United States to-day they are spending considerable sums of money, with great advantage to every State of the Union, on the promotion of science as applied to agriculture. The American Bureau of Agriculture sends out numerous bulletins; and I may remind hon. members that those bulletins are received by this Parliament. I do not know whether the booklets are read very much; I fear they are usually thrown out and burnt. They are, however, of considerable value to the farmers of Western Australia. Almost every one of those publications has a practical application to farming in this State. To my mind it is quite unnecessary for each State of the Commonwealth to establish a separate department to issue a "Journal of Agriculture." Western Australia has ceased publishing its journal; but the corresponding publications of the Eastern States do, as a matter of fact, consist largely of reprints.

The Minister for Works: Not entirely. There is a good deal of original matter in the New South Wales "Agricultural Gazette."

Mr. LAMBERT: That may be, but those journals consist in the main of reprints. Many of the American bulletins, I repeat, are of great value to the farmers of Western Australia; and I suggest to the Minister that at a very small cost those having immediate application to the farm lands of Western Australia could be distributed amongst our agricultural community. An American bulletin to which I recently drew the attention of the Premier, on the fertilisation of soils, has a very direct practical application to the soils of this State. Probably that bulletin would go absolutely unheeded by most hon. members, and our farmers are not given an opportunity of gaining the advanced knowledge and advanced science older countries are applying to the development of their agricultural lands. I will cite an instance which I have cited here previously. Hon. members will be interested in the statement that in 1914 Germany, when she went to war, was producing for fertilising purposes about 200,000 tons of nitrates per annum; and nitrates are a most essential soil food.

Mr. Latham: Nitrogen and potash.

Mr. LAMBERT: Apart from potash, Germany was producing 200,000 tons of nitrates per annum. When the Armistice was signed, she was producing at the rate of over two million tons per annum of fixed nitrogen from the atmosphere—of course, at that time using the nitrogen mainly for war purposes. However, immediately upon the conclusion of the Armistice that fixed nitrogen was applied to fertilise the soil of Germany, which meant doubling the productivity of that country. That production of nitrogen was maintained by Germany while she was at war virtually with the world. The Minister speaks of the results obtained by fertilising the sick soils

of Western Australia. With all due respect to the farmers, who I know labour under many disadvantages, let me say it is only to be expected that the slipshod methods in use here to-day as regards the application of superphosphate to the soils would result in those soils becoming super-sick. Moreover, they get fertiliser-sick. In that condition they cannot respond, and give the results which they should give, on account of the chemical constituents present. It is well that the Agricultural Department are to-day alive to this all-important subject. True, a practical farmer might say, "The member for Coolgardie is not a practical farmer." I do not put myself forward as a practical farmer, but as one who studies and knows the results which have been gained through the close application of science to agriculture in other parts of the world. I follow the subject with the greatest possible attention and interest, for I well know that if it is applied in a practical way to the utilisation of Western Australian soils, this State will probably secure twofold results as compared with those being obtained to-day. Assuming that there is the ordinary rainfall, there are only two reasons for a soil going sick—either the physical properties of the soil, or lack of the proper application of plant food. It boils itself down to a very simple problem; and that simple problem should be solved by our Agricultural Department, and the solution disseminated right through the agricultural districts of Western Australia.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: It is a matter of cheap lime.

Mr. LAMBERT: True; and it is a scandalous thing that while Western Australia has in its north millions of tons of lime which is utilisable for the top dressing of its soils, practically not one ton of that lime is being used to-day.

Mr. Teesdale: We will remember that when the next application for a lime concession comes along.

Mr. LAMBERT: What does the hon. member refer to?

Mr. Teesdale: All the restrictions and conditions; particularly the condition that lime must be supplied at 7s. per ton.

Mr. LAMBERT: There is an answer to that. I know the company referred to by the hon. member, and I also know the calcium carbonate constituents of the lime in Lake Clifton.

Hon. P. Collier: We will inquire into that matter during the tour.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes; we shall be there in a day or two and can look into the matter then. But that lime, by reason of its physical condition, is not suitable for application to the soil; it could not be used through a distributor economically. There are limes, however, in Western Australia which could be utilised.

The Minister for Works: Why cannot the Lake Clifton lime be utilised?

Mr. LAMBERT: The Minister knows that the lime when taken out of the lake is damp,

and must be dried in order to be used through a drill.

Mr. Money: That is done now.

Mr. LAMBERT: Perhaps it is; the problem is not a very difficult one. It is a lime which, on account of its physical properties being a carbonate instead of an oxide, is one of the best limes in the world. Indeed, there is no better lime to be found than that in those lakes, after it has been dried so that it may be used in a practical and economical way through a drill. But it could not be used in its present state. I went carefully through the Bill for granting a concession in connection with the Lake Clifton lime, on account of certain points raised by the member for Bunbury. At the time, I issued to this House a warning as to the actual properties of that lime. The question was whether our farmers wanted the lime as a carbonate or as an oxide—two very different things.

Mr. Money: The company agreed to crush it.

Mr. LAMBERT: It does not need to be crushed.

The Minister for Works: You have not seen it.

Mr. LAMBERT: I have swum in Lake Clifton.

The Minister for Works: But we are talking about dry lime.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Minister says that that lime wants crushing. Assuming that the physical properties of the lime are such as to answer the exacting requirements of the Minister—

The Minister for Works: The farmers are told that they must use a 20-inch mesh for this lime; and the stuff must be crushed and dried in order that it may go through a 20-inch mesh.

Mr. LAMBERT: It would not be a very difficult problem to do that, as the Minister must know.

The Minister for Works: But it is not being done.

Mr. LAMBERT: Let me remind the Minister that at Dongarra and in other northern localities we have thousands of acres of virtually pure lime—lime that is pure in the ordinary acceptance of the term. We have lime going about 90 per cent., which is quite good enough for any farmer. There is not a limestone to be found in this neighbourhood running more than about 75 per cent. of lime. That is the natural limestone. But in the northern area there is lime actually running about 90 per cent. It can be merely shovelled up, and it will run through a drill. That lime would run through a mesh smaller than the 20-inch. As a matter of fact, it is unnecessary, except for reasons of sheer expediency, to ask a company to do that sort of thing at a loss, probably, while engaged in establishing an industry, if right alongside us we have millions of tons of lime that could be utilised. If we had not those millions of tons of lime for our farmers, I would make the company crush the lime. I am not

saying that they should not do it. They have agreed to do it, and possibly they will do it. If they are required to do it, it is not a very big thing. There is also another company after the oyster beds here in the river. It would be a very good idea to get those big oyster beds exploited. There we have an absolutely pure lime, which can be burnt and utilised. Among agriculturists and scientists the form in which lime should be applied to the soil is a very moot question. Of course for new soil, freshly broken, one would employ a lime with the highest possible calcium contents. There is no doubt about that. But one can only get that with burnt lime, which has but one-half of the calcium contents of carbonate of lime. That is the only difference; there is no mystery about it. It is merely a matter of what a man chooses to do, or of what he has been used to do in the ordinary practice of agriculture. The Minister dealt with the pests which are prevalent in our fruit-growing areas. He knows that their presence often proves very costly to the orchardist. I am glad that the Government propose to standardise sprays in this State. They are going to take care that the people who supply spraying liquors of any description shall be specific about the contents of those liquors. I myself have had some experience of making sprays for the orchardist. When I went to Mount Barker, I was told by the man in charge of the fruit-growers' co-operative concern there, "Oh we are not going to have anything more to do with Western Australian-made sprays. We have had some of them." Now, those Western Australian-made sprays were compounded by Mr. Nathan, who is chairman of the Bureau of Industrial Development. That gentleman, I understand, made an attempt in a backyard at Fremantle to compound lime sulphur spray. The effect of his product—I do not know who actually attempted to make the spray—was such that I did not venture to try to sell any sprays. I mentioned them once, and I did not dare to mention them again.

The Minister for Works: Mr. Nathan is a prominent gentleman.

Mr. LAMBERT: I know one portion of his anatomy which is prominent, at all events. The statements I have made concerning his manufacture of spray are not intended in any way to disparage him. The explanation is simply that he, or those whom he employed, did not know how to take a certain amount of lime and a certain amount of sulphur and boil those chemicals together in a copper. This State is importing 15,000 gallons of lime sulphur spray every year, while Western Australia possesses the finest lime to be found in the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Works: Hear, hear! And the best sulphur.

Mr. LAMBERT: And the best sulphur, too; and, further, pyritic rock, which is being brought to Cuming Smith's works over the railways at a farthing per ton per mile, yields a sulphate content of about two pounds per

ton, while lime sulphate spray, for which every orchardist has to pay, and which contains 65 per cent. of actual moisture, is brought over here from Victoria and New South Wales in barrels. About 15,000 gallons of that spray is imported annually in barrels, and that is on account of the magnificent effort to establish an industry which was made by the gentleman I have referred to, who could not take some lime and some sulphur and boil them together and put the resulting mixture in a barrel and send it to the orchardist.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Why do you not make some of it?

Mr. Teesdale: They will take some of that stuff to Java.

Mr. LAMBERT: Every gallon of it I made, I sold, but I will not add to the wealth of the fat importers who charge £25 per ton for sulphur that I should get for £12 per ton, simply in order to establish the industry. When the time comes, I hope to take advantage of the possibilities ahead of that industry. I am glad that the Government intend to give greater attention to the fruit industry. That intention on the part of the Government takes my mind back to the progress made in de-hydration in other parts of the world. I understand there is a small plant established at Kendenup. Any one familiar with the operations of the fruit trade can but hope that further progress will be made in that direction in the interests of the orchardists of Western Australia. I hope the Government will adopt a more progressive policy regarding this aspect. In the Lower Swan district there is considerable settlement going on, and the settlers include a large number of soldiers. Should they desire to start a little co-operative concern with a view to establishing a de-hydration plant, it would be in the interests of the country to lend them assistance. There is no mystery about de-hydration to-day. It is not a system that should be regarded as peculiar to Kendenup, but it can be applied to other orchard districts throughout the State. It would be of advantage if a plant of this nature were established at some central place where the fruit could be gathered. If, owing to gluts, strikes or any other cause, it was found impossible to dispose of the fruit, it could be dealt with by the plant, packed into cases and loaded for sale in various parts of the world. I hope the Government will recognise the necessity for fostering the de-hydration industry. In California it has been the salvation of that country. Unless the British Government had acted promptly and established de-hydration plants to treat onions, potatoes, vegetables generally, and fruit, Great Britain would have been in difficulties during the war period, regarding the task of feeding her people, and particularly her troops.

Mr. Latham: We did not have much of their dried fruits.

Mr. LAMBERT: There was no reason why the troops should not have been fed in that way, for de-hydrated fruit and vegetables could be sent wherever required. I do not

desire to labour this phase. Members who take an interest in this industry and are interested in the progress it has made in other parts of the world, will appreciate the significance and importance of embracing the most modern ideas and developments which have been successfully operating elsewhere. I sincerely trust the Government will assist this movement. I do not care whether it be the Mt. Barker organisation, or the settlers in the Lower Swan, where people are growing vines for the raisin industry, so long as the more advanced methods are adopted. The Government should see that slipshod methods are not encouraged. The Government should see that these co-operative concerns secure proper plant, and that reasonably up-to-date methods are adopted. If that is done, there is no reason why we should not make good, as growers in other parts of the world have made good also. The Government would not necessarily be required to find money. If a number of small orchardists in a given area were prepared to establish a co-operative concern, they could embark upon the venture. The Government should be prepared to stand behind them with their guarantee. If proper de-hydration methods were adopted, there is no reason why our exports should not reach in value between a quarter and half a million pounds before many years have elapsed.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [6.5]: In reviewing the Estimates for the Agricultural Department, one seems to recognise a sameness about them. There are the same items, the same methods and so on as we have had for sessions past. We do not seem, however, to take into account the losses that our agriculturists are suffering. We neglect the great vital principles of agriculture. We seem to disregard the essentials. I doubt whether it is known that the agriculturists of Western Australia, particularly those in the wet districts, are only hauling one-third of the tonnage they should be hauling. They are losing two-thirds of their energy through not having the essential good roads to get their products to market. There is nothing in these Estimates dealing with that aspect. On no occasion that I know of has that point been stressed by the Director of Agriculture, and it is left to the people of the State to find out these essentials. This is no new aspect to bring before the House. The necessity for good roads has been mentioned time and again. That point should have been dealt with in these Estimates; otherwise, why is it necessary to have Parliament at all? The Parliamentary machine should pick up these essential ideas for expression in this House. If that is not done, then Parliament fails the country. What was true two years ago, is equally true to-day. As sure as members are in their places in this Chamber to-day, so surely must this question of good roads receive attention sooner or later, and the later it be, the more costly it will be. We have heard a lot about freights.

This afternoon mention was made regarding certain freight that was carried for one farthing per ton per mile. To-day the lowest agricultural freight is a halfpenny per ton, and that applies to the carriage of fertilisers for the wheat growers. Fertilisers, which are valued at £7 per ton, and are an essential commodity for the wheat growers, are carried at that rate. The wheat produced with the aid of those fertilisers, which is valued at £17 per ton, is carried with freight at one penny per ton. One of the essentials required by the agriculturist in the wet districts is the provision of good roads. Not only are those roads required by the agriculturist, but they are required by the people of the State as a whole. Under existing conditions it means that the bad roads necessitate three times the cost haulage should represent, were it not for their rotten state. Despite this condition of the roads, the freight on gravel is four times as much as that imposed upon manure! Is that fair and equitable? Can we continue under such conditions? If this matter does not receive attention and we do not get equitable and fair treatment, more comparable to the wheat farmers and the carriage of fertilisers, then God help the South-West.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The House will not take the question of good roads seriously.

Mr. MONEY: The House must do so, sooner or later. If it does not do so, we must stop.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is the position all right.

Mr. MONEY: We encourage people to develop their holdings and increase production. When they produce three or four times as much as they did formerly, they find out immediately that owing to the rotten condition of the roads, they cannot get their produce to the railway station. I would remind the House that this particular matter was placed before hon. members some three years ago, and again 12 months ago. How was the position met regarding the question of freights? The Minister for Railways says: "This does not affect my department; mine is the Railway Department. What has this got to do with me." We tried to impress upon him that he had a good deal to do with that question and that it affected the interests of the people generally. He met us with the reply: "See the Commissioner." I did not think it was right for a member of Parliament to see the Commissioner, but I did go to see him. What was the result? When the position was put to the Commissioner he said: "This is a matter of Government policy. 'M' rates affect the position and I cannot depart from that." It simply amounted to a case of battledore and shuttlecock. For my part, I do not know where we are. The latest concession is that they may reduce the "M" rates by 10 per cent. if we guarantee to take 200 tons at a time. That is as far as it has gone. It is for the Government and the House to

recognise the importance of this essential matter. Unless Parliament has lost control of the finances—

Mr. O'Loughlen: Which it has.

Mr. MONEY: —and of the administration of the country—

Mr. Pickering: That has been said, too.

Mr. MONEY: And it must be true to some extent, or the House would have agreed with the sentiments expressed three years ago and since.

The Minister for Works: The House can express a pious wish, but that does not put money into the Treasury.

Mr. MONEY: Quite true, but without good roads, we will not put money into the Treasury either. With good roads, we will put money into the Treasury. We cannot progress without these essentials. If we were able to produce ten times as much as we do the rotten state of the roads would prevent people maintaining communication with their railway station. If this continues they will have to give up producing. We cannot go on under existing conditions. We are foolish to try. I am astonished that the people in these districts do not come forward and say that unless they get the same essential assistance as is given to the wheat farmer, they will not, and cannot, go ahead.

Mr. Marshall: You advocate direct action again.

Mr. MONEY: I do not care what the hon. member calls it.

Mr. Marshall: You all suffer from it.

Mr. MONEY: It is not Western Australia that is waking up to the essential importance of good roads. In America, in consequence of the Roads Congress held in San Francisco in 1915, the people of the United States were brought to a realisation of the fact that they lost £27,000,000 per year on account of the bad state of the roads. What are we losing here, if it is costing us three times as much for haulage as it would if we had good roads? What did America do? Directly she recognised the essential nature of good roads, she passed a vote for a very considerable sum of money for expenditure in that direction. That vote has been increased to-day to £42,000,000. I want to bring this matter home to the Government. If they cannot afford to provide better roads, the same applies to the contrary. The Government cannot afford to have bad roads. If it is necessary to legislate or move motions in this House it will have to be done. Unless the Government take the matter up seriously and insist upon the provision of these essentials, we cannot go on. I admit something is being done; we want more to be done. We cannot do too much. Unless something more is done, I will not miss a single opportunity of emphasising the necessity for more attention being given to our roads. There is another aspect I desire to impress upon the House. I have already stated that it costs us three times as much for haulage as it should do, and I now state

that we have lost two-thirds of our crops in certain districts of Western Australia for the want of essential drainage. The producers have borne the cost for manure, ploughing, putting in the crop, harvesting and garnering and yet for the want of essential drainage, they lose two-thirds of the crop every year. Is that point stressed by the Agricultural Department? Have our officers paid attention to that aspect? I regret that there is no item provided in the Estimates for agricultural drainage. Two years ago that point was stressed here and the necessity for stressing the point remains to-day. We cannot afford to continue along these lines and we cannot afford to continue losing two-thirds of our crop every year. The Government should pay serious attention to these essential requirements of the South-West.

Progress reported.

BILL—PERTH HEBREW CONGREGATION LANDS.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Message received notifying that the Council had agreed to the Assembly's request for modification.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 8th November at 4.30 p.m.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 8th November, 1921.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE — WYNDHAM MEAT WORKS AND STATE SHIPPING SERVICE.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin, the time for bringing up the committee's report extended to the 22nd November.

QUESTION—NORNALUP DISTRICT.

Hon. J. DUFFELL asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay upon the Table of the House the report recently furnished by the Conservator of Forests, the Surveyor General, Mr. Surveyor Camm, and Mr. W. A. Saw on the Nornalup district?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION laid upon the Table the report referred to.

QUESTION—STRAITS SETTLEMENTS GOVERNMENT AND HON. J. SCADDAN.

Hon. A. SANDERSON asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay on the Table the correspondence referred to in the file relating to the invitation by the Straits Settlements Government to the Hon. J. Scaddan, laid on the Table on the 20th instant?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION laid upon the Table the correspondence referred to.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL HALLS, SUBSIDIES.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY asked the Minister for Education: 1, Was it the rule some years ago that, when a community in the agricultural areas were desirous of erecting a hall, the Government provided a subsidy of £1 for each £1 subscribed by the community?