

course I must admit that some of the men concerned in the unregistered clubs are really decent fellows; but there is no getting away from the fact that the unregistered is an irresponsible body, to which the concession should not have been granted. Their proposition is of no use in respect to the breeding of horses, is in fact nothing but a gambling machine. I have nothing more to say. I thank hon. members for having exhibited so much patience towards me.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 28th October, 1915.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Works: Midland Junction Abattoirs and Sale Yards, audited accounts to 30th June, 1915.

By the Minister for Mines: Regulation under the Coal Mines Regulation Act.

QUESTION—ABORIGINE CHILDREN IN MISSIONS.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): 1, How many children were cared for by each of the following Aborigines Missions for the financial year 1913-14, and the amount paid by the Aborigines Department to each of these missions for the support and education of the children for the same year:—Australian Aborigines, Beagle Bay, Ellensbrook Home, New Norcia, Presbyterian Church, Salvation Army (Girls' Home), Sunday Island, Swan Native and Half-caste, Drysdale River Aborigines Mission? 2, How many children are now cared for in each of the said missions? 3, What amount does the Government intend granting to each of the said missions for the current financial year for the support and education of their children? 4, Will the Government resume the former practice in regard to the report of the Aborigines Department, namely, to have the report laid on the Table of the House and printed, as all other departmental reports, for the information of the public? 5, If not, why not?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister) replied: 1,—

Name of Mission.	No. of Children, 1913-14.	Expenditure, 1913-14.
		£ s. d.
Australian Aborigines	35	470 8 2
Beagle Bay	143	800 0 0
Ellensbrook	4	34 19 6
New Norcia	43	350 0 0
Presbyterian Church	Unknown	144 9 1
Salvation Army ..	18	218 1 8
Sunday Island ..	62	200 0 0
Swan Native and Half-caste	43	509 12 6
Drysdale River ..	Nil	Not subsidised.

2.—

Name of Mission.	No. of Children.
Australian Aborigines ..	21
Beagle Bay	130 approx.
Ellensbrook	4
New Norcia	40
Presbyterian Church ..	Unknown
Salvation Army	14
Sunday Island	59
Swan Native and Half-caste	34
Drysdale River	Nil

Figures taken from last available returns.
No return from Beagle Bay for some months.

3.—

Name of Mission.	Estimated expenditure, 1915-16.
Australian Aborigines ..	£450
Beagle Bay	£400
Ellensbrook	£35
New Norcia	Nil
Presbyterian Church ..	Nil
Salvation Army	£210
Sunday Island	£150
Swan Native and Half-caste	£450
Drysdale River	Not subsidised.

4. The annual report will be laid on the Table of the House in due course. It has not been printed for two years. 5. Answered by No. 4.

QUESTION—OIL FUEL AND COLLIE COAL.

Mr. MALE, for Mr. Robinson, asked the Premier: As oil fuel suitable for internal combustion engines used in traction is now being made from New South Wales coal, will the Government take steps to ascertain if Collie coal can be treated to produce a similar product?

The PREMIER replied: Professor Wilsmore, of the Western Australia University, to whom the question was referred, states, "It would not be an economic proposition to treat Collie coal for the purpose of obtaining oil fuel only.

This heavy oil is a by-product obtained in the process of gas-making, and Collie coal does not contain sufficient volatile matter to enable it to be used for that purpose."

QUESTION—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BOARD AND CROP SALES.

Mr. PIESSE asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is it the intention of the Industries Assistance Board to compel settlers who assigned their crops to that board to sell their wheat by the 31st December next, irrespective of price offered? 2, If fair prices are not offered by that date, will the board extend the time during which the settler will have the right to sell?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, for the Minister for Lands, replied: 1, No; assigned settlers have been protected by a circular to buyers, which states, "Farmers will have a free hand to sell at a time and price considered suitable to them. Any contract entered into on the basis of London parity price, on date of contract, will be accepted as binding on the board." 2, If fair prices are not offered there is no obligation on the board to accept; but the board does not propose to extend the date at present, as it is essential that it should be in a position to handle as much as possible of the proceeds of the crops before the 1st February to meet guarantees for cornsacks, oil, twine, machinery, and wagons, given on behalf of assisted settlers.

QUESTION—RAILWAY OFFICERS' INCREMENTS.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Minister for Railways: What are the reasons for the refusal of the Commissioner of Railways to make public the list of officers who received increments at the last two reviews?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: This is not a matter of public interest, but one lying solely between the Commissioner and the employee concerned.

QUESTION — RAILWAY WONGAN HILLS-MULLEWA AND CARRIAGE OF MAILS.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that settlers along the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway have their mails sent per road from the Midland railway? 2, What is the explanation of this arrangement?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, The Postal Department declines to send the mails by rail.

QUESTION — COLLIE COAL, DANGER FROM SPARKS.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that scores of fires are being caused by sparks from the locomotives along the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway? 2, As the grass is quickly drying, will immediate steps be taken to minimise the risks of loss to farmers by their crops being burnt?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, Steps have already been taken in this direction.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE. MONEY BILLS PROCEDURE.

Mr. ROBINSON brought up the report of the joint select committee on Money Bills Procedure.

Report received and read.

BILL—PERMANENT RESERVE.

All Stages.

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

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [3.15] in moving the second reading said: I desire to point out that this is a very large reserve situated at Capel, on the Stirling estate. The portion that we are asking should be excised from the reserve is of about 50 acres. The reserve was

made for the purpose of tuart timber, but the northernmost angle of the reserve consists of limestone ridges on which no tuart is growing. As a matter of fact, a lime kiln was established there some time ago, and portions of the reserve had been leased for lime prior to the reserve being declared a class A reserve. I have discussed this matter with the leader of the Opposition. Our object in having a portion excised from the reserve is in order that we may take into consideration an offer made for the manufacture of cement in Western Australia. We have in the State to-day a gentleman from South Australia who declares that his party have behind them a capital of some £80,000 for the purpose of establishing cement works. They desire to have a lease of this portion of the reserve; but before anything can be done for the purpose of entering into an agreement with them, it is necessary that this portion of the reserve should be excised. We have several applications for leases for the manufacture of cement, one at Dongarra and another at Lake Clifton. This gentleman is asking for no concessions whatever. His one desire is that he should be permitted to take stone from this area at Capel, and he hopes to be allowed to proceed with the establishment of cement works and to take shell from the river by dredging, on which he will pay a royalty. It will also be necessary that he should use the slack of Collie coal in connection with the manufacture of the cement.

Mr. Smith: Has he submitted any draft agreement?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, we cannot consider that until we have power to deal with this portion of the reserve, which we ask should be excised from the large area reserved under class A for tuart.

Mr. Smith: Will you submit the agreement to the House?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot guarantee that. He is merely asking that he should be allowed to lease the land and pay rental, and that we should give him leave to dredge portion of the river for shell. He is not asking

for exclusive rights. There have been other propositions made which would tie the Government down in one or another way. Of late we have found great difficulty in obtaining cement, and I think it would be to the advantage of Western Australia if we could have cement works established in the district. The intention of the gentleman to whom I have referred is to establish portion of his works somewhere near Coffee Point if satisfactory arrangements can be made. I regret that the leader of the Opposition is not here, because I promised him I would introduce the Bill before Parliament closed. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [3.21]: It is only reasonable that the Government should ask the House to agree to the Bill. The Minister has explained fully the intentions of the Government, and I think the House will pass the Bill. It is intended to use the land for a good purpose, and it cannot be so used unless the measure receives the sanction of the House. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [3.22]: I agree with the last speaker. It is very necessary that we should have cement works established within the State. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading, for I feel sure the interests of the State will be strictly conserved by the Minister for Works.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—VERMIN BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of two amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. McDowall in the Chair, the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

No. 1, Clause 2, Subclause (1).—Add the following proviso:—"Provided that no proceedings shall be taken for the recovery of rates heretofore struck if, and so long as, the amount thereof is paid by equal annual instalments extending over ten years from the commencement of this Act; the first of such instalments to be payable at the expiration of one month from the commencement of this Act, and every subsequent instalment to become payable at the expiration of each succeeding period of twelve calendar months";

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In regard to these amendments sent down from the Council, I am going to move that they be agreed to. Hon. members will see that the two amendments will give satisfaction to all concerned. They are the outcome of an arrangement made after discussion with the Minister for Lands, as he virtually promised when the Bill was previously before hon. members. A satisfactory understanding has now been arrived at. Under it the back rates due will be spread over a period of years, and in addition a reduction will be effected in the annual rate to be struck. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I am pleased to find that both Houses are in accord in regard to these amendments. I notice that these amendments were passed in the Council without any dissent, in fact they were apparently agreed to by arrangement.

Mr. ROBINSON: I am very gratified that this amendment has been accepted by the Government. It is one of those suggested by the member for Gascoyne, and the fact that it is now accepted by the Government should give general satisfaction.

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

No. 2, New Clause.—Insert a new clause to stand as Clause 4, as follows:—"Sections forty-seven and forty-nine of

the principal Act are hereby amended by striking out in the said sections the words 'two shillings' and by inserting in lieu thereof the words "one shilling":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

This, like the other amendment, was accepted by agreement.

Question passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

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

BILL—ROAD CLOSURE.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [3.31] in moving the second reading said: This is one of the usual Bills that come down to Parliament every session, and which provide for the closing of certain roads in various parts of the State. This Bill provides for the closing of a lane in the Claremont road district which has been asked to be closed for the purpose of a subdivision of certain land. The lane is owned by private persons who also own the land on either side, and the intention is to subdivide the area, and this cannot be carried out until the lane is first closed. The request has been made that the lane should be closed, and it is necessary, owing to the plans having been deposited, that an Act of Parliament should be passed to allow the land to be closed. The second matter dealt with in the Bill is to close portion of Amos-street, Midland Junction. This is an arrangement brought about by the Midland Junction municipality and some private persons, Messrs. Keeley Bros. This has been approved by the local authority. Every consideration has been given to the matter, and I hope members will agree to the request. The third matter is a proposed closure in the municipality of

Northam. This is asked for for the purpose of effecting improvements at the east end of the Northam station yard, the Railway Department having found it necessary to close certain portions of a road extending from Charles-street to the east side of Morrell-street. An arrangement has been entered into so that gates can be placed on either side of the road, and the road will then be maintained by the Railway Department. The next matter dealt with is the closing of a certain portion of Bellevue-terrace in the city of Perth. This has been requested for the purpose of making improvements in connection with the King's Park. The request is made by the King's Park board and the Perth City Council, and I can assure members this has the sanction of the local authority, and no doubt will be satisfactory to the city. The next is the closure of Hillside-street, Mt. Lawley. This has been approved of by the Perth roads board. An arrangement has been made by which one portion of the road will be closed and another opened, which will be a great improvement to the district when carried into effect. All these applications, as far as I am aware, according to the information I have received, have been considered by the local authorities, and we must realise that the local authorities must know more about the opening and closing of roads than hon. members. I think it is our duty to comply with their request. I have examined the maps very carefully, and I am of opinion that by the closing of certain roads and the opening of other roads in lieu, improvements to the various districts will be effected. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [3.36]: I do not rise with any desire to criticise the Bill except to say that so far as that portion which relates to the city of Perth is concerned, I am quite in accordance with it, and, as the Minister has stated, it has been referred to the city council and the alteration is to take place in order to add to King's Park. The road runs parallel to the river along the top of the hill. At the present time it is

a wide road and there are houses only on one side, and at the request of the city council and the King's Park board this road will be now added to the King's Park and become cultivated. The owners are quite agreeable, and so is the city council. It is already surveyed, and I do not think there will be any difficulty. Many years ago, when the erection of Parliament House was under consideration, it was agreed that there should be, on the recommendation of the advisory committee, a street surrounding the whole of Parliament House, a chain and a half wide. At that time there was a narrow street running east and west, Wilson-street, only a chain wide. Ord-street was continued between the Observatory land and the High School. At that time, in order to carry out the idea of having a wide street surrounding Parliament House, Ord-street was closed and half a chain added to Wilson-street, making Wilson-street a chain and a half wide. It was agreed to continue a street of a chain and a half wide around Parliament House. Malcolm-street would have to be widened by half a chain being taken from Parliament House grounds, and the same with regard to George and Hay streets. The idea was not gone on with at the time. This request was revived by the city council and the King's Park Board a short time ago, so far as Malcolm-street was concerned. When they had word that this Bill was to be introduced into Parliament in connection with Bellevue-terrace a deputation consisting of the King's Park board and the mayor of Perth waited on the Minister for Lands with a request that the widening of Malcolm-street should be added to the Bill. St. George's-terrace is a wide street, and so also is King's Park-road and there is only a narrow neck—Malcolm-street—leading to the park of a chain wide, and the deputation asked the Minister for Lands to carry out the promise so far as the widening of Malcolm-street was concerned by taking half a chain from the Parliament House grounds and adding it to Malcolm-street. The Minister readily agreed to that, and he went further and said that

as far as he was concerned he would like to add the widening of Hay-street and George-street, but in order not to delay the introduction of the Bill these amendments could be introduced in another place so far as Malcolm-street was concerned. It may be suggested that there is no hurry over this matter, but a cupress hedge is planted along Malcolm-street, and if authority were given now, the city council could shift that hedge when the next winter rains were on. But if the Bill is not introduced until next year the winter rains will be over, and the city council will not be able to shift the hedge with security, and probably the plants would then be too big to remove.

Mr. Foley: What will become of the corner of the Public Works Department?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: There is a portion that would stand in the way.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You are dealing with a town planning Bill now, not a Bill for the closing of roads.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The proposal is only to take a portion of the land from Parliament House reserve and add it to Malcolm-street.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: That has nothing to do with the present Bill.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It was promised by the Minister that this should be added to the Bill in another place, and I would remind the Minister for Works of the promise of the Minister for Lands. As the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) states, a portion of the Barracks will stand on a portion of the land referred to, but it is not intended to alienate that at present. Later on when the Barracks are removed, that portion will be included in the street. The reason why I urge that this closure be added to the present Bill is so that the trees can be shifted during the winter, whereas, if the amendment is not made now these trees cannot be removed. I ask the Minister for Works to ask the Lands Department as to whether what I have stated is not correct, and if he will carry out the promise given by the Minister for Lands that the amendment will be made in another place for the widening of Malcolm-

street, and if he likes, George-street and Hay-street as well. But my request now is as far as Malcolm-street is concerned. It is the proposal of the Minister for Lands himself that Hay-street and George-street should be added.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle—in reply) [3.44]: I do not think the hon. member can expect me, at a moment's notice, to agree to what he has asked. It requires consideration, whether at this juncture I should agree to alter the Bill for the purpose of widening the streets named, and it may increase the expense. I do not think this is a matter of urgency, but I agree that possibly a few years hence it may be of advantage to have wider streets all round Parliament House. I suppose the City Council wish to grow trees on the area which it is necessary to allocate to the roads around Parliament House.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: They could not spend money on a Class "A" reserve.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: They could spend money to beautify any area in the district if it would be of advantage to the municipality to do so.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: If the Minister will look at the promise previously made I do not think he will see any difficulty in the matter.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will look into the matter. The hon. member would not expect me, without giving the matter consideration, to have this question introduced straight away. I will, however, make investigations.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

Mr. Carpenter in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Schedule:

Mr. ROBINSON: I am inclined to agree with the Minister for Works that it is impossible that the Bill as it stands in face of the ruling given by Mr. Speaker yesterday, should be added to in the direction named. It is desirable, how-

ever, that the question should be taken into consideration. This is part of our Parliamentary reserve which is bounded on one side by Malcolm street. If that street is widened half a chain it is obviously of benefit to Parliament House, in that it will broaden the approach and make it more imposing. The line of trees belongs to Parliament House and the Parliamentary gardener would have to move the trees, and not the city gardener. If these trees are dealt with now they could be shifted readily at the proper season of the year. Whether this can be included in the Bill or not I am not prepared to say. If the Minister will give effect to the suggestion which has been made either by altering the title of the Bill or introducing another Bill, it will be a good thing in my opinion.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The principal item is that of planting the trees. So far as the roads are concerned the matter is not one of urgency. These trees have to be planted in their proper places. I can only promise, seeing that the hon. member has stated that this is within the reserve of Parliament House, to interview Mr. Speaker, with a view to seeing whether the request of hon. members could be carried out, namely that the trees should be planted in their proper places as early as possible.

Mr. Robinson: This cannot be done until the winter time.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will bring the matter under the notice of Mr. Speaker.

Question put and passed;

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—PERTH MUNICIPAL GAS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [3.53] in moving the second reading said:

It is not necessary to make a long explanation in regard to this measure. It is a short amendment of the Perth Municipal Gas and Electric Lighting Act of 1911. A few years ago, when the municipality of Perth took the gas and electric works over from the Perth Gas Company, there was an Act passed of which this is an amendment. Now the City council work the electric light and gas as a separate department from the municipal offices proper, but in the passing of the Act of 1911 there was no special provision made, apart from the Municipal Institutions Act, for the signing of cheques for the gas and electric light department. Consequently, at the present time cheques have to be signed by the mayor, the town clerk, and the City treasurer. As the offices are situated in a separate part of the City and as I have already mentioned the department is worked independently of the municipal offices, this is found to be very inconvenient. In order to get over this difficulty it was necessary to introduce a small amending Bill. This Bill only provides for one matter. It provides that so far as electric light accounts are concerned the cheques are to be signed by the mayor, the general manager of the electric light and gas department of the City council, and the chief accountant, instead of, as provided under the Municipal Act, the mayor, the town clerk, and the City treasurer. In other words, so far as these municipal cheques are concerned, they are signed by the general manager and the chief accountant, instead of the town clerk and the City treasurer. Clause 3 provides for that, and Clause 4 simply incorporates part 25 of the Municipal Corporations Act which deals with all accounts and audits so that it will be under the same system. It is only a matter of different officers, in conjunction with the mayor, signing cheques instead of the town clerk and the City treasurer. I brought in this Bill at the request of the City council, and the Premier was good enough to afford me an opportunity of putting it through quickly, for which I thank him. It is purely a matter for the internal manage-

ment of the City council and for their convenience. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Message received from the Legislative Council in reply to the Legislative Assembly's Message insisting on its amendment No. 6, disagreeing with the modification added by the Assembly to amendment No. 4, and transmitting for concurrence an alternative amendment to No. 1.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Repeated Requests.

Message from the Legislative Council received and read notifying that it repeated its request for amendments Nos. 1 and 3.

In Committee.

Mr. McDowall in the Chair: the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

No. 1.—Clause 2: After the word "and" in line 2 insert "municipal and road board rates and licenses":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is my intention to accept this amendment, but I desire to point out that I cannot understand the action of some hon. members in regard to the amendment which they have insisted upon. There have been complaints repeatedly from those representing the farmers in this House against the Government charging 6 per cent. on the land rents, and now we find these same gentlemen in another place, not only insisting that the

Government shall take their land rents and charge the farmer 6 per cent., but that we shall pay their cart licenses, and pay their road rates and charge the 6 per cent. as well. Personally, I consider there was no necessity to insert this in the Bill, but in the interests of the farmers of the State it is realised that it is necessary for the Industries Assistance Act to be continued. That is necessary, not only in the interests of the farmers, but in the interests of the people who previously advanced money to the farmers. I am surprised at the Legislative Council, amongst whom there are so many representatives of the farmers, adopting the attitude they have taken up, and forcing this Chamber into the position of having to accept their proposal. I move—

That the amendment be made.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am glad the Minister is willing to accept the amendment, which only makes it possible for the Industries Assistance Board to pay such rates if they please. I cannot understand any roads board enforcing payment against settlers who had suffered a failure of crop. Any roads board which did take advantage of a settler under this clause would certainly deserve scant consideration.

The PREMIER: We are compelled to accept the amendment though we are as strenuously opposed to it as at the outset, because the Bill has reached that stage when the non-acceptance of the amendment would mean the loss of the Bill.

Mr. Foley: What is wrong with losing the Bill?

The PREMIER: That is not desirable. The amendment will not compel the Government to make an advance but it will make it very difficult for the Government to resist. When the roads boards discover the provision in the Act, they can make use of their powers under another statute which enables them to sell up a holding unless the rates are paid and, to protect our own interests, we shall have to pay up the farmer's rates and he will then have to pay the Government 6 per cent. interest for what, from the indi-

vidual point of view, is really deferred payment of rates. Thus, those who in another place claim to be conserving the interests of the farmers, are discriminating against the farmers by providing that if their rates are deferred they shall pay 6 per cent. interest on them.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You take the 6 per cent. interest on them.

The PREMIER: If anyone else gets his rates deferred, as people do for years and years, he pays nothing for the convenience. The amendment will affect the Government only to the extent that we shall have to provide a little more capital but we shall get 6 per cent. on the money for which we are paying 5 per cent.

Mr. FOLEY: The amendment should not be accepted. The alleged farmers' representatives in another place are making it certain that the local governing bodies will take steps to recover their money through the Government. I am about tired of giving my support any further for any part of the State to be exploited for the sole benefit of the farmer.

The Minister for Works: This is for the miners as well.

Mr. FOLEY: But until the Mining Development Vote is cut out, none of the board's money will be called upon. The Bill should be dropped and the onus thrown upon the farmers' representatives in another place. I believe the object of the amendment is not to assist the farmers but merely to harass the Government.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is unfortunate that the Bill has reached that stage that we must make the amendments or lose the Bill. For the protection of the Government the measure must continue but it is idle for a man to claim to be a friend of the farmers when he would support a provision under which the farmers' rates and taxes, which are really deferred payments, must be advanced by the Government as a loan and 6 per cent. paid by the farmer on them. The farmers will be the only people placed in that position. Anyone else will not have to pay interest. This is unfair.

Mr. James Gardiner: I see the amendment was moved by the hon. Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Bolton: That explains it.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 3.—Clause 3, after the word "or" in line 2, insert the words "Municipal and road board rates and licenses":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

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

Sitting suspended from 4.36 to 7.30 p.m.

LOAN ESTIMATES 1915-16.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 19th October; Mr. McDowall in the Chair.

Vote—*Departmental, £70,967:*

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [7.30]: I am sure that all hon. members after having sat till 9 o'clock this morning, will wish that the remarks one has to make in regard to the Loan Estimates should be as brief, as possible and to the point, and I feel that I should endeavour to be as concise as I can in dealing with the figures the Premier placed before us. At the same time we have not got a true appreciation of the position notwithstanding that in previous debates on the Estimates in general and on the Budget deliverance, we have touched more or less upon the Loan Estimates. It is necessary and unavoidable, although to some extent regrettable, that we cannot very well eliminate loan matters from the Budget debate. It has always been customary to refer to them to some extent and there has been no exception to the rule on this occasion. Hon. members will see that what I say is perfectly true, that there is a lack of appreciation

of the true position, and the outstanding features of the position to-day, gathered from the remarks made by the Premier when introducing these Estimates, were first of all that he himself and we as members had not the slightest idea where we were to obtain the money in order to complete the expenditure provided in these Estimates, amounting to over £2,000,000, that we also were not seized of what is undoubtedly a fact that the country to-day is being carried on pretty well exclusively by loan moneys, even to a great extent in the administrative functions of the Government, and more than anything else I think we do not appreciate the fact—and the Government will pardon me for saying this is more applicable to them than to any other section of the House—that every pound of public money we spend unwisely and every shilling of expenditure upon which interest is paid means a load for the whole lifetime of the loans which we float. It is not as if it were only a temporary expedient to carry us on for say 12 months but it extends to the full lifetime of the loans that are floated. Last year we leaned very heavily upon the Commonwealth Government and, if it had not been for the fact that the Premier was able to arrange that loan from the Commonwealth Government amounting to £3,100,000, of which he told us £1,800,000 had been paid to the 30th June last, we certainly would have been in a very parlous condition and must of necessity have closed down many of our works. In addition the Premier was able to raise some £800,000 by the issue of Treasury bills at from 4 to 4½ per cent. This issue, of course, meant practically that we were temporarily utilising the proceeds of these borrowed moneys to make up our deficit, and I am very much afraid we also do not appreciate the fact that the deficit has assumed such alarming proportions that the redemption or the making good of it, in other words the squaring of our finances will have to be spread over a considerable number of years, because it would be impossible to adjust them in any one year. With the additional fact that now pre-

sumably we will have to pay 5 per cent. for any money we raise, we must come to the conclusion that, as our expenditure increases when we have to meet the sinking fund contributions on the £14,000,000 of our loan indebtedness which as yet has not come under those provisions, it is hard to tell what the financial position of the State will be. It must of necessity make the burden we have to carry heavier by some degrees than it is at the present time. I noticed that the Premier in his remarks said our loan operations last year were restricted; in other words, we had spent only £2,500,000 of loan moneys during the financial year. Then he went on in his usual airy fashion to juggle with the figures somewhat; he added and deducted and subtracted and eventually he got a grand total of £1,175,000 representing the total loan expenditure of last year, and then he compared this amount with the expenditure of 1910-11 and proclaimed with satisfaction that they last year expended £175,000 less than we expended in 1910-11.

The Premier: If you are going to quote me, quote correctly. I did not say anything of the kind.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have gone through the *Hansard* report of the hon. gentleman's speech during the last hour or two.

The Premier: I said expenditure on public works.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That was the sum result and those were the words the hon. gentleman used. I will accept his amendment.

The Premier: I deducted those amounts for the purpose of assistance to industries and the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, a lot of deductions were made and brought down the grand total of loan expenditure to £1,175,000. I am not concerned as to whether the Premier did or did not expend last year £175,000 less than we did in 1910-11. I want to point out that this does not rebut the statement I have made from time to time that the present Gov-

ernment have undoubtedly been extravagant in their expenditure. Their extravagance does not altogether consist of spending more or less than other Administrations. I might go further than that and point out that it does not at all consist of the amount that is expended, but it does consist of how the money was spent and what value the State got in return for it. Last year in the £2,500,000 the Government expended, which was not the total for the different undertakings and works and the provision of capital in connection with the Agricultural Bank, there were many items that could reasonably have been held over till a more favourable season. For instance, the Government expended on workers' homes £97,500, on the extension of the implement works at Rocky Bay £18,000, on the sawmills £28,000, on some new plant in connection with the Boya Quarry which was very fully discussed last night £358, on new hotels £10,000, in connection with the metropolitan sewerage and water supply works £200,000, in connection with the new ferry boat for the South Perth ferry which was criticised so severely by the hon. member for Canning, something like £6,000, and on that fresh fish supply undertaking, the latest bantam of the present Administration in the way of cheapening the food supplies of our people some £3,000, or a total—saying nothing of the disastrous negotiations, contract and settlement of the Nevanas episode in connection with the freezing works at Wyndham—of £362,000, whilst at the same time our settlers were waiting for railways in order that they might be able to bring their produce to market, whilst increased facilities to our harbours were hung up and the South-West, which has been dwelt upon on many occasions as being the great opening for the further development of this State, still lies closed and is awaiting active movement on the part of the Government. The Premier went on to claim great credit for the assistance that had been given to farmers, and this was one of the items which he deducted in order to arrive at the mar-

vellous figures which he quoted to the House as loan expenditure on public works, and he has emphasised the fact that during last year he expended some £602,000 from loan funds on behalf of the farmers and settlers of this State. He claims on frequent occasions that they are not giving him that generous consideration which he is entitled to by reason of this expenditure. Whereas undoubtedly the Government have done a good deal for the farmers of this State in helping them through the troublous times through which they have recently passed, it is hardly fair to saddle that section of the community with the total expenditure which he names of £602,000. Of this amount land rents and water rates which were taken into revenue, amounted to £123,000, reducing the sum total to £479,000. This also includes the stocks of bran, pollard, wheat, etcetera, which are for sale and have been for sale, amounting to £200,000. We get this position, that the farmers and settlers, out of this £602,000, actually only receive £279,000, in round figures.

The Premier: Where do you get those figures from?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: From the speech of the hon. gentleman, and from other information which I get outside, as well as from the published accounts.

The Premier: Where did you get the £200,000 from?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: From people who know, from figures which are published, and from the speech of the hon. gentleman. To show, with regard to this matter, that I am on pretty solid ground, I would point out that out of £30,000 worth of flour and wheat shipped to South Australia a loss of £6,000, apparently, has been made. Flour was selling in this State at £18 10s. a ton, and yet we shipped it away to South Australia at £15 5s. a ton. The difference shows a loss so far as the State is concerned. Then again, in proof of the extravagant expenditure of the Government, let me draw attention to the fact, which is undoubted, although it is of course always a difficult

matter to place one's finger on the actual transactions in order to prove one's contention, that the day labour system on public works, which the Government have inaugurated and carried out to a larger extent of recent years than ever before in the history of the State, is responsible for a tremendous increase in the cost of these works and undertakings. I turn to the report of the Commissioner of Railways and see the new lines which were handed over to the Working Railways during the last financial year. They were the following lines—the Corrigin-Bruce Rock line which, according to that gentleman's report, cost £3,250 per mile to construct; the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line, which cost £2,630 per mile to construct in round figures; the Yilliminning-Kondinin railway, which cost £2,341 per mile; and the Brookton-Corrigin line, which cost £2,460 per mile. The average cost of these railways opened during the last financial year was at the rate of £2,547 per mile.

Mr. Green: They were amongst the cheapest railway construction in the world.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, there was nothing equal to it. Contrast that with the year 1911, which the Premier had the courage to make a comparison with, and the Katanning-Kojonup line, which was built at a cost of £1,196 per mile, the Wagin-Dumbleyung line, which cost £1,153 per mile, and the Greenhills extension, which cost £1,426 per mile. This work was done by contract, and most of the lines were equal in quality to the railways I have referred to.

The Premier: Nonsense. Read the report of the Commissioner.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The ex-Minister for Works (Hon. W. D. Johnson) extended this very Greenhills railway still further after he took office, and although it passed through practically the same country as the previous construction in our time passed through, at a cost of £1,426 per mile, it cost under the present Administration, £2,000 per mile. When I point out that this extension was the cheapest work that this Government have done under the day labour system, I think

very little extra comment is necessary to drive my arguments home.

Mr. Carpenter: Except that your Government did not complete their work, while ours did.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The day labour system stands condemned as such when adopted as the policy of a Government, and when not held in check by inviting tenders and letting works also by contract. Of course Ministers have abandoned their principles in this respect, as they have done in many other respects which have been pointed out on different occasions. I remember when the ex-Minister for Works, now the Minister for Lands, first took office in 1914, he declared himself in favour of private enterprises to this extent, that it would be a check upon departmental work and that he would not want for a moment to assist in stamping out private enterprise in the direction of public works in this State. That principle which was courageously voiced on that occasion, has gone to the wall. To-day we have the startling fact that inasmuch as the Government have absolutely pinned their faith to departmental construction, and owing to the "ca'-canny" system which has prevailed in our departments, the cost of construction has enormously increased.

The Premier: That is a general statement.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The figures I have given will take some refutation. Last year the increased expenditure on railways per mile was £600 on account of the extra cost of rails, the increase in the cost of sleepers, and also to some extent the increase in the cost of labour, but never yet have figures been produced to show that the increased cost could be double what it was in 1911, and it must be concluded by every thinking person in the community that this increased cost is due largely to the fact that we are not getting the same return from the wages that are being paid, as was being obtained under the system of private construction.

The Premier: And the men are loafing, I suppose.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Undoubtedly they are to a large extent, and are loafing under encouragement from the Government.

The Premier: Not in our railway construction.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Taking our public buildings, we find that we expended £90,000 in this direction from Loan last year. There is no check by public tender. In respect to the Wooroloo sanatorium, hon. members who know something about it and have seen the building, will bear me out when I say that the expenditure here has been most extravagant, and the cost of the work has been largely in excess of what it would have been had tenders been invited in the first place.

The Premier: Have you seen the sanatorium?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have had information from men who have worked on the job, who have informed me that the concrete work alone cost double what it need have cost under the system of construction which is now in vogue. It is necessary that we should have a check afforded by public tenders. I hope the House will insist, in no uncertain manner, that the day labour evil and departmental construction, which permeate the whole of the public service throughout the country, are put a stop to and the check afforded by public tenders being called, instituted, so that the department must compete in open markets with the contractors, and by this means enable the State to get a fair return from the public moneys which are being expended. There is very strong evidence of the lack of well thought out and complete plans in connection with our public works. I have only to instance some of the works, passing over the harbour constructions and the extensions we embarked upon, the new railway and road bridge at North Fremantle, of which this House has no details and no knowledge in detail, to show what I mean before I draw attention to the work which I have particularly in mind, namely, the electric power station at East Perth. This was a big undertaking which the Premier knows full well it was thought

at first could be erected at a cost of some £206,000. This was an undertaking which was going to produce electric current at .54d. per unit. The power house, however, is now going to cost from all accounts, and by the admission of the Government, something over £400,000, or almost double the original estimate. I am sorry to hear also that the current, in consequence of the increased cost of construction, will now cost .827d. per unit. We are to have a loss on the contract which we have completed with the Perth municipal council, and which extends over a period of 50 years, of nearly one-thirteenth of a penny per unit, instead of a small profit. Many items were not included in the original tenders. The Premier went home to London, and afterwards assured us that he had personally supervised the calling of tenders.

The Premier: That is absolutely incorrect.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He said he had satisfied himself that the contracts—

The Premier: I ask the hon. member to withdraw the statement. It is incorrect. I know the inference he is trying to draw from it.

The CHAIRMAN: The Premier denies the accuracy of the hon. member's statement that he supervised the calling of tenders in London.

The Premier: Yes, that is absolutely incorrect.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I accept the statement of the Premier, but would refer him to the reply which he gave me and which appeared in *Hansard*, wherein he said that tenders were called and submitted to him while in London.

The Premier: Tenders were called by our advisers before I reached London, and their recommendations were submitted through me to Cabinet.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am not making any inference. Let me suggest that the Premier should keep calm, and should not infer that other people have ulterior motives in what they may be

saying. Tenders were submitted to the Premier when he visited London.

The Premier: Tenders were not submitted to me.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And the contracts were placed in consequence of his recommendation before Cabinet.

The Premier: They were not my recommendations to Cabinet.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier said just now that he had recommended to Cabinet.

The Premier: I said that our expert advisers had recommended to Cabinet through me.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They submitted the matter to the Premier, and through him it was sent on to Cabinet.

The Premier: Yes, and it would have gone to the Agent General if I had not been there.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am not saying anything to the contrary. Why should the Premier become agitated about the matter? The fact remains that the works are to cost double what he anticipated they would cost, and what he led Parliament and the State to believe they would cost when he first mooted the scheme. It is perfectly true he mentioned in 1913 that there was increased cost in connection with these works over and above the figures which he had previously made public. It is quite true that the contract with the Perth City Council, which evidently has now to be carried out at a considerable loss to the State, was submitted to Parliament and was ratified on the 28th November, 1913. But I want to point out that Parliament should have been told on the occasion referred to that the increased cost of the works would result in an increased cost per unit of the power to be generated. So far as I can remember or can find recorded, not a word was uttered by the Premier to warn Parliament that the contract with the Perth City Council could not be carried out at a profit. No intimation whatever was given by the hon. gentleman that the cost of electric current was to be increased from .54d. to .827d. per unit, in consequence of the increased

cost of the works. The complaint I make is that at the time when Parliament was considering the request of the Government for ratification of the contract with the Perth City Council—in fact, some 10 days previously—the Commissioner of Railways had penned a minute to some responsible Minister pointing out that the Government would have to reconsider the question of the cost of the current.

The Premier: Ten days previous to what?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Previous to the day on which Parliament was asked to ratify the contract with the Perth City Council.

The Premier: Where?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Here in this Chamber.

The Premier: The Commissioner of Railways had nothing to do with the power house when the agreement with the Perth City Council was ratified.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Government evidently knew there was going to be some increase in the cost of the current because the cost of the works had increased enormously, but they came down to this House and got the agreement ratified on the understanding that 54d. was to be the cost of generation per unit. The memorandum which the Commissioner of Railways penned to the Government reads as follows:—

In the circumstances it may be perhaps desirable to suggest to the Agent General that he should discuss the probable ultimate cost of the plant with Merz and McLellan at this stage, and report thereon. Another feature which should receive consideration is the cost of production of current, originally estimated at 54d. per unit. It may be, in view of the larger capital cost of the plant, that there is some variation in this estimated figure.

That minute was written on the 12th November, 1913. I am taking the minute as an extract from a speech delivered during this session, but it is on the files as having been written on the 12th November, 1913.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the speech in this session's *Hansard*?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, Sir.

The CHAIRMAN: Then the hon. member has no right to quote from it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am not quoting a speech. I am quoting the Commissioner's minute from the files, as published. I am not reading from a speech, but from the reprint of the minute.

The CHAIRMAN: Anyhow, you have read it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes. I am sorry if I have exceeded my rights in this connection.

The Premier: Colebatch has said all this a dozen times over.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I can hardly conceive that the Premier, when he introduced the Bill ratifying the contract with the Perth City Council, was aware that this minute had been penned by the Commissioner of Railways 10 days previously. If the Premier was aware of it, then he is guilty of culpable negligence in not having put it before the House. I ask him to state whether he was aware of it or not. I cannot conceive that he was; but here the fact remains that the Commissioner of Railways was alarmed by the ominous increase in the cost of the work, and pointed out, at any rate to his Minister, if not to the Premier, that the cost of production of the electric current would probably be largely increased in consequence; and the Commissioner suggested that the Government should get in communication with the advising engineers.

The Premier: Is this what you call discussion of the Loan Estimates?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Certainly. All this is covered by the Loan Estimates. Every item I am referring to is on the Loan Estimates.

The Premier: Do not you think you could rise above that sort of thing?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am not going to rise above that sort of thing for all the gibes in which the Premier likes to indulge. Let him continue to gibe and scoff, and I will do my duty and place his conduct in its proper light, always being fair, so far as I can.

Mr. Green: Personalities again, which you resented so bitterly this morning.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am not personal. I object to this interjection from the member for Kalgoorlie. I have not indulged in personalities. I state facts. Let them be refuted. Will any hon. member, even on the Government benches, tell me that if the Premier knew of that minute he should not have brought it before the Chamber? On that occasion I congratulated the Premier on the agreement he had made with the Perth City Council. I supported the passing of the measure, but it was on the distinct understanding that the Government could produce the electric current, at any rate for the money we were going to receive from the Perth City Council. I used the expression that we were practically partners—that the Government and the Perth City Council had entered into a partnership in order that they might both utilise the power that this station would generate, and thereby reduce the cost. I never dreamt that the maximum which was placed in the agreement was not an assured maximum. Now we have sprung on us the fact that we, at any rate, unwittingly, have entered into a contract which will probably mean that for many years to come the national exchequer must bear a certain proportion of loss accruing on the current generated by the State for the Perth City Council.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I hope the Premier will prove it is not correct.

The Premier: It has already been proved.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Pardon me, it has not. I have read the Colonial Secretary's speech in the Upper House. The Minister replied very moderately and very much to the point, making a good speech; but he did not refute this position. This is the one exception I take to his speech. We have enormous expenditure, but we have not had the complete and well-thought out plan that we were entitled to get from these gentlemen, Messrs. Merz and McLellan, and we have not—

The Premier: There is no firm in the world can do the work better than Merz and McLellan can.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That may be so, but we have not had that consultation with our own experts, and that supervision by our own experts, which is necessary in order to avoid pitfalls of this description. All these matters are covered by the Loan Estimates. We are to be asked to pass a vote for further expenditure on every one of these items. Take the Wyndham freezing works. The select committee's report on that subject may or may not be considered by this House later, but I must say that the deplorable state of affairs revealed in connection with the freezing works, the incapacity and ineptitude displayed by the Minister responsible for allowing the country to make that unfortunate contract with Mr. Nevanas, filled me with alarm for the future of this State. Mr. Nevanas, who styled himself "Governing Director by arrangement with the Western Australian Government"! The whole thing seems to me a screaming farce.

Mr. George: Hear, hear!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Consider the terms of the charter of the "N2," which we discussed in the early hours of this morning. That is a piece of business which might hold up the administration of this country to the ridicule of all right thinking people. I intend to leave the details of the Wyndham matter for the member for Murray-Wellington, who naturally knows all about the subject, having taken the evidence in conjunction with some hon. members on the opposite side of the Chamber. I wish to point out, however, that in February last I congratulated the Government on the fact that at last they had been converted from the error of their ways and had decided to reverse their policy of no freezing works at Wyndham, and to make a start with the works at once. But the blunders made previously to that are in evidence. The first blunder of the Government undoubtedly was committed in accepting in its entirety the report of the then Minister for Works, Mr. Johnson, who

made a special trip to the North-West for the purpose of condemning the proposition. The Government's second blunder lay in waiting for four years, notwithstanding that they were in the meantime convinced of the original blunder they had made. Their third blunder is that to which I have just referred, and which has cost this country so dear, and the end of which, I am sorry to say, is not yet in sight. I might go on and point to the implement works. Again we are asked to provide money for the works on these Loan Estimates, or if not this year, at any rate further expenditure for the extension was proposed last year. But we have discussed that proposition to some extent already, and therefore it would be merely repetition if I indulged in further remarks concerning them. However, we had the manly and frank admission of the Minister for Works that great blunders have been committed in connection with the implement works, and I for one hope that the Government will not allow one penny more of capital to be sunk in the extension of the works.

The Premier: All those blunders taken together do not amount to so much as your blunder over the dock.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. gentleman has lost more money by the State Steamship Service alone than I ever spent on the dry dock at Fremantle.

The Premier: It is not what you spent, but what you cost the country.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier has lost more money in the one venture of the State Steamship Service.

The Premier: What did the dock land the country in?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The present Government spent £80,000 on the dock in the year after they took office. When I was Minister for Works I spent £40,000 on the dock. What is the latest blunder that the hon. gentleman and his colleagues have committed? If you please, they have landed this country in an expenditure of £140,000 on a new State steamship, a Diesel-engine vessel, now known as the "Kangaroo." Here let me point out to the Premier that he purposely

hookwinked Parliament when I asked him certain questions in connection with a proposed new steamer. It is on record that I asked the Premier whether it was true that Cabinet had decided to build a new steamer for the North-West trade, and, if so, what was the estimated cost. Thirdly I asked whether the Government would consult Parliament before entering into any contract or committing the country to any further expenditure. Surely those were reasonable questions to be put to the Premier as leader of the Government. More especially was it reasonable that I should ask these questions in view of the past history of transactions of the Government. It was natural that I should ask them to consult Parliament in future before involving the country in further expenditure. What were the Premier's replies? To my first question he replied, no; that the Government had not decided to build a new steamer, but that designs were being prepared by Sir John Biles for a new steamer to replace the "Western Australia," and to provide for the trade in chilled meat consequent upon the establishment of freezing, chilling, and canning works at Wyndham. To question No. 2 he replied that the cost could not be estimated pending the completion of the design. To question No. 3 he said that if it was eventually decided to build a steamer, provision would be made on the Loan Estimates in the usual way. I got the usual evasive answers specially drafted in order to mislead me and the House. Whilst I was asking these questions the Government were completing the purchase of the steamer which then had not left the builder's hands, and it is idle to quibble about the term "build" or "purchase." The Premier knew well that I was seeking information about a new steamer which the Government proposed to purchase, and whilst he was apparently denying the fact to this Chamber, he was pledging this country, without authority, to the immense expenditure of £140,000, for the purchase of the Diesel vessel.

Mr. Taylor: Can you find anything on the files to show that this steamer was

intended to replace the "Western Australia."

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not intend to search the files for anything of the kind. The hon. member also is quibbling. The Government had a right to take a broad view of the questions I asked, and when they knew that the information which was sought was of public importance they ought to have given it.

The Premier: Just as you gave information to the public in connection with the purchase of the Dalkeith estate.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I gave it at once. The Premier has not only flouted this Chamber, but the law as well. He has laid it down in no uncertain language that no Government should involve the country in expenditure without the approval of Parliament. But what does he do? He had no legal power to make this purchase and I hope the member for Canning will emphasise that point better than I am able to do. There is no statutory power to which the Premier can point by which he would be enabled to make this purchase, and there is no power that will justify the Governor in signing the warrant for the completion of the purchase of the vessel. The negotiations for the purchase of this vessel had been going on for months. On the 20th July the Colonial Secretary had an interview with Mr. Stevens, the manager of the State Steamship Department, and Mr. Denny who represented Sir John Biles, in regard to the proposal to purchase the new steamer. The papers which have been laid on the Table of the House show that Mr. Stevens pointed out that when it was decided to send the "Western Australia" to England for sale, it was also resolved to procure a new specially designed steamer for the North-West coastal trade. So that it will be seen that as far back as July last the Government had decided to procure a newly designed steamer for the North-West trade. Does that coincide with the answers given to my questions?

Mr. Taylor: There was no knowledge of the "Kangaroo" at that time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Will the hon. member contain himself for a while? He will have an opportunity of putting his own views of the question before the House. Does not the Premier stand condemned in the minute which Mr. Stevens wrote? He was misleading the Chamber.

The Premier: No.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If Cabinet had decided to procure a new specially designed steamer for the North-West coastal trade prior to the date on which the answers to my questions were given, were they the right answers to give?

The Premier: Yes, absolutely.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The same desire for secrecy, the desire to hide all their transactions until the matters have been decided, beyond recovery. On the 26th July Mr. Stevens attended a Cabinet meeting, if you please, and the 3rd August was the date on which I received the replies to my questions, that Cabinet had not decided to either build or purchase a new vessel. The funny part of the whole transaction is that we are to be asked to pass a vote of £200,000 to cover this unfortunate transaction, and Western Australia was unable to raise the wind when the purchase was completed. We had to call in the aid of private money lenders and mortgage £175,000 worth of inscribed stock, so as to raise the £140,000 which was necessary to make this unfortunate purchase. Another remarkable feature about the transaction is that in the first instance Mr. Stevens condemned the Diesel tramp boats as being unsuitable for the trade on our coast. He said that he could not recommend the purchase of a steamer of this kind because that would be a huge blunder and in the next breath he recommends the purchase of this boat. Why did he recommend that purchase? Because, practically, of the high rate of the oversea freights and also because the Government of Western Australia might derive the credit of being the first State to attempt to carry wheat in bulk to the Home markets. And, thirdly, which is, perhaps, the most important, it was to give Mr. Stevens a

chance to put our State Steamship Service, which he had described as being decrepit and obsolete, on a proper and favourable footing. In other words, the object was to enable Mr. Stevens to prove that he was a capable manager and that he could earn profits. It was a gamble, pure and simple, when we pledged the credit of this country for a large number of years to pay an excessive price for a boat of this description. Everyone knows that the market value of a vessel of this size is from £65,000 to £80,000.

The Premier: You are a champion!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I know something about the value of these tramp steamers.

The Premier: You know nothing about this class of steamer. I doubt whether you have ever seen one.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Any man can make a profit out of a new steamer with high freights. In any case this State has no right to sit down and gamble with the credit of the people, for the purpose of embarking on a venture which may or may not be profitable, according to the freight market. The Government have already run the State finances into a condition of chaos and on the advice now of a young gentleman inexperienced in shipping they embark upon an expenditure of £140,000, which is £40,000 or £50,000 more than was necessary, in order to secure a steamer they know nothing at all about, and they had to go to private money lenders to raise the wind to embark upon the venture, so that they might gamble upon the freight market. The Premier and his colleagues have committed a big error in entertaining the proposal for one moment. Whilst he and I might sit down and pledge our individual credits for a venture of this description, it is entirely outside the province of a Government to do so, and it should be condemned by every member of the Assembly when the item is challenged later on. There are three glaring matters which are covered by these Estimates, the one to which we have been referring, the Nevanas episode, and the Monteath pipe contract. All

these matters are covered by the Estimates and if hon. members stultify themselves by providing money to enable the Government to embark upon such ventures, then we are not fit for the positions we hold as representatives of the people. The Premier made some touching allusions to his difficulties in regard to raising money and the treatment meted out to him by the Commonwealth Government. I am quite in accord with his remarks in that direction. It was beyond the province of the then Minister to attempt to force the States into accepting his conditions, when it was suggested that they should borrow for immediate requirements of the State. To limit the borrowing powers of the States to so much per head of the population, and that the Prime Minister should be the final arbiter in this matter, and that he should also be the final arbiter as to the amount of loan moneys to be expended by the State, is going outside the functions of his office, and I venture to think the people of Western Australia will support the Premier in his repudiation of such terms. It seems to me that in respect to our finances we are in a parlous condition which will take all the astuteness and care of the Treasurer to overcome. His statement that we have only some £600,000 available at the present moment to meet our loan expenditure for the next nine months, less of course the £150,000 which he referred to as probably being required between this and the end of December next to cover the increase in our deficit, is sufficient to convince one that we must strain every nerve—

The Premier: You are not quoting the figures correctly. I said it was estimated to expend by the end of the financial year £800,000.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, and £600,000 the hon. member referred to as being the amount required to meet loan expenditure, and out of that £150,000 to cover the probable deficit, which would be recouped during the first half of next year.

The Premier: You are wrong. I said there was £600,000 available and that, with the £800,000, would make £1,400,000.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am sorry if I have not got it exactly right; however, the Premier will explain later. As I have said, it will take all the acumen of the Premier to guide the ship of State safely for the next six months. Still I commend him for having taken a firm stand in regard to the Prime Minister's suggestion. I do not believe in giving up our freedom to any man. I believe the right of the sovereign State is to develop its own country in its own way without the interference of the Prime Minister of Australia or any other authority. Here let me say I regret to see by the newspapers that South Australia apparently is not standing quite loyally to the arrangement the Premier announced in regard to the floating of loans.

The Premier: I think it is a redemption loan. That was understood.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But we do not know that it is a redemption loan. South Australia is about to place a loan on the London market of £2,000,000 at 5 per cent., issued at £99. I do not believe in one State getting in ahead of another. If they are going to join forces to raise the necessary money to carry on with, they should be loyal one to another.

The Premier: I can almost assure you that it is a redemption loan they are raising.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I would suggest to the Premier that he send a wire immediately, because the bald statement in the Press is simply that they are on the market for a £2,000,000 loan, notwithstanding that they are parties to the agreement you arrived at.

The Premier: There was no agreement.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: An understanding was arrived at that the States should join together to operate the money market.

The Premier: Outside of redemption loans.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There is nothing to show that it is a redemption loan. It looks as if they were trying to get in ahead of the Premier and go on the London market before him. As

an illustration of how our finances have been drifting, I may say that last year it took £700,000 from general revenue to make good the interest and sinking fund payment contributions of the State. Only four brief years ago the whole of those payments were made from the investments of the money; that is, the concerns in which the money was invested returned sufficient to pay interest and sinking fund on the whole of the loans of the State. We require to get back to that condition as quickly as possible. I admit it is a big task for any Government after four years of drift; but it is the duty of Parliament to endeavour to insist that all expenditure shall be cut down to the lowest possible amount. With strict economy in administration, in accordance with the Premier's advice to the Chamber when delivering his Budget Speech, and with the recuperative forces of the State we may, without any profit from the trading concerns, manage to get back to the advantageous position from which we have drifted. We require to know the estimated cost of all public works. I cannot understand why the department, with or without the knowledge of the Premier, has cut out column 3 from the back of this estimated expenditure from loan moneys, a column which gave the total amount of estimated cost of all public works. The Audit Act lays it down clearly that the Government must give these figures to the House. The figures were provided until we were turned out of office, but of late years this column has been deleted, possibly with the connivance of the departmental officers, possibly even with the connivance of Ministers themselves, although I hope this is not so. Before we are asked to vote a £5 note on a public work we ought to know exactly what the total estimated cost of that work is. We drift along, we get a vote for a couple of thousand this year, and for £50,000 next year, until it swells to hundreds of thousands of pounds, and no one knows what the ultimate cost will be. The Audit Act specially provides that all estimates of expenditure of loan money shall contain

the total estimated cost of the work upon which it is proposed to expend the money. I ask the Premier to see that that information is given to the House, and that the missing column is reinstated so that we may know where we are when the Estimates come before us. Take the Fremantle bridges and the harbour extension: has any member the slightest idea of the ultimate estimated cost of those works upon which we are asked to embark? Can hon. members form any judgment as to whether at this juncture, with the high price of money, we as representatives of the people are warranted in pledging the credit of the country in raising this money for works of this description? I say no.

The Minister for Works: For a bridge, yes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know that. Are we going to build the bridge?

The Minister for Works: It is a matter of compulsion.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Well then, I presume the Minister has already decided upon the site and the plan of the bridge. I saw that some cylinders were being cast at the State Implement Works for the construction of a bridge of this description, and that further cylinders were to be cast; but the Minister for Lands, when I referred to this matter a few short days ago, indignantly denied that anything further than tests was being made, and he asked "Do not you know that we must cast cylinders to test the ground before we construct a bridge?" I said I was not previously aware of such a process, that as soon as one begins to sink his cylinders he is in the constructive period of the work.

The Minister for Works: We are going to make sure of this.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: The Minister for Lands was right, according to the information given here.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of course, the engineers would not put forth such a theory; they would not say that all this was merely to test the foundations. It

is further progress in the sub-structure of the bridge.

The Minister for Works: Immediately the foundations have been tested it is necessary to proceed with the construction of the bridge.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Well, let us have the plan and the elevation of the bridge.

The Minister for Works: You cannot get the plan until the foundation is tested.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, we can. We must know the class of work we are embarking upon, and we must know, as far as is reasonably possible, the ultimate cost of the work. If the Minister thinks I am going to be a party to voting in dribs and drabs what may ultimately run to hundreds of thousands of pounds for a work of this description, without full knowledge of the details, he is much mistaken. I will certainly oppose it. Even as the information in regard to that much lamented dry dock was placed before Parliament and sanction obtained ere a penny was spent, so I ask that the Government shall submit their project to the House before asking us to vote.

The Minister for Works: You did not do that with the dock; you made investigations. That is the case here.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, it is not. Cylinders are being cast. That is construction of the substructure. I will advise the Minister to go into the question of the cost of that cylinder which he says is being cast for this purpose. We want to see what the Minister is going to carry out, before we vote the money. Again, I advise him to give us some sketch plan, at any rate, of the proposed harbour works at Albany, Bunbury, and Geraldton.

The Premier: Why are you so anxious to see the plans of the bridge before passing the vote?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Because I want to know the class of work you are carrying out.

The Premier: You want to see whether it conforms to your pet policy of allowing the shipping to come up the river.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Possibly that is one reason, although such a thing has never suggested itself to me. I am not worrying about Fremantle in that respect.

The Premier: Fremantle is not worrying about you.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Or about the Premier. He is going to let the shipping come up the river. When the time is ripe it will come up the river in spite of the Premier.

Mr. Carpenter: They think a lot of the Premier at Fremantle.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, about as much as they think of the hon. member. Both the hon. members' names are mud at Fremantle.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think this has anything to do with the Estimates.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier in his remarks in defence of the enormous expenditure embarked upon from Loan Funds during recent years contended that loan expenditure per head of the population must of necessity be greater in Western Australia than in any other State of the Commonwealth, and he quoted the State of Victoria as having at one period of its history lost £1,000 a day for every day in the year in running its railway system, and he argued that Western Australia, with the intense development necessary, the large area to be covered, and the sparse population at present, which we hope will increase year by year, must of necessity spend more loan money per head of the population than the more thickly populated States such as Victoria. I agree with the argument, but are we blindly following in the footsteps of Victoria, because on one occasion that State had an excessive loan expenditure? Should not we learn by her experience to avoid this pitfall? It is hard to induce young countries to take notice of the experience of older countries, but when we know the history of Victoria's railway construction and its lines which in many instances had to be closed down, no one can wonder that Victoria for a time made a considerable loss on its railway system. I think we ought to learn by this experi-

ence and avoid falling into the same error. I venture to say that, notwithstanding the trouble, financial and otherwise, through which Victoria passed that State has never even approached per head of population even in its earliest days what Western Australia has achieved at the present time.

Mr. Green: No, because you can throw a pocket handkerchief over Victoria.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The highest record of public indebtedness in that State was reached in 1913, not when so much was being lost on running the railway system, and then it was only £45 per head of the population, as compared with our little net debt of £102 per head of the population.

Mr. Carpenter: Do you think that is a fair comparison?

The Premier: It is, for party purposes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have told the Premier how far I agree with him and I am prepared to make this statement for party purposes: when we bear in mind that in 1911, the year the Premier is so fond of quoting, the national indebtedness of Western Australia was only £73 per head of the population—that was the last year we were in office, and it was after we had initiated and carried out a huge public works policy—and in the last four years it has gone up to £102, or an increase in that period of £29 per head of the population, we can see how extravagant the expenditure has been. I could carry out work so much better, cheaper, and more expeditiously than the present Government, and I have proved it. It is the difference between a good manager and a bad manager. The loan expenditure per head of the population was as follows:—1911, £5 6s. 10d.; 1912, £7 19s. 3d.; 1913, £11 2s. 6d.—we had reached the hey-day of our borrowing and spending policy inaugurated by the Labour Government in that year; 1914, £9 0s. 2d., and in 1915 we got back to £7 11s. 7d., but still that was some 50 per cent. higher than in the last year of the last Liberal Administration. Certainly we are getting near to the danger zone, and I ask hon.

members to give close attention to these Loan Estimates and the subsequent Loan Bill which will be submitted for their consideration, the amount of which I think can, with safety, be reduced by at least half a million of money, and to bear in mind that Western Australia is easily the leader, so far as loan expenditure and loan indebtedness are concerned, of all the States which comprise the Commonwealth of Australia.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You are singing a wonderfully different song from what you did when you were in office.

The Premier: You have forgotten your policy speech.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am inclined to vote not one penny more than is absolutely necessary to carry on, for the next 12 months, works of which we have previously approved. Many of the items on the Estimates and in the Loan Bill schedule, although desirable in themselves, can well stand over until more favourable times return to us.

Mr. Carpenter: You want stagnation.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: In conclusion I trust that hon. members will bear in mind that they have a duty to their electors and far and away beyond that, a duty to the people as a whole, which far exceeds the duty to party or the duty to the Government whom they support.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [8.51]: Having listened to the leader of the Opposition, who dealt exhaustively with the estimated expenditure from General Loan Fund, it is quite unnecessary for me to attempt anything on the same lines. In glancing over the Estimates, I was struck by the fact that in the metropolitan area no less a sum than £300,000 is to be expended, while in the whole of the South-West, there is provision for only one-third of that sum—£110,000.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You have not one-third of the population.

Mr. Green: You are doing well; you ought to compare it with the goldfields.

The Premier: Take a national view of it.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The fact is so glaring that I could not refrain from commenting on it.

The Premier: You ought not to make it the keynote of your speech.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Where are the Government spending this £110,000? The Harvey irrigation scheme accounts for £45,000. This is an excellent scheme, and one which will recoup the Treasury handsomely, and my only regret is that the amount is not larger. It would have been better for the State as a whole had this amount been greater and had less money been expended on the power house. Then there is an amount of £25,000 for the Bunbury harbour. Anyone who knows anything about the hinterland of that part of the State will admit that this expenditure on the harbour is absolutely necessary, because Bunbury should be a great port. If this hinterland is going to take its place as a great producing area of this State, a thorough scheme of harbour improvements should be prepared. I do not pose as an expert, but the present scheme does not appeal to me in the slightest. When the Bunbury harbour is as it should be, all the wheat grown from Popanyinning southwards will find an outlet through this port. There is also a small amount of £40,000 for the little Wagin-Rowelling line, and this exhausts the items for the South-West.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: What about rolling stock?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Decentralisation is the only hope for this great State. There is nothing which I can recommend the Government more earnestly to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest, than the need for decentralisation for the benefit of the State. In spite of the remarks of the member for Leonora, I reiterate the fact that the South-West is eminently suited for dairying, and that there are more than two cows and two tins of condensed milk in the district. This is an extraordinary statement coming from a member who once took a flying trip through that part of the State, probably at night. It is heartbreaking to think that any member could display

such lamentable ignorance on such a matter. Rome was not built in a day. These huge tracts of forest took thousands and thousands of years to grow, and it is impossible to denude that country of the timber and turn it into smiling dairy farms in a few years. Recognising this, why do members of this House endeavour to persuade the people of this State that we have no land suitable for the great industry of dairying? The Wyndham freezing works contract has lately formed the subject of a most exhaustive inquiry, and the evidence has been printed for the information of members. To-night I do not intend to dilate upon the evidence, but I must state that, in my opinion, the Government by breaking their charter agreement with Nevanas & Co. in respect to the steamer "N2," absolutely ruined any chance the firm might have had to construct the freezing works at Wyndham. The evidence tendered was contradictory.

The Minister for Mines: The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. WILLMOTT: It was both contradictory and unsatisfactory. The Wyndham freezing works are, however, on the Notice Paper.

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

Mr. WILLMOTT: Then I will not continue on the subject. The report is there for the perusal of hon. members, and I hope they will read it and judge of it for themselves. Later on, when we are dealing with the items, I shall have something to say as to the purchase of the Diesel engine vessel, the "Kangaroo."

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [9.0]: I shall confine my remarks to one phase of the Loan Estimates, namely, that dealing with the expenditure of public moneys without authorisation. There are several items on the Loan Estimates which answer to that character and which will be dealt with in detail as they come along. I wish to make a general statement on the subject so that members of the House may know what the effect of the statutes of the country is in connection with the expenditure of these

moneys. In Section 30 of the Audit Act we are told how moneys are to be used. It says—

No money shall be drawn from the Public Account except in the prescribed manner.

The next section deals with the question of how moneys are to be appropriated by law and says—

No money shall be drawn from the Public Account except under appropriation made by law or by the authority of the Governor.

The Minister for Mines: In going into technicalities the hon. member is taking rather an unfair advantage of us, in the absence of our legal adviser.

Mr. ROBINSON: The Minister will find my remarks in print in his hands before the return of the Attorney General. I feel sure that the Attorney General will agree with the constitutional aspect. These remarks are mainly made for the guidance of the Premier, and in order that members of the House may know how to deal with the question. I now wish to refer to Section 56 of the Audit Act which deals with the keeping of separate accounts in respect to general loan fund. It says—

A separate account shall be kept in the Treasury of all moneys which shall be raised by way of loan upon the public credit of the State, and which shall have been placed to the credit of the Public Account. Such account shall be called "The General Loan Fund," and shall be kept under separate heads as are specified in the several Loan Acts under the authority whereof the moneys were raised.

It is not lawful to spend any loan moneys except under the authority of an Act. It is to that statement I have been leading up. That is set out in Section 58 in the clearest possible words, which do not require even the Attorney General to interpret them. They only require to be read by a man who can understand the plainest English that has ever been written. This section states—

It shall not be lawful for the Treasurer to expend any moneys standing

to the credit of General Loan Fund, except under the authority of an Act.

The subsection of this section reads—

Such Act shall show the nature of the proposed work or other object of the proposed expenditure, and the amount of the proposed expenditure in each case and the total amount proposed to be expended for such work or object.

That last sentence deals with the column which the leader of the Opposition says has been omitted for some time from the Estimates of the Government. It is, therefore, clear from this section of the Audit Act that it is unlawful for the Treasurer to spend loan funds without legislative authority.

The Minister for Mines: We do not.

Mr. ROBINSON: It may be said, possibly, that expenditure has not been incurred from loan funds, that the money is taken from consolidated revenue and is intended to be picked up at a later stage by the flotation of a loan.

The Minister for Mines: Our authority may be belated, but we generally get it.

Mr. ROBINSON: In this respect I refer to the Constitution Act where it states that all duties and revenues shall form one Consolidated Revenue Fund. Section 64 provides that—

All taxes, imposts, rates, and duties, and all territorial, casual and other revenues of the Crown (including royalties) from whatever source arising within the Colony, over which the Legislature has power of appropriation, shall form one Consolidated Revenue Fund to be appropriated to the Public Service of the Colony in the manner and subject to the charges hereinafter mentioned.

The next section is one dealing with Appropriation and Tax Bills, and the source from which they shall originate. Section 66 states—

All Bills for appropriating any part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, or for imposing, altering, or repealing any rate, tax, duty, or impost, shall originate in the Legislative Assembly.

This shows that the strings of the purse shall be held by this Assembly and not by any one member of it.

The Premier: So long as I hold the purse you can hold the strings.

Mr. ROBINSON: I would like to hold the strings of the purse of the Premier. I would pull them pretty tightly for him.

The Premier: There is nothing in it.

Mr. ROBINSON: The Constitution Act also shows that no money, vote, or Bill is lawful unless recommended by the Governor. This means that no individual member of the House can bring forward a measure of taxation or a measure dealing with money; such Bills of necessity require Government introduction. Section 67 provides that—

It shall not be lawful for the Legislative Assembly to adopt or pass any Vote, Resolution, or Bill for the appropriation of any part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, or any rate, tax, duty, or impost to any purpose which has not been first recommended to the Assembly by Message of the Governor during the session in which such Vote, Resolution, or Bill is proposed.

The Premier: So long as a Government get a Message during the session, it is lawful.

Mr. ROBINSON: Will the Premier wait until I have finished reading all the sections? Section 68 provides that—

No part of the Public Revenue of the Colony arising from any of the sources aforesaid shall be issued except in pursuance of warrants under the hand of the Governor directed to the Treasurer.

Now comes the last section to which I shall refer which provides that the Consolidated Revenue Fund shall be appropriated by Act in the Legislature. Section 72 says—

After and subject to the charges hereinbefore mentioned, all the Consolidated Revenue Fund shall be appropriated to such purposes as any Act of the Legislature shall prescribe.

I submit from these sections that the law is this, that not one penny can be taken

from the Consolidated Revenue Fund without the authority of the Legislature and a warrant of the Governor. No money can in fact be taken from revenue without an Act of appropriation.

The Premier: What section is that?

Mr. ROBINSON: The Premier will find the particulars in Sections 64, 66, 67, 68 and 72. In this House, about two months ago, I drew the attention of the Colonial Treasurer to the fact that it was common talk in Perth that money was about to be spent in the purchase of a new steamer or steamers, and the Treasurer replied across the House to me, "We are doing more than thinking about it; we are going to do it."

The Premier: That is frank.

The Minister for Mines: There is no secrecy there.

Mr. ROBINSON: No, possibly not, but it is done without the authority of this House. That is my point. If at that time the Treasurer knew he was going to expend a large sum of the public moneys of the State in the purchase of steamers or in any other object it was his duty to come to the House, as Parliament was in session for authority, and in all respects take us into his confidence on the subject.

The Premier: I did.

Mr. ROBINSON: This purchase is, however, made and completed before the House is allowed to know anything about it. We had no power to vote upon it. We should, in right, be asked to vote and appropriate the funds of the country before any expenditure is incurred. We should be told here what is going to be done, and should be shown the nature of the proposed works, the object of the proposed expenditure, the amount of the proposed expenditure, and the total amount to be expended. These are the words of Section 58 of the Audit Act. This is the law of the country, but the Treasurer has defied the law of the country; he is above the law of the country. He has spent this money through the Treasury without the approval of the House or without the vote of the House. He now comes along with these Estimates.

The Premier: What has your party done in the past?

Mr. ROBINSON: I have nothing to do with what has gone before. I do not know whether people have done illegal acts of that kind on a previous occasion. If they have done so it has nothing to do with me. There are members in this Chamber who can answer these questions, and state whether there is any truth in them or not.

The Premier: I have it all here; I am going into the matter.

Mr. ROBINSON: From my knowledge of the Premier and after reading his public utterances I should say he has always been accustomed in answering allegations from the opposite side of the Chamber to say, "You did it before." I know nothing whatever about what has gone before, or what other Governments have done. I do know that the Premier cannot spend the moneys of the country without the consent of the House, and I know by the items which appear in the Loan Estimates that moneys coming under the heading of loan have been expended by the Premier without the approval of the House. Why does he ask members to approve of this expenditure after it has been incurred? There are many cases in which the head of the Government could come along to the House and say, "I have had to take this responsibility; I now ask the House to bear with me and approve of what I have done." But this could not be so while this House is in session. The expenditure which has been incurred by the Treasurer on the lines I have indicated during this session of Parliament has been, I say, illegally and unwarrantably incurred.

The Minister for Mines: It must be recognised that the Executive must have some power of initiative in this matter.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle) [9-15]: It is not often that we have Loan Estimates submitted to us with such a note of uncertainty attaching to them as on this occasion. The Premier has told us, and told us truly, that while he is submitting these Estimates and asking the Committee to approve of them, there is no certainty as to how soon, if at all,

the money will be available to carry out the works proposed. One can only sympathise with the Treasurer and with the Government, and express the hope that in spite of the difficulties, which we all recognise, the way will be open at least to enable him to obtain enough money to carry on those essential works which must be kept going unless the State is to stagnate. We have to face the fact that for some years to come money must be dear. There can be no cheap money available for many years to come. The present disastrous war is making its financial effects felt already. No matter how soon the war may end, or how long it may last, those financial effects must be felt for years after the conclusion of peace. The enormous amount of capital being destroyed will have to be replaced, and that will mean a keen demand for money all over the world at the conclusion of the war.

Mr. James Gardiner: South Australia is paying 5 per cent. now.

Mr. CARPENTER: Yes, and we shall be lucky if we get money for 5 per cent. I doubt very much whether for the next few years we shall be able to borrow money at anything like par for 5 per cent. I need not stress the point that there comes a time when the use of borrowed money becomes unprofitable. There is a point beyond which one cannot borrow money for the carrying out of public undertakings, and I question very much whether some of the works appearing on these Loan Estimates will prove profitable if we have to pay 5 per cent. for the capital to carry them out. I note with some interest that our Treasurer, among the Treasurers of other Australian States, has been unable to make satisfactory arrangements with the Federal Treasurer. I am not at all surprised at that, because it must also be recognised that at this particular time the Federal Treasurer has immense obligations to face.

The Premier: That was not the trouble.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Premier has told the people of this State that one reason, if not the sole reason, why he could not arrange with the Federal

Treasurer for the granting of further loan moneys to this State was that the Federal Treasurer insisted upon attaching certain conditions to the lending of money. I do not know whether the Premier has told us the whole story. I am going to urge him, if he can do so without breach of confidence, to let the people of this State know exactly where they stand, because the question of getting money from the Federal Treasurer—either this Treasurer or the Treasurer of some future Federal Government—is apparently going to depend upon the Federal Treasurer's supposed, or assumed, right to say to the State to whom the Federal Government lend money, "We will only lend it to you provided you expend it in a way we suggest or direct."

The Premier: The Federal Government have never said that.

Mr. CARPENTER: There have been rumours that to some extent the Federal Government sought to take up that position.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am glad of the Premier's denial, because what has been rumoured would be a serious thing.

The Premier: The Federal Treasurer said that he should be able to decide how far we should go, not in what direction; not how we should spend; but how much we should spend.

Mr. CARPENTER: I heard it rumoured that attempts were made to direct how the money should be spent. I should strongly object to that. Of course this is the old question of Federal versus State; and perhaps I may be pardoned for saying that from the inception of Federation I was never in favour of the debts of the States being controlled by the Federal authorities, because that meant, as one could not help foreseeing, some Federal control of State borrowing.

The Premier: Not necessarily.

Mr. CARPENTER: It meant that to me, because we have never had a proposal yet for the taking over of State debts by the Commonwealth but the Federal Treasurer has said, "We must

have some control of borrowing; we cannot take over existing State debts and allow the States still to go on piling up further debts; there must be some limitation." As soon as we admit that, good-bye to our power of developing our own territories.

Mr. James Gardiner: I prepared a schedule dealing with borrowing on that basis.

Mr. CARPENTER: From the point of view of the State itself, it would be absolute folly to submit our developmental policy to Federal control, for approval or otherwise, in order to get some supposed advantage from borrowing through the Federal Government or from the Federal Government.

Mr. James Gardiner: Practically a schedule of works is submitted to the people from whom the State borrows now.

Mr. CARPENTER: But that is a different thing. I understood the Federal Government would act simply as an agent or go-between, and I should object in such circumstances to the imposition of conditions upon our policy. I much prefer to see the States do, as I understand they are attempting to do to-day; that is, to act independently of the Federal Government, but in co-operation with each other.

The Premier: There is no doubt the people of Australia require some control over their debts; but the trouble is that the Federal Government always want to impose conditions which have nothing to do with the control of debts.

Mr. CARPENTER: For that reason I have never been very sanguine that the provisions of the Federal Constitution for the taking over of State debts would confer much benefit upon the States.

The Premier: Under the proposed arrangement all the States would borrow through the same source. Now each State practically takes its turn.

Mr. CARPENTER: That goes to show there is some kind of co-operation between the State Treasurers, and that is what we want. We do not want to see anything like cut-throat competition.

The Premier: All the States agreed that under present conditions there should be only one borrower. That one borrower sought to impose conditions which were considered unreasonable.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am glad to have the Premier's assurance that the rumour I referred to was not correct, although he admits that there was some suggestion on the part of the Federal Treasurer as regards borrowing, that the amount advanced should be applied to certain works which the Federal Treasurer himself would suggest should be carried out.

The Premier: I did not say that at all. No works were mentioned.

Mr. CARPENTER: I listened with some interest to the remarks of the leader of the Opposition. There is a familiar ring about his speeches on Loan Bills. I have heard the same old statement trotted out time and again, until it has become somewhat like a recitation. I suppose by this time those of the public who take an interest in financial matters and read the report of the hon. member's speeches, must be perfectly familiar with the time-honoured argument he has been trotting out for the past four years, more particularly as regards the difference between the amount of money spent by his Government and the amount spent by the present Government. It has been pointed out again and again that the bulk of the expenditure imposed upon the present Government was authorised by the leader of the Opposition when in office.

The Premier: We have not yet completed the programme he outlined.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No. You neglected it. You tinkered with sawmills and steamers and so on.

Mr. CARPENTER: If the leader of the Opposition had remained in office, he would have spent the same amount of money.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No.

Mr. CARPENTER: Perhaps I should not say that. Take the railways, one of the most costly and least profitable, so far, of our forms of investment—

we are simply carrying out the boom policy for which the leader of the Opposition and his colleague the member for Northam were responsible. That boom policy has cost the State millions; and, according to the reports of the Commissioner of Railways, the responsibility for the greatest part, if not for the whole of the present deficit rests with the railways rushed by the Liberal Government through this House in double quick time just before the elections.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Last year the whole of the loss on agricultural district railways was only £33,000.

The Premier: That is only for one year. That amount would not cover the loss made in the previous year.

Mr. CARPENTER: I do not say a word against the building of agricultural railways. I am merely pointing out that during the previous Government's boom policy certain railways were rushed through shortly before the general election. When a change of Government came about, in spite of the boom, the present Administration did their utmost to continue railway construction. We had the spectacle time after time of our friends opposite rising to ask us, "Why do not you build the railways faster?" They now admit that it was an expenditure necessarily unprofitable for some time to come. The mistake made was doing too much at once. A mistake perhaps made by the present Government lay in allowing themselves to be rushed ahead too fast. I believe that although for a time money will be lost on those agricultural railways, they will eventually become profitable. As I have said, there is a stage at which the expenditure of loan money becomes unprofitable, and we have reached that stage in carrying out the boom policy of the preceding Government. The leader of the Opposition took upon himself to object to a provision made in these Loan Estimates for works connected with the extension of the Fremantle harbour. I wish to offer a few words in reply. I know the member for Sussex has held some peculiar views on this question, and I need hardly say that

those views are quite out of harmony with the views of anybody and everybody who has to do with the carrying on of the work of the Fremantle harbour. I regret that the report of the Fremantle Harbour Trust has not yet been submitted to Parliament. The report of the Railway Department is a much larger and more complicated document, and yet it can be laid on the Table of the House in time for the discussion on the Annual Estimates. On the other hand, the report of an important business concern such as the Fremantle Harbour Trust, in the property of which more than 1½ millions of public money is invested, will not be available before the close of the session. It is not because the secretary has been absent. Last year in their report they wrote a special paragraph with reference to the delay, and it was pointed out that the reports were ready in October but that the delay then was due to the Audit office. The Government should write a special minute requesting them to push along with their reports, so that Parliament might have an opportunity of seeing them before the end of the session. So far as the last five years' operations are concerned, the results have been highly satisfactory and I think I am correct in saying that of all the business concerns in the State this is one of the biggest and one of the most profitable.

Mr. James Gardiner: What is it paying now?

Mr. CARPENTER: It pays interest, 3½ per cent., and 1 per cent. sinking fund. The Trust have rebuilt wharves from revenue to the extent of £100,791, and they have created a renewal fund for wastage amounting to £10,000, and in addition have paid into consolidated revenue £105,846. These figures show that the concern is profitable, and I do not think the leader of the Opposition is quite justified in raising objections to the necessary expenditure for the extension of a concern like that. I know the Commissioners are in the position of being able to fix their own charges. We can with confidence say to the Committee that whatever the Government propose with regard to the extension of the

harbour, there need be no fear as to the financial result. It is necessary because the business of the harbour demands that the extensions should be made. When the question of extending the harbour came to a head some four years ago, the Commissioners recommended certain extensions which they stated would meet the requirements for the next five years. Those extensions have been largely carried out. Four years of that time has elapsed leaving only one year of the period stipulated to run, and what I want the Treasurer to notice is that the next step in harbour extensions must take at least three years. It will be necessary for the new bridge to be built, the railway will have to be deviated and the road will have to be deviated, while the existing railway bridge will have to be removed before additional accommodation can be provided. I do not think that the most sanguine Minister for Works would say that that work could be done inside three years. This year fortunately, or perhaps unfortunately, the wheat cannot be rushed down to the port as was done two years ago. It will have to go down gradually because it will not be possible to get the vessels to take it away. Two years ago, it was marvellous the way in which the Commissioner of Railways and the Harbour Trust handled the harvest. If we get another good season next year, the harbour will be taxed to its utmost capacity and there will be a strong agitation for its extension, and it will not be possible to carry out the work in the time which I have stipulated, namely, three years. I am going to ask the Committee not to listen to any suggestion that the work should not be authorised. I am glad to find that the Government have been carrying out the work on hand with a fair amount of expedition. Provision is made for improvements and there has been provided £125,188 and of this amount £75,000 will be spent in 1916 and £50,188 will be spent in 1917 in the work of deepening the harbour to 36 feet. I suppose it is not necessary to remind hon. members of the fact that vessels have passed our doors because the depth of water

has not been sufficient. That has been a bad advertisement not only for the harbour but for the State itself. If we cannot provide facilities for the shipping, which is coming here and demanding to be accommodated, we shall lose a considerable trade.

The Premier: There have not been many.

Mr. CARPENTER: I do not think there should be many more. I think I can speak for the Treasurer and say that he is quite alive to the fact that that state of affairs should not continue. The work which has been done so far, although it has entailed a large expenditure has not provided much additional accommodation for ships. We have built a thousand feet of additional wharfage, but we have also removed the sea jetty which gave accommodation for 900ft., so that our net increase has been only 100ft. The provision for the bridge to which the leader of the Opposition referred is £100,599, and unless members think that this work is being rushed as the leader of the Opposition tried to make us believe was the case, I would remind members that the expenditure for next year is to be the modest sum of £5,000. That will be utilised for completing tests for the foundations and I believe also there will be a small amount for the survey of the deviations. The bulk of that money will be expended in 1917, the amount set down for expenditure then being £95,599. I am not quite satisfied as to what is being done in connection with the tests. I should like to see some outline given of the plans of the proposed bridge. I take it that the engineers responsible for suggesting and carrying out this work must have an idea of the character of the bridge and where it is intended to erect it. It is unthinkable that they would go on testing the foundations and go so far as to put down a cylinder unless they had some idea as to where the superstructure was to be.

Mr. James Gardiner: It is near Billy Goat Farm. All those foundations were tested by the late Mr. O'Connor before the secret purchase of land.

Mr. CARPENTER: No complete tests were made.

The Premier: If they were completed, we ought to dump out a few of the officers of the Works department.

Mr. CARPENTER: All I know is that that was supposed to be a suitable site for the bridge.

Mr. James Gardiner: All the land was tested there.

Mr. CARPENTER: I notice there is an amount on the present Estimates for the purchase of land for railway extensions and improvements at Perth and Fremantle. I do not know whether that means that the Government are purchasing additional areas of land on the South side of the river in connection with this extension.

The Premier: I do not propose to tell you; we have not got all the land that is required.

Mr. CARPENTER: I do not think there is much to be obtained by further secrecy because it is in everyone's mouth that the bridge is to be near a certain place.

The Premier: But the railway has to be deviated.

Mr. CARPENTER: It is in everyone's mouth that the Government have to purchase land for that railway, and I thought that the fact that the money was on the Loan Estimates might indicate that the Government had at least obtained an option over the land they wanted. I cannot imagine that they would allow the site of the bridge to be known before making provision for the purchase of the land. I believe that what the present Government have done in connection with the carrying out of the harbour improvements has met with the approval, not only of the members of the Harbour Trust themselves and the officers, but of all who do business with that concern. In spite of the warning from the opposite side, I sincerely hope that no attempt will be made to interfere with the carrying out of a work which will be one of the most profitable in the State.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [9.45]: I recognise that in the present state of the finances, it is futile to expect a

large amount of work in any particular portion of the State. On a comparison of the Loan Estimates we can clearly see that £750,000 less is set down this year than appeared in the previous year, and we are given to understand that there is a possibility of the expenditure being further reduced by some £333,000. The Premier has told us in no uncertain voice we cannot be sure that even the money for the estimated expenditure can be secured. If the money is secured, I trust that at some future time the amount for the development of goldfields and mineral resources will rise in ratio with its decrease during the last two years. In 1914-15 the amount set aside under this heading was £108,000. Of that amount only £95,654 was spent. The amount set aside this year is only £74,000, or a decrease of £34,000 or nearly 33 per cent. The industry is just as great to-day as ever, and the necessity for the exploration of the back country is greater. I trust that when better times return, the falling off referred to will be more than made up. The amount proposed to be spent on the development of goldfields and mineral resources this year is only one-seventh of that set aside for agriculture. I do not wish to make invidious comparisons, but I think no member will contend that the agricultural industry is superior to that of gold mining. The only difference is that the gold mining industry is self-reliant, and in consequence has not required the financial help which it is anticipated will be required by the agricultural industry. I must totally disagree with the remarks of the leader of the Opposition in respect to this comparison between the amount of loan moneys per head in Victoria, as against Western Australia. In the heat of party politics, when discussing the Estimates, sometimes we are prone to withhold from the question that consideration and calm thought which the country expects of us; and I take it the country expects from the leader of the Opposition a good deal more than is expected from the ordinary member. We were told that Western Australia has 900,000 square miles

as against the 87,000 square miles of Victoria, that our State is ten times as great as Victoria, that we have only one-fifth of the population, and that in consequence the duty allotted to every man in this State is fifty times as great as that allotted to a man in Victoria; that we have not the population, and that the only way to open up our country is by borrowed money. It was a most absurd comparison to make.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: We have a liberal Agricultural Bank to maintain.

The Premier: And water supplies all over the place.

Mr. GREEN: In the recent war loan the amount subscribed by Western Australia was merely peppercorn as against that furnished by Victoria. In Victoria are many affluent people who have been settled there for the past 50 or 60 years, and who are satisfied to let their money out to the Commonwealth at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Those conditions do not obtain here. I would like to say a word about the Esperance railway. All will remember the strenuous fight put up by goldfields members here on five occasions in favour of the Esperance railway. The Bill was passed last session, yet, instead of an earnest being shown by the Government of their desire to build the railway, we find that not a penny was expended on it up to 30th June, 1915. There is a strong feeling of dissatisfaction on the goldfields in regard to this.

The Premier: Not so strong as some would make it out to be.

Mr. GREEN: I admit there are malcontents in every community.

The Premier: While they were singing out we were actually doing the work.

Mr. GREEN: If only because every man on the goldfields has a member of Parliament's baton in his knapsack, there are to be found up there malcontents prepared to make a noise without occasion. But the Premier must see that after the project having come five times before the Chamber—

The Premier: We did not get too much credit for having brought it up

five times, and for eventually getting it passed.

Mr. GREEN: Well, what is the good of having passed the railway if we do not take some action? Up to the end of June not a penny had been spent.

The Premier: We said we would finance it in July, which we did.

Mr. GREEN: The Kukerin-Lake Grace railway was passed at the same time as the Esperance. On page 9 of the Loan Estimates, we find it set out that the Kukerin-Lake Grace railway is to be completed by the 30th June, 1916, whereas in regard to the Esperance railway it is only proposed that a depot shall have been built at Esperance and some railway material forwarded by that date.

The Minister for Works: Which will cost more than the whole of the Kukerin-Lake Grace railway.

The Premier: And before the Esperance line is built, a jetty must be provided.

Mr. GREEN: In regard to the intersection of the Minister for Works, it is not borne out by the Estimates; for we there find that it is proposed to spend £25,000 on the Kukerin-Lake Grace railway, and £18,000 on that at Esperance.

The Minister for Works: Including £2,000 for the jetty, it will be £20,000.

The Premier: You forget that we built a road which is actually the bed for the railway.

Mr. GREEN: The Kukerin-Lake Grace railway, one of many constructed in the agricultural districts, is to be completed by the 30th June, 1916, whereas the Esperance line will not be completed, or anything like it, by that date.

The Premier: Half the earthworks are completed.

Mr. GREEN: The people at Lake Grace will be able to get in their harvest next year, while those at Esperance will be disappointed.

The Minister for Works: Some of them in the Lake Grace district will still be 40 miles from a railway.

The Premier: Some of those making the greatest noise on the goldfields

are doing it in the interests of others who are only dummyming down at Esperance.

Mr. GREEN: Settlers who cannot get their wheat to a port, particularly after the railway has been promised, must necessarily complain. From the total amount set aside for railway construction and railway purposes this year—£685,975—we can deduct £120,000 for additions and improvements on opened railways, part of which will be expended on the goldfields, and this leaves a total of £565,000 available. Yet the whole of the amount proposed to be spent on the goldfields is only £15,000. It is up to the Government to see that this line is constructed by the 30th June next.

Mr. James Gardiner: All the railways will have to go a bit short this year.

Mr. GREEN: The Kuerin-Lake Grace railway, passed at the same time, will be finished by 30th June next.

The Minister for Works: It was passed before the Esperance railway.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: No, afterwards.

Mr. GREEN: The understanding was that the Esperance railway would be built at the earliest possible date, and I consider it a breach of faith that it is not contemplated to have the line finished by the end of June next.

The Premier: How can we construct that in the same time as the other? It is not connected with our present system.

Mr. GREEN: The Ravensthorpe railway was built very quickly under almost similar circumstances.

The Premier: No, they were booming a proposition then.

Mr. GREEN: If any district requires to be boomed, it is Esperance. I feel that the Government have overlooked us in this respect, and I trust the vote will be excessed to meet the requirements.

Mr. THOMAS (Bunbury) [10.5]: The leader of the Country party raised some small measure of objection to the amount to be spent in the metropolitan area as compared with the amount proposed for the development of the South-West. While I do not propose to assume a dog-in-the manger attitude, on general principles I agree with the hon. member

to this extent that decentralisation has been preached by all parties when not in power, but when they have had a chance to give effect to those principles they have never seemed to eventuate. There must be something in the influence of the power that surrounds the throne in Perth that leads Ministers away from doing their duty in this direction. I have sometimes complained that people in the metropolitan area have many facilities, luxuries, comforts and provisions for their needs already far in advance of what the people in the country can ever hope to have, and that the provision of greater facilities for the metropolis will not in any way help to develop the State or to make it that prosperous and self-reliant country it ought to be. Western Australia is like every other State of the Commonwealth, the head is growing much bigger than the body, and we cannot look forward to a healthy development if this continues.

Mr. James Gardiner: That is the curse of Australia.

Mr. THOMAS: It is going to be the curse of Western Australia.

The Premier: You ought to be the last one to make that complaint. Your district is getting more than it has ever got. We are giving it the natural port.

Mr. THOMAS: I thank the Premier for the grant of £25,000 for harbour extensions at Bunbury. For three long weary years, I was fed up by the promises of the present Minister for Lands who was then Minister for Works. He used to draw most rosy pictures of what he was going to do for Bunbury. Every time I saw him the plans were nearly completed and stupendous sums were going to be spent on the harbour so that in the near future Bunbury would be abounding with prosperity. The three years went past and, as a result of these magnificent promises, the Minister, up to the time he relinquished the Works office, spent £2,000. I believe the Premier is determined that at last we shall receive some measure of what we are entitled to. I have pleaded in this House many times that something definite and tangible should be prepared

for the development of the South-West—that fair province which is the garden of Western Australia. It seems astounding to those who know that country best that Ministers have visited this favoured locality and have waxed eloquent about its magnificent prospects and potentialities, but that all we have received has been fair words and fair promises. I have heard the Premier state that he had been greatly impressed with the South-West.

The Premier: I will dilate on what we have done in the South-West during the last three years. Your memory requires to be refreshed.

Mr. THOMAS: The Premier is rather touchy to-night.

The Premier: You are making a flank move.

Mr. THOMAS: I deny that. No member can claim to have been more loyal to his chief than I have been.

The Premier: I was alluding to the fact that we have given more attention to the South-West than any other part of the State, and you are attacking us for it.

Mr. THOMAS: The Premier cannot bring forward facts to substantiate that statement. The Minister for Lands, speaking on the Estimates of the Agricultural Department, said—"I recognise that we have a great asset in the South-West, but it is almost heartbreaking to get that asset developed." What has the hon. gentleman done so far to develop it in any way whatever? While millions of money have been found to develop other portions of the State, to wit, the wheat growing areas—

Mr. Smith: At 6 per cent. interest.

Mr. THOMAS: We in the South West are quite prepared to make every undertaking revenue producing. While millions have been invested in very doubtful prospects sometimes, we in the South-West have been allowed to stand over while more clamorous communities get all they require. The Minister for Lands went on to say—"The settlers who have good land do not seem to realise the enormous possibilities of intense culture." Where the opportunity has been provided for intense

culture in the South-West that part of the State has responded magnificently. We have one little place down there called Barrakup, where previously the land was held in large areas but which has recently been cut up into small areas of from 50 to 100 acres. Whereas in this area the large estates proved an entire failure, the position is altogether different with the small areas, for the people are going in for intense culture and are amongst the most prosperous settlers in the community. A man with 1,000 acres in the South-West finds the task of developing and making use of it, generally speaking, greater than his means will permit. He would need to be a wealthy individual to have any chance of making a success of a large area down there, with the result that many of the people are carrying big loads in the shape of bank advances, while the people in the small areas are doing well. I know of one man who holds 25 acres of land. He has a comfortable home built upon it and I have every reason to believe he is in a prosperous way. He tells me that he never can succeed in using the whole of his 25 acres. This property is developed by means of putting a small portion of it under irrigation with the owner's plant. He goes in for mixed farming, a high class of poultry, pigs, and grows a small crop for his own use. This sort of thing could be carried on to a greater extent if the Government would only make some small provision at an early date for development of that nature in the South-West. We have many examples of what can be done in that part of the State. We have before us the example of the Brunswick State farm, and the value of the land in that district. I have visited the farm on several occasions, and although the Commissioner comes in unfortunately for much criticism I think his criticism only emanates from those who least understand his task and the ability which he is displaying in carrying out the work allotted to him. The member for Leonora (Mr. Foley), with his usual irresponsibility, made charges concerning the South-

West. He said that the money spent on the South-West Commissioner was wasted, and twitted the South-West generally with being the next thing possible to a complete failure. Something was said in reply by the member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott), and the member for Leonora went on to say that there were only two cows or so left in the South-West. I want to show how the people with the least possible knowledge of a case will persist in indulging in unjust criticism, more especially in regard to this area, and in regard to this public servant who is doing such good work. It has always been a mystery to me why the various Ministers for Lands have not done something for the South-West. When the Hon. T. H. Bath became Minister for Lands I had great hopes, bearing in mind his knowledge of the land question and his appreciation of the difficulties of the man on the land and of the necessity for developing the country, that he would do something, and that out of his knowledge would spring a definite and tangible scheme upon which we might lay the foundation stone for the establishment of a really prosperous South-West portion of the State. As it was, however, he left office, and the South-West remained the same as it was before. Unless some other members from that part of the State insistently and persistently knock at the door of the Minister from time to time that work will never be completed.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): What do you want done?

Mr. THOMAS: It was said, I believe, by the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) that we are no nearer producing butter to-day in any quantity than we were 10 years ago. I generally pay a good deal of attention to the utterances of that hon. member, but I am afraid on this occasion I must dissent from his views. I am perfectly satisfied that once that hon. gentleman has seen some of the growth which has taken place in that part of the State, he will be loud in his praises of its possibilities. It is true that the dairying industry in this State has not made the strides it should have

made, and that in Busselton, where a butter factory existed, either through bad management, or lack of initiative on the part of the farmers, the promoters of the institution were obliged to close it down. The record of the Bunbury butter factory is, however, very different. This institution was established in 1908 and has been going on continually ever since. In August and September this factory turned out 22,000lbs. of butter, the finest in Western Australia, factory or otherwise. I am not going to say that we have reached the limit of our capabilities in this direction.

Mr. James Gardiner: It is a good start.

Mr. THOMAS: During the seven years that this factory has been established, something like £50,000 worth of butter has passed through the establishment. Further than that, there are some 200 people who are supplying the butter factory with cream. The clients of the factory extend as far out as the electorate of the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George). The dairying industry is what saved Victoria at the time that State was passing through the great slump. The industry there was assisted by a system of bonuses, and was gradually developed until at last it brought Victoria into a state of prosperity. In the South-West we have an absolutely certain and adequate rainfall. A drought has never been known there and the entire area is larger than the whole of Victoria.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): There is no summer rainfall down there; it is quite a different proposition to Victoria.

Mr. THOMAS: We have the area, the rainfall and one of the finest climates in Australia. We have also got the soil, which is absolutely fitted for the promotion of the dairying industry.

Mr. George: If the Government would give us lime our land would be most valuable.

Mr. THOMAS: I heartily endorse those sentiments of the hon. member. With our great resources for wealth, our districts offer a sound investment for

the capital of the State and an absolutely certain return. Ministry after Ministry comes along, and little or nothing is done for the development of the South-West. We have been questioned about the value of the land. It will, perhaps, interest the Honorary Minister when I tell him that, taking acre for acre under cultivation in the South-West with a similar acreage in Victoria, the average potato crops in the South-West exceeds that of Victoria by 30 per cent.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): One farm in Bacchus Marsh will produce more than the whole of Western Australia can produce in that way.

Mr. THOMAS: Taking the average production for the acreage that we put in, and the average production for the acreage put in in Victoria, I say that our potato crops show a production of 30 per cent. greater than that of Victoria. The development of the South-West has been phenomenal. I have heard the Commissioner for that part of Western Australia say that there is land thereat the present time which has never been approached for potato growing, and that it is richer than anything we have yet developed. He says that, taking the finest specimens of soil in Victoria, there is land to be found in the South-West of greater value. That is a valuable opinion to come from a man who knows not only this State but Victoria as well. I have merely instanced the potato growing qualities of the South-West in order that members and the people of the State may realise what can be done in that direction. I now want to outline a scheme by which I think the dairying industry can be developed to an enormous extent. Before coming to that, however, I should like to say that, so far as I can ascertain, while cows are being supplied to settlers in other parts of the State on the time payment system, under which a small farmer, by paying half rent, can eventually become the owner of the cows and at the same time be paying off the purchase price in instalments and making a considerable profit himself, the farmers around Bunbury and Brunswick have not been

able to get that assistance for themselves.

Mr. George: I believe that is correct.

Mr. THOMAS: At any rate I am given to understand that this is the case. If the Government would give a little more generous assistance in that direction in the way of supplying small farmers with dairy stock on the time-payment system, the butter industry could be developed very rapidly.

Mr. Smith: I understand the Government have offered very excellent dairy stock from the Brunswick farm.

Mr. THOMAS: I do not think it would be taxing the resources of the State too much to ask the Government to embark upon a small scheme in that direction, and I am sure the Premier would be laying the foundation stone of better things to come. We have been told a thousand times over about the million of money we are sending away to the Eastern States every year for dairy produce. The amount is increasing year by year, and is over a million now. It seems a crying shame that with such a fair province as we have in the South-West—land specially provided by nature for the development of an industry of this description—time should go swiftly on and on without anything being done. The very stuff of which we ought to be producing our own requirements and exporting to the rest of the world, we are importing.

Mr. George: We have a fine class of men in the South-West, too.

Mr. THOMAS: I believe we have the sturdiest class of farmers in the South-West. Because they are not all crying to the Government for help, they have, I think, been overlooked. While I remain in Parliament I shall take every opportunity of ensuring that they are not overlooked in future.

The Premier: You have not overlooked their interests, but you have overlooked what the Government have done for them.

Mr. THOMAS: Before leaving the question of butter factories I wish to express the hope that the £1,000 a month turned over in the Bunbury butter factory may speedily increase to £2,000

£4,000, and even £10,000 per month. The Government have a valuable estate at Harvey, recently purchased; and I have been approached by many individuals desirous of being informed when the Government are going to cut that estate up. I do not for a moment profess to be an expert in these matters, but I have been told that a man and his wife and family can make a very decent living on 30, 40, or at the most 50 acres of that land.

Mr. George: If the man gets good land.

Mr. THOMAS: I bow to my friend's experience in that matter. The prospects are particularly good because of the possibilities of irrigation in the Harvey district. I appeal to the Premier—who I fear is not in a very generous mood to-night—to put even £10,000 on these Estimates for a little development scheme to benefit the South-West. I have discussed with the member for Irwin the success of what he calls his ready made farms in the Midland district. With some slight variations that scheme could be applied to the South-West, only at much smaller expense. I am quite satisfied that we shall never settle a big population in this country while we spread the people over vast areas, giving each settler a couple of thousand acres and then having to build a railway in order to bring him in touch with the consuming public. In the South-West the Government have the re-purchased Harvey and Henty estates. We might adopt something of the Midland Railway Company's system. I suggest, as a basis, that an area of 40 acres for each farm should be set aside, and cleared. Perhaps experts would say that only half the area should be cleared, but I leave the details of the scheme to be furnished by those who understand the matter better than I do. A ring fence should be put around the 40 acres, and a reasonable homestead erected. A homestead for a man making a start in life could, I presume, be built of wood for £150. Possibly a small water supply in the shape of a well would be necessary, and if some other little assistance is needed it should be provided. Possibly

cows might be supplied to the settler on the time payment system. Payment for the farm might extend over a liberal period: say 30 years, if necessary. For the first three years of the settler's tenancy he might hold the farm free of any charge whatever. I believe that £10,000 would provide 20 farms on the lines I have suggested. If the matter were attended to properly, and if due care were taken in the selection of the individuals to be placed on those farms, I am convinced that the annual expenditure of £10,000 which I propose would be increased so as to bring about the settlement of a vast number of people in the South-West on closer settlement lines.

Mr. Smith: Where are you going to get the settlers from?

Mr. THOMAS: Any number can be obtained from Great Britain.

Mr. Smith: But the present Government discountenance immigration.

Mr. THOMAS: That is an unjust, unfounded, and ridiculous charge. If we want to settle immigrants in a climate and other conditions most nearly approximating to the climate and conditions of England, what better part of Western Australia could be selected for the purpose than the South-West? Assistance has been given through the Agricultural Bank towards the development of the wheat-growing areas. Various measures have been passed through this House for the assistance of farmers. I may point to the Industries Assistance Board. I am the last individual in the world to do or say anything that would interfere with or hamper the legitimate development of this country. I have a sincere admiration for the farmer, and am as anxious to assist him as any member of the House can be. At one time I was one of the most enthusiastic advocates in Western Australia of the Agricultural Bank as well as of other forms of assistance to agriculturists. But it is beginning to dawn upon me that the effect of continual assistance in a certain direction, joined with pleasantly hopeful anticipations that are created of what is going to be done in the future, may be to produce a class

of people lacking the virility that is necessary in order to make a successful settler in this or any other country. I have said before in this House that certain sections of our Western Australian community display a growing tendency to lean up against the Government all the time. I have no objection whatever to a first start being given, but to lead settlers to expect a series of continual helps, year after year, is only to sap the virility of the individual: and the result may be to involve the State in difficulties from which it will have trouble in extricating itself. I have discussed this matter with one or two individuals well able to judge, and they agree that if we extend the policy of assistance too far the time will come when that policy will have an effect the opposite of that which we expect, and that we may live to regret the methods we have introduced. The theory is excellent and the intention underlying it is commendable from every point of view, but unfortunately theories do not always work out in practice as we would wish them to do. My theory is that the little area to be allocated should be fenced, and a home built on it of a modest character, and with it all the requisites to enable a man to start on the producing stage at once. I would like to see the whole expenditure capitalised and a long period given for the repayment, and for the first three years the settler should be free of all charges. When these areas were being advertised for sale, it should be so arranged that a reliable officer of the department should have all the individuals before him. In many cases there will be hundreds applying for a block and the best man of all should be the one selected to have the block. A man should be asked whether he was married and had a family, and had stock, horses and cart, and when it was found that there was a hardy individual of the right type and that he had sons or even daughters who would help him, and that he would be the most likely individual to make a permanent success of the undertaking, he should be selected without fear or favour from the lot. He should be

given the opportunity on the understanding that it should be like the laws of the Medes and the Persians, unalterable, and he should be told that he was getting a ready-made farm, that he would have to go on it and that the assistance he was getting then would be the only assistance he would receive, and that if he failed to make a success of it he would be dealt with as any other business man or money lender might do under similar circumstances. The man would be given the best of possible chances but he would have to understand that it was the only chance. It would be of no use for the man to get tired and to make an *ad misericordiam* appeal to the Government for a bit more. He must make good or go. Those are the principles upon which business men succeed, and they are the principles upon which men will succeed on the land. If a man knows he is up against it and he must succeed or go out, there is no further appeal for him. The best that is in him will come out, and if he devotes it to the proposition he has taken in hand it will be a success. Everyone agrees that that is the nucleus of a scheme which might ultimately be extended over a vast area.

The Premier: Are you taking into account that a ready-made farm would require irrigating?

Mr. THOMAS: I am not sure that irrigation would be necessary in every case, but if the benefits of irrigation could be extended to such a settlement, a man with 40 acres, with the magnificent winter rainfall which we enjoy down there, and the blessings of irrigation for summer crops, could grow enough to make him wealthy. The Premier is as enthusiastic an advocate of the good quality of the soil of the South-West as any man in the State. He finds no fault with the scheme. Then why not find £10,000 to put a number of these men on such farms immediately.

The Premier: We have found £54,000 for one irrigation scheme already.

Mr. THOMAS: The Premier is providing £45,000 for an irrigation scheme at Harvey, £40,000 for a railway from Wagin to Bowelling, and £25,000 for

the Bunbury harbour, amounting to a little over £100,000.

The Premier: Altogether £165,000.

Mr. THOMAS: That amount is for the whole of the South-West, and for about three items in the metropolitan area the Government are finding £300,000. How is Western Australia going to be developed into the fine country it ought to be while we are building up the city and doing nothing to the country? If we were spending £60,000 in Perth and £500,000 in the South-West we would be doing justice to the State.

The Minister for Mines: There must be provided the accommodation which is necessary for a modern capital city.

Mr. THOMAS: In the metropolitan area you have half the population of the State.

The Premier: No.

Mr. THOMAS: At least a third. If in these circumstances you propose to make the City still more attractive, you will draw all your country population, and the State will languish.

Mr. Carpenter interjected.

Mr. THOMAS: I have not been parochial. I have not been dealing with my own electorate at all. On the subject of harbours, while that of Fremantle, with a capitalisation of nearly two millions, returns a profit of £20,000 per annum—

The Minister for Works: No, £40,000.

Mr. THOMAS: Bunbury, with a small capitalisation of about £100,000, returns £10,000 per annum. So in such a comparison Bunbury comes out infinitely superior to the chief port of the State.

The Minister for Works: That is your view, on your own figures.

Mr. THOMAS: The Minister should open his eyes to development going on in other parts of the State. I appeal to the Premier to give my suggestion for land settlement some consideration, and to make some small provision towards testing it.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [10.55]: I congratulate the member for Bunbury on having dealt with the subject in a generous manner. In regard to some of the land in the South-West, I

agree that 40 acres would be sufficient. I notice a fairly large provision on the Estimates in connection with water supply. If a water supply has to be provided in any district, every care should be taken to see that the water, when it is supplied, is potable. There have been instances in this State of large expenditure on the supply of water which when supplied was not fit to be used. One of the essential constituents most of our lands lack is lime. Reference has been made lately to the Dongara deposit. In the South-West we have large deposits which, at a minimum cost, could be exploited and supplied to the people.

[Mr. Carpenter took the Chair.]

The Premier: Are you going to discuss that now?

Mr. GEORGE: No. I will have something to say about it later. A few days ago I referred to the Commissioner for the South-West. I am afraid my remarks were misunderstood. It was not my intention to accuse that gentleman of neglecting his duty, but I had the impression that he was somewhat hampered in his operations. What the farmers of the South-West had in view when that officer was appointed was that he should be constantly travelling amongst them, showing them where they could make improvements. However, I think the policy has been wrong all through. In respect to State farms, while undoubtedly we have some of the finest land, we have a great quantity of second-class and third-class country. The object of the State farms should be to show us how this inferior land could be profitably utilised. I fear this has not been shown us. The Brunswick State farm, with unlimited money and up-to-date plant, has not proved a commercial success. We expect that a State farm with special advantages should be able to meet its expenses and should afford an object lesson to all of us. I agree with everything the member for Bunbury said in regard to the clearing of land.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [11.0]: The leader of the Opposition was very reasonable in his criticism and

it angered the Premier. The Premier is easily angered; he objects to criticism and even objects to statements of fact. The Premier was very considerate in postponing the discussion of these Estimates until after the tea adjournment in order that the leader of the Opposition might get some rest after the all-night sitting. No Loan Estimates were ever introduced under more unfortunate circumstances than these. We have the London money market closed against us, the war is prevailing and the Federal Government are borrowing locally to meet the expenses of the war. Therefore, the Premier is forced to go on a market which is already exploited to the full. He is faced with increased taxation by the Federal authorities and increased charges against the people in many directions. There has been expenditure which might well have been avoided. It is all very fine for the Premier to imagine he completed the scheme of works laid down when he assumed office. Instead of that he spent the money on trams, a power house, and on trading concerns and he must admit that a great deal of borrowed money has been swallowed up by the deficit—something like £1,250,000. The Premier has increased the indebtedness of this State during the last four years by 13 millions and has increased our interest bill from £1,046,000 to £1,620,000.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And increased the assets, too.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: More than one-third of the public debt is due to the borrowing of the present Premier and more than one-third of our interest bill is likewise due to him. Last year we had to contribute, £700,000 from revenue to meet interest and sinking fund. In 1911 practically the whole of the interest and sinking fund came from the earnings of our investments. This is the most unfortunate feature of the whole of the Premier's finance. True, he has had a very bad year, but even allowing for that, we are down something like £500,000 a year against our revenue collections to provide interest on the borrowed money. This makes the position for the future

difficult and it means that the Premier must consider well before he embarks on any fresh expenditure. When we come to the items I shall endeavour to strike out every one that means unnecessary expenditure and to see that the expenditure is devoted to reproductive works—productive not merely of interest and sinking fund but productive of work. With all this loan expenditure, and notwithstanding that 11,000 men have gone to the war, there is still unemployment, and we must see that our borrowed money is so spent that it will lead to development, production and work. The Premier must see that works cost no more than they ought to. Owing to the day labour system, every railway built by the present Government has cost 20 to 30 per cent. more than it should have. I believe every public work the Premier has faced has cost a great deal more than it is worth to-day. On the Estimates only £150,000 is provided for new railways, notwithstanding that a total expenditure of over £2,000,000 is involved. If there is anything which is important to this State, surely it is the building of new railways. There are some railways which should come before any other expenditure unless perhaps it is the £200,000 for the Agricultural Bank. There is a railway from the Great Southern towards Lake Yealering from Popanyinning, the Kondinin-Merredin line to be completed, the Mount Marshall line, of which 40 miles remains to be finished, the line promised from Wongan Hills to Cowcowing, and a line to separate the Dowerin-Merredin and the Northam-Merredin railway running through Yorkrakine. There is also the Busselton to Mount Margaret railway, for which no provision is made, although the Bill has been passed. These and other railways would provide work for all time, work for the men on the land, work for the men in the City, work everywhere. But the Premier does not consider that. The House should insist on these works being undertaken and, if it were possible, I would strike out the amount of £270,000 for the tramways and power house in order to start these works.

The Premier: You are a wobbly crowd. You supported them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Not this enormous expense. The Premier does not tell us all that is in his mind. When we bought the Perth trains we thought we had a splendid scheme that would be a grand investment. Instead of that the Premier went to London and arranged to build a new power house.

The Premier: That is incorrect.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier decided to build a new power house and it is being built now. That is all I meant to convey.

The Premier: But at election times your party go round and say dirty things.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier makes the whole of his own troubles.

The Minister for Mines: Why not say that everything we have done is faulty? That would be comprehensive.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We have said that on occasions.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The power house will cost nearly twice as much as the Premier intended it should, and twice as much as the people he got to advise him said it would cost. Of course, we shall have to provide for the new power house because the works are under way. In dealing with loan and other Bills in future, while the money market is in the present condition, we shall have to be careful not to allow the Premier to undertake works which will be difficult to complete. The Premier contemplates building a bridge at Fremantle at a cost of £100,000. In dealing with the Loan Estimates and the Loan Bill, we shall have to see that the money is found to carry on the work that has been started. Now that these works have been started we shall, I presume, have to go on with them even if they cost more than they should. The Premier has provided £120,000 for additions and improvements to opened railways. He has provided £260,000 for trading concerns including a steamer. That is a tremendous sum of money to devote to a purchase of this sort. There will be hungry mouths in the country due

to the fact that the Government have put their money on the wrong horse. The Government in some of their outlays may be able to produce interest and sinking fund, but the works are not reproductive in the broadest sense. We want reproduction in addition to procuring interest and sinking fund. We shall be able to strike out some of the items on the Estimates and devote the money to building the railways I have mentioned. We have £200,000 down for the Agricultural Bank. As a matter of fact I find that we have something like £350,000 only that will be devoted to the revenue-producing undertakings that will practically have to earn interest and sinking fund for a great deal of the remainder of the expenditure. Out of a loan expenditure of over £2,000,000 this is not satisfactory. In dealing with the Estimates the member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) referred to the boom that was inaugurated by the previous Administration. That development was no boom but a steady and slow progress, and but for that there would have been no Fremantle at all. Before we started to develop the back country Fremantle was a dull and empty place. The development of the back country absolutely made Fremantle, and the shipping which has come to that port is due to the development of our broad acres, which has made the harbour and made possible the expenditure on the harbour. The Premier was wrong in referring to the inspector of the harbour in the way he did. Loan expenditure was used by the previous Administration for works to be provided without delay. That loan expenditure was recouped from year to year from the profits made from the harbour, which is a perfectly legitimate method of finance.

The Premier: How absurd! What would have become of the profits if there had not been that debit to make up.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier would have wasted that profit. The debit, however, was for work done to the wharves and other necessary work of that description in the harbour. If the work had been delayed until the harbour

had earned sufficient money to enable the undertakings to be gone on with the progress of the port would have been considerably hampered.

The Premier: The money was spent without authority.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We did nothing without authority. The Premier said Sir John Forrest did something without authority and exceeded his loan items.

The Premier: He put votes down which were in excess of his Estimates.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Sir John Forrest and every other Liberal Government have gone on the expenditure which has been authorised by Parliament. If we pass this Loan authorisation of expenditure upon the bridge at Fremantle the Premier will argue that he is entitled to go on with the whole expenditure notwithstanding that we have not voted the money.

The Premier: It will have to be done whether the money is voted or not. It is absolutely essential.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is a different proposition to carry on work upon which a small sum has been voted from buying a steamer upon which no vote has been passed at all. Let the Premier be careful about his expenditure. He will find a difficulty in getting money and any money he takes from the money market for Western Australia will be withdrawn from active use. As the Premier borrows money the work will be reduced.

The Premier: What do you think I shall do with it?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I should like to know what the Premier will do with it. He will not put it to good use in putting it into some of these enterprises which he has started. Out of consideration to the Premier, and because he has shown consideration to my leader this afternoon, I am not going to say anything more now, but will keep what else I have to say when I am speaking on the items as we come to them.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill—Ivanhoe—in reply) [11.17]: I must express my appreciation of the attitude adopted by the member for Nor-

tham (Hon. J. Mitchell) in giving me ten minutes in which to reply to the speech of his leader which lasted an hour and a half. I do not propose to speak at any great length, but I desire to refer to one or two of the points that the leader of the Opposition in particular endeavoured to make in connection with the Estimates now submitted and before the House. First of all, I think a lot of the time of members might have been saved and might be saved in future if the leader of the Opposition had his speech printed, and, whenever he desires to make a speech on the Estimates, either on Revenue or Loan, that he should merely move that it should be laid on the Table of the House. His speech was only a repetition of what the hon. member has been saying ever since he has been sitting in opposition.

Hon. J. Mitchell: He has said too much for you hundreds of times.

The PREMIER: We have heard all about the expenditure of loan funds ever since the Government came into office.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You spent 30 millions of money and wasted it all.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition stated prior to the election, as the result of which this Government came back to office with an overwhelming majority, that if the Government were returned headed by myself there would be stagnation in Western Australia because the money lenders would not lend money to a Labour Government.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You said you would not borrow.

The PREMIER: That is absolutely incorrect. After four years, however, we find that the burden of members' complaints is that I have been able to get money too freely.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You have wasted it.

The PREMIER: Where is the consistency of our friends opposite? They have never attempted to be consistent. Any old stick will do to whip the dog with. It is no matter to them whether it is in the interests of the country or not. It is the interest of the party that is paramount with them. Everything that they

deal with they deal with from the party political point of view.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I deny that.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Even under the shadow of the war.

The PREMIER: We heard in the beginning of this session a great deal about a political truce, but I say there never was a time in the history of party Government in Western Australia when there has been so much dirty party politics introduced into the political life in Western Australia as during the past three months.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Not at all.

The PREMIER: There has never been so much party politics in the political life of Western Australia.

Hon. J. Mitchell: On whose part?

The PREMIER: Will the hon. member take our record for last session? Did we introduce a single Bill that could be considered a party measure, pure and simple?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, you did.

The PREMIER: Not a single Bill. The only measure which for even a moment could be described as having something of party in its nature is the Mines Regulation Act Amendment Bill. But that is really not a party Bill. The *West Australian* newspaper has supported that measure for years. We have dropped all party during this session. On the other hand, the bitter party attacks which have been made upon us not only for our actions during the past 12 months, but extending back over four years, have no parallel in the political history of this State. What have we heard from the leader of the Opposition to-night?

Hon. J. Mitchell: A jolly good speech.

The PREMIER: It was in its way a magnificent speech. A good deal was said in the course of it for the purpose of misleading the public and preventing them from recognising the truth. In the first place the leader of the Opposition expressed the opinion that a good deal of the money spent during the past financial year might have been saved—

that on many items money was expended which ought not to have been expended.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Quite true.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition said we should not have expended £97,500 on workers' homes. Of course we should not. Our friends opposite claim the credit of the introduction of the workers' homes scheme in Western Australia. The scheme has been in operation for only three years, and now they want it stopped.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The buildings you have erected are not homes for working men.

The PREMIER: The member for Northam has never seen a working man. Next the leader of the Opposition objected to the expenditure of £236,000 in water supply. He said we should not have done that work.

Hon. J. Mitchell: He did not say that at all.

The PREMIER: I took the words down as he uttered them, and I have them now before me. He said that many items of expenditure could have been held over, and amongst those items he included water supply, £236,000. Imagine the hon. member going in to the agricultural backblocks and telling that to the settlers. Imagine the reception he would get.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The money was not spent in the agricultural backblocks.

The PREMIER: Then the leader of the Opposition said we had no right to spend £2,792—a huge sum out of a total exceeding three millions—in the establishment of a fish supply. At this very moment the Press of the Eastern States is bitterly attacking Liberal Governments for not following our example in this respect.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What do they know about the thing over there?

The PREMIER: The newspapers of the Eastern States are not concerned about our venture, but they are concerned to know that the coastal waters of Australia teem with fish for which the people are hungering. And why are they hungering for fish? Because private en-

terprise will not tackle the problem of fish supplies; because a few foreigners have come out and formed rings and are thereby preventing the people from obtaining fresh fish at reasonable prices. Liberal journals in the Eastern States are now urging Eastern States Liberal Governments to follow the example of Western Australia and nationalise the fishing industry so that fresh fish may be placed within the reach of the people. Those are some of the items on which the leader of the Opposition would economise. The real leader of the Liberal party, Mr. Colebatch, through his newspaper, once asserted that this State should never spend more than one million per annum from Loan funds.

Hon. J. Mitchell: He has corrected you forty times as to that.

The PREMIER: Mr. Colebatch stated that in his newspaper.

Hon. J. Mitchell: He could do more real work for the country with one million than you could do with four millions.

The PREMIER: The hon. member need not worry. I do not know that I could get anyone to concern himself so much in my behalf when Mr. Colebatch attacks me in another place.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You have your Colonial Secretary there.

The PREMIER: At all events, I read that statement myself in Mr. Colebatch's newspaper when I was in Northam once. I have been challenging that hon. gentleman and anyone agreeing with him on the point to show me how this country's Loan expenditure could be reduced to a million annually by indicating what items should be cut out. The first attempt to meet my challenge has been made by the leader of the Opposition to-night. And by how much does he propose to reduce last year's Loan expenditure? By £362,000, still leaving, out of £2,521,608, a balance of over £2,200,000. When the hon. member went to the country in 1911 he submitted a programme that would have involved a Loan expenditure of ten millions.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Four millions.

The PREMIER: The new harbour would have cost a million, and the railway construction proposed by him would have cost four millions; and then there was the rest of the programme. Of course, the hon. member did not really mean it. However, this extravagant expenditure of which we have heard so much could, on the hon. member's own showing, have been reduced by only £326,000 for the past financial year.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And the country would have suffered.

The PREMIER: Even if that were not so, the fact remains that the leader of the Opposition recognises that a Loan expenditure of fully £2,200,000 was necessary to provide indispensable facilities for the people. The hon. member made various references to the cost of railway construction, but I am not going to follow him in that respect. He has made the same statement and quoted the same figures times out of number, and just as frequently as he has put forward his case have we contradicted it by the evidence—

Hon. J. Mitchell: Where is the evidence?

The PREMIER: Evidence not concocted by a Minister but supplied by the departmental engineers, who were also the Government engineers when our friends were in office—evidence proving that, allowing for the increased cost of material, railways are being constructed to-day more cheaply, and also better, than the work was carried out under the Liberal Administration.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No.

The PREMIER: The hon. member can turn up *Hansard* and read the evidence there. Again, the leader of the Opposition introduced the question of the electric power house at East Perth; and, once more, I do not propose to follow him on the present occasion. Mr. Colebatch there too thought he had made a grand discovery, and he went to another place and said, "I have a tale to unfold of my discoveries. I have spent nine hours on the power house files, and I have some revelations to make." What did he discover, in fact? Something that

he had been told years previously by the Minister representing the Government in that Chamber—something that had been definitely and completely placed before this Chamber by myself when a certain Bill and certain estimates of cost were being submitted here. The leader of the Opposition was merely repeating what Mr. Colebatch has said on this subject. The leader of the Opposition has not studied the question for himself at all, but has simply repeated here, from *Hansard*, such portions as it suited him to repeat of Mr. Colebatch's speech.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The leader of the Opposition read an official minute, too.

The PREMIER: He continues to make assertions on this subject which I have repeatedly contradicted in this Chamber. Our Liberal friends, or the organisation to which hon. members opposite are attached, sent round canvassers at the last general election to tell the electors that no tenders had been called for the East Perth power house.

Hon. J. Mitchell: In what way were they called?

The PREMIER: They were called from all the leading firms who could supply the material, and they were called in proper form.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You mean that prices were obtained.

The PREMIER: No. I say that tenders were called and were submitted for the various materials required in connection with the erection of the power house. Tenders closed before I arrived in London, and the firm of experts engaged—and there is none better known in the world—Messrs. Merz & McLellan, recommended the acceptance of certain tenders. I myself never sighted the tenders. They were never submitted to me while I was in London. My name had merely been written at the bottom of the cablegram which was sent out, and Cabinet dealt with the matter and approved of the tender. Yet statements were circulated by the Liberal organisations for the purpose of damaging my personal character and for miserable party purposes, and now hon. members, by innuendo, re-

peat those statements. The hon. member stated that he spent nine hours over the files, but he could have got all the information he wanted in nine minutes if he had approached the officials of the Railway Department. Then he introduced the freezing works question, and we had that discussed *ad nauseam*, and I suppose we shall discuss it again. The question of the purchase of a new steamer has also been discussed, and the answers which were given to the questions asked relative to the purchase were deliberately twisted. His questions did not apply to the "Kangaroo." We were pledged to secrecy in the matter by the British Admiralty. The hon. member asked whether we were considering the advisableness of purchasing a new steamer to replace the "Western Australia," but it was pointed out that such a vessel could not be built in a year. Sir John Biles was asked to report on the matter, and he stated that there was a vessel which he thought would be available, and he stated that the Admiralty would not allow any British ship to go to a foreign owner. He recommended the purchase of the "Kangaroo," and we accepted it for more reasons than one. One particular reason which stood out was that there was going to be a shortage of freight this year, and we were going to introduce bulk handling, and there was the opportunity to test it. There would be a steamer which could be economically worked, and which it was thought would be satisfactory in every way. What I have given is only a brief outline of what took place, but it is sufficient to refute the statement that I supplied false information. Some mention has been made about illegal expenditure in connection with the purchase of this boat, and the member for Canning also applied himself to this particular question. I would like to tell the member for Canning that, although he endeavours to repudiate the actions of the Liberal Governments in the past during the period that this Government have occupied the Treasury bench he has occupied public platforms and has advocated the claims of that party, a party who

were responsible for more illegal expenditure during 12 months than the whole of the period this Government have been in office. The hon. member has made a discovery that under the Constitution Act—

Mr. Robinson: I did not claim to have discovered anything. It is there for anyone who runs to read.

The PREMIER: The hon. member dealt with the Consolidated Revenue account.

Mr. Robinson: I have said so.

The PREMIER: Every pound from Consolidated Revenue is spent under supply and appropriation duly recognised.

Mr. Robinson: Not on the purchase of these ships.

The PREMIER: Ships are not purchased from Consolidated Revenue. The hon. member referred to the Audit Act. Section 31 provides that no money shall be drawn from the public Account except under appropriation made by law or by the authority of the Government. Public Account embraces all accounts, and all moneys are drawn from Public Account. The words I have quoted from the section are there for a definite purpose. We carry on in Western Australia with an Executive Government who are called upon to take the responsibility for their actions. We have taken the responsibility of doing something which we believe is in the best interests of the State, and we have done it under the terms of the Constitution Act and the Audit Act.

Mr. Robinson: Section 38 of the Audit Act says that you cannot expend moneys from Loan except under the authority of an Act of Parliament.

The PREMIER: The hon. member did not quote Section 60 of the Audit Act, which says—

All the provisions of this Act relating to the issue and expenditure of public moneys and the authority for such issue and expenditure, shall apply to the issue and expenditure of moneys standing to the credit of the General Loan Fund, and the Governor

shall have the same authority with respect to such moneys and the expenditure thereof as he has with respect to moneys standing to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

The powers of the Government are clearly defined in that section. The hon. member should ask his leader as to whether it is possible to carry on government without the Government taking responsibility of at all times drawing on Public Account to meet unforeseen emergencies.

Mr. Robinson: That relates to Revenue, not to Loan money.

The PREMIER: On 30th September, 1906, there was £204,962 16s. 9d. debited against Loan Suspense Account, which is a special account set up to provide for expenditure not authorised by Parliament.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Excesses principally.

The PREMIER: That sum was debited against Loan Suspense Account and authority was not obtained from Parliament until the 17th December, 1906. On the 31st December, 1908, there was £267,000 debited against Loan Suspense Account, for which there was no authority of Parliament.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They were excesses. Do you maintain you could buy a fleet of steamers without sanction?

The PREMIER: No, I do not. Does the hon. member contend that he could buy up all the private property in Western Australia without parliamentary authority? Yet he bought Dalkeith estate in that way.

Mr. Robinson: Two wrongs do not make a right.

The PREMIER: On the 31st December, 1910, there was an amount of £88,837 5s. 10d. debited against Loan Suspense Account, for which there was no authority of Parliament, and that was assented to only in a Loan Act of 16th February, 1911. On the 30th September, 1911, there was an amount of £12,572 17s. 11d. debited against Loan Suspense Account without the authority of Parliament, and the Loan Act to cover that expenditure was assented

to only on the 9th January, 1912. Thus we had to legalise the actions of our predecessors. Our predecessors carried on Government for three months, drawing out of public funds for the carrying on of the services of the State, without meeting Parliament.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No; I took a vote for three months when I was absent at the Coronation.

The PREMIER: On one occasion, when Sir Newton Moore was Premier, the House did not meet until the end of August; yet he had no authority for the expenditure of money in the meantime.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have done the same.

The PREMIER: Only once, and then I approached the leader of the Opposition and suggested that it might be desirable to get two months' supply to carry on, instead of calling Parliament together in June and then adjourning for a month or two.

Mr. Robinson: There is a great difference between that and buying ships without authorisation. I will move the item out of the Estimates.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition spent a large sum of money on harbour works without authorisation, and so as not to increase his deficit he charged it to suspense account instead of spending it from revenue. He said, "For the next five years I will put aside so much per year against revenue; so as to make the position look better I will cover up my tracks."

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

The PREMIER: He did this, and now he comes along and preaches the gospel of doing everything in strict conformity with the letter of the Act. Some of the existing deficit is due to our paying the hon. member's debts.

Mr. Robinson: You were in Parliament; did you not object to this sort of thing?

The PREMIER: No, we did not know anything about it. We only discovered it after we got over here.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nonsense; you passed the appropriation.

The PREMIER: Again, there was the purchase of the Crawley Park estate.

Hon. Frank Wilson: A very good purchase.

The PREMIER: It was; but I can say the same about the steamer, an excellent purchase. We heard nothing about Crawley Park until we saw it in the Excess Bill the following year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It was in all the newspapers.

The PREMIER: So was the steamer purchase in all the newspapers, but that does not give authority to spend the money. Parliament knew nothing about the Crawley Park purchase until months after the purchase was completed.

Mr. Robinson: Fifty such instances do not answer my point.

The PREMIER: The Avondale estate was another instance. I hope I have shown the member for Canning that if in connection with the purchase of the steamers we have done something which does not seem to give him pleasure, it will give the people of the State, especially the primary producer, pleasure, when the full effect of it is felt. If anything irregular has been done, the hon. member will recognise that our predecessors set us the example.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You said the same thing in regard to the "Western Australia."

The PREMIER: No, in that instance we came down to Parliament under "Treasurer's Advance."

Hon. Frank Wilson: I will know what to do when I get back to power.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member, when discussing the trading concerns for which the present Government are responsible and are prepared to take full responsibility—

Hon. Frank Wilson: What is the good of that? Will you bear the loss?

The PREMIER: The hon. member is beginning to appreciate what we fully appreciated when we were on the Opposition side, when he and his Government were tyrannising over the workers of this State. They brought down a Redistribution of Seats Bill, a gerrymandering Bill as it was known—and

had to bring a sick man to the House in order to get it passed and then the hon. member said—"We will take the responsibility." What was the good of them taking the responsibility when we were the ones who would suffer under that measure.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There was no loss under it and you did not suffer.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Has this anything to do with the Loan Estimates?

The PREMIER: Yes, the leader of the Opposition introduced these matters and I must reply to them. We take the responsibility for our actions in this direction. I would ask the Opposition to discuss the question of trading concerns without everlastingly connecting with them those persons we appoint to manage them for us, because, by belittling them, there is a danger of doing these persons a lifelong injury.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You do that yourself.

The PREMIER: No. Mr. Stevens, the Acting Manager of the State Steamship Service, is not responsible for the policy of the service.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You always hide yourself behind your servants.

The PREMIER: I am protecting them. Mr. Stevens is not, in the slightest degree, responsible for the policy of the State Steamship Service. He is there to do his best in connection with the management of the steamers, and it is unfair that the Opposition should endeavour to belittle him because he happens to be the manager of the concern.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I have not done so.

The PREMIER: Mr. Stevens has a reputation, and he cannot defend it here.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Mr. Chairman, I deny that I ever belittled Mr. Stevens and it is not right of the Premier to make false statements in connection with my speech.

The PREMIER: I take exception to the accusation of making false statements. I listened to the hon. member intently.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You talked too much.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the leader of the Opposition to withdraw his remark accusing the Premier of making false statements.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Well, an incorrect statement, but the Premier should withdraw his objectionable remark.

The PREMIER: I withdraw. I think we might discuss these concerns from the point of view of policy and not from the point of view of the individuals who happen to be selected by the Government to manage them. These men are not responsible for the policy; the Government are responsible for that and take the responsibility for it. I am not going to follow the hon. member any further except to repeat that what I said when introducing the Loan Estimates with regard to the expenditure of loan funds on public works last year compared with the year 1911 still stands good, and that a great proportion of the £2,103,000 which is provided this year is due to the necessity to find money to finance our settlers and financial institutions which money had not to be provided from loan fund by our predecessors, and to finance those particular works which in most of the States of Australia are controlled and financed separately by boards. That being the case it is not fair for the hon. member, again for party purposes, to take the debt per head of the population of Western Australia and compare it with that of Victoria to our detriment, and thus undermine the credit of our State. It is not only absolutely unfair, but quite unworthy of the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have done that yourself in your acts.

The PREMIER: On the contrary I have taken the figures and shown the amount which should be deducted because it is not fairly chargeable to the national debt.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have undermined the national credit.

The PREMIER: A great amount of this money has been borrowed and

expended in the interest of individuals who are responsible to the State for the repayment of that money, and such an amount should not be considered part of our national debt. Surely the hon. member can sometimes think sufficiently of his own State to fairly represent this position to the public and through the public to those who find the capital to carry on our industries. I appreciated the remarks of the leader of the Country party. He took a national view of the whole question. I think that hon. gentleman might try sometimes, when dealing with these larger issues such as our revenue expenditure and our loan expenditure, to make comparisons on a national basis and not merely on a South-West corner basis. I expect that from the member of any party, but the leader of a party I expect to take a broader view namely that of the whole State.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is only a class organisation.

The PREMIER: I do not think the organisation was responsible for his utterances here to-night. The member for Kalgoorlie bitterly complained because the Government have not done more in connection with the construction of the Esperance railway. I know that some complaints have been made, principally by the Esperance Railway League in Kalgoorlie, against what they termed the inaction of the Government for not pushing on with the construction of this line. It is not very generous on the part of that organisation or on the part of the member for Kalgoorlie that they should so soon forget that we passed the Bill no fewer than five times in this Chamber and submitted it as often to another place for the purpose of getting this line authorised. When the Bill was rejected we submitted on our Loan Estimates a sum to provide a road for motor tractors to assist the development of that country pending the provision of a railway. It was largely due to this fact that Parliament eventually agreed, by a narrow majority it is true, to authorise the building of 60 miles of railway from Esperance northwards. Even if we had neglected

to proceed with the construction of this line with some speed, they might have been generous enough to recognise that we have shown our sincerity by our past actions, and should have encouraged us rather than adopted the attitude they have taken. We are gathering the material for this railway. It is not an easy job. A new jetty has to be built. A good deal of the earth works have already been constructed in the road which was put down along the route of the railway so that, when the line was eventually authorised, we would merely have to throw the sleepers and rails on to it. We have about 30 miles of earth works thus constructed. The member for Bunbury complained about the neglect of the South-West.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The hon. member should recognise that we spent something like £200,000 on the establishment of sawmills in the South-West, not merely to turn out timber for the market but to make that magnificent country, about which the hon. member speaks so fluently, available not only for settlement but also for that closer settlement which he desires.

Mr. Thomas: Your first consideration was to market the timber, not to make the land available for settlement.

The PREMIER: I do not agree that that was the first consideration; they were equal considerations. That country had been inspected and we were desirous of removing the timber in order to make the land available for settlement. We are responsible for the Manjimup, Big Brook, and Wagin-Bowellling lines, and these are in the South-West. We extended the railway from Dwellingup to Dwarda. That, too, is in the South-West. We purchased the Margaret river-Flinders Bay railway, which again is in the South-West.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You spoilt that transaction by not carrying the railway on to Margaret river.

The PREMIER: The Brunswick State farm has been extended during the past four years.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You promised that railway four years ago.

The PREMIER: There are other places in the State which are more entitled to consideration than that particular district. The land is there, but the settlement is not. We have made a commencement with the harbour improvements at Bunbury which have so long been asked for. We have made a genuine start on that work, and there is a sum on the Estimates for the purpose of going on with it. The member for Bunbury might appreciate that. We relaid the line from Armadale to Bunbury for the purpose of giving better travelling facilities to the public in the South-West. We spent a large sum of money on the drainage of the Stirling estate, for the purpose of assisting the South-West. We also kept on in employment the men working at the mills when other mills were being closed down, and this has meant a great deal to the business people of Bunbury. We practically rebuilt the Caves House, and encouraged people to visit that beautiful portion of the State. We established our brick yards in the South-West.

Mr. Thomas: Where are they?

The PREMIER: That is at Beenup.

Mr. Thomas: That is in Perth.

The PREMIER: It is in the South-West. This Government were responsible for passing the Irrigation Act, and not without a struggle, which will enable us to do what the hon. member desires us to do, and we provided £50,000 towards the establishment of the first irrigation scheme in the South-West. We put men on to clear the Harvey estate, and so bring it into greater usefulness, which is of advantage to the people of the South-West. Last year 1,700 acres were cleared, and the Minister is now taking the preliminary steps to make the land available in the near future.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Now we know where the money has gone.

The PREMIER: It is not a case, therefore, of the Government overlooking the South-West, but it is a case of members from that part of the State overlooking what the Government have done.

Mr. Thomas: These are merely the details of what you should do.

The PREMIER: I am astonished at the hon. member.

Mr. Thomas: The Premier should do more.

The PREMIER: The hon. member might recognise that we are entitled to give some consideration to the metropolitan area and to the industrial classes congregated in our towns, in connection with which matter there has been considerable neglect in past years. These people are entitled to have comfortable homes. Will the hon. member suggest that we should refuse to provide money for the erection of workers' homes in the metropolitan area?

Mr. Thomas: I would not suggest that.

The PREMIER: Very well. That is exactly the position which we find hon. members occupying when they are complaining about our Loan expenditure. One cannot pin them down to anything definite or any definite ground for complaint when the individual items are brought under their notice. In the previous year we spent £240,000 on workers' homes, but this has now been reduced to £97,000. This was due largely to the commitments that were made, and to the fact that we had to go on with them. We had to stick to these operations. There is a certain amount of money coming back by way of repayments under the Workers' Homes Act which can be re-used, and we are re-using it for the purpose of providing new homes. If the member for Bunbury will consider the matter for ten minutes and go through the items, and listen to the details which are given upon these by the Ministers when they are under consideration, he will discover that never in the history of Australia, and particularly of Western Australia, were Estimates submitted to Parliament which provided for the wants of the people on such an equitable basis as these Estimates provide for them. In connection with the first vote, which is now before the Committee, I would point out that this Vote is placed there on the assump-

tion that the total amount provided on the Loan Estimates and the Revenue Estimates will be expended. If the vote is not expended, a reduction will take place. It is a matter which will be adjusted at the end of the year on the basis of the proportion which will be expended from either Loan or Revenue Fund.

Vote put and passed.

[*The Speaker resumed the Chair.*]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 12.9 a.m. (Friday)

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 2nd November, 1915.

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

SITTING HOUR, EXTENSION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central): I move—

That for the remainder of the session the Council do meet for the despatch of business at three p.m. on all sitting days.

It is probable that the session will be brought to a close this week, and as is usual when the session is nearing the end, I am asking hon. members to meet at the

hour of 3 instead of at 4.30. It may not be necessary to call the House together at that hour, but it is as well to be prepared in the event of the necessity arising.

Question passed.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central): I move—

That for the remainder of the session so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable Bills to be taken through all stages at one sitting and Messages to be taken into consideration forthwith.

The Standing Orders in another place have been suspended and it is the customary procedure to follow when the session is about to draw to a close. The suspension of the Standing Orders facilitates the transaction of the business between the two Chambers.

Question passed.

BILL—PERMANENT RESERVE (No. 2).

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: This is a short measure introduced for the purpose of excising from the class A reserve at Stirling Estate in the Capel district, that portion of the reserve contained in Lot 60 of the subdivision, containing 50 acres. For the information of members I may say that it has been discovered there is on this land a deposit of lime suitable for use in the manufacture of cement. A gentleman from South Australia interested in the manufacture of cement is at present in this State, and an application has been lodged for a special lease of this portion of the reserve, but while it is included in the class A reserve, that application cannot, of course, be considered. It is credibly stated that capital to the amount of £80,000 is available for the prosecution of the industry to be