

I expected, I do not now propose to proceed with the Property Bill. I wish to explain to you, Mr. President, that under my instructions copies of the Bill have been distributed amongst members. It is not usual to do this until the second reading is about to be moved. I would ask you to overlook my action on this occasion. I thought it would be well for members to have copies of the Bill so that they might peruse it, and I asked the Clerk to have them distributed, believing that we would be dealing with it to-night.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We can deal with it to-night.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not propose to proceed with it to-night.

Hon. J. Duffell: Have copies been sent to the Barristers' Board?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Copies of the previous Bill were sent to the Barristers' Board, and copies of this Bill will also be forwarded.

The PRESIDENT: Very well.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [8.2]: My view is that these Bills should be distributed amongst members at the earliest possible moment, whether the second reading has been moved or not, so that members may have the fullest opportunity to look into them. It is all very well to sit and listen to a second reading speech from a Minister on a Bill such as this Property Bill, which no member has ever seen. I do not think that is a proper procedure at all. It seems to me more or less a matter of red tape.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [8.3]: During this session we have had several Bills delivered to us before the second reading, and we have been able to follow the subject matter while the second reading speeches have been made.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is against the Standing Orders.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. Ewing—South-West—in reply) [8.4]: I think that what I have stated is the rule.

The PRESIDENT: It has always been the custom. It is not in the Standing Orders, though.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If it is your wish, Mr. President, that in future copies of a Bill shall be distributed when the measure is introduced, of course that will be done.

The PRESIDENT: I will think the matter over.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Bills are distributed elsewhere as soon as they have been read the first time.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 8.5 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 13th September, 1923.

	Page
Questions: West Province Election, temporary appointments ... ..	710
Railways, Lead requirements ... ..	710
Arbitration Court, congestion ... ..	710
Bills: Inspection of Scaffolding, Com. ... ..	711
Redistribution of Seats ... ..	716
Estimates: Vote discussed, Lands and Surveys	725

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

### QUESTION—ELECTORAL OFFICIALS, WEST PROVINCE.

Mr. STUBES, for Capt. Carter, asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, How many electoral officials were employed in each district of the West Province on the 8th inst.? 2, How many of these special appointments were temporary hands? 3, How many were returned soldiers? 4, Will the Minister also specify the number of returned men employed in each district separately?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Fremantle, 16; N.E. Fremantle, 17; S. Fremantle, 20. 2, Fremantle, 12; N.E. Fremantle, 10; S. Fremantle, 12. 3, Fremantle, 9; N.E. Fremantle, 10; S. Fremantle, 9. 4, Fremantle, 11; N.E. Fremantle, 11; S. Fremantle, 11.

### QUESTION—RAILWAYS, LEAD REQUIREMENTS.

Mr. LAMBERT asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What were the quantities of red and white lead respectively in oil and powdered form used by the Railway Department for the year ended 31st August, 1923? 2, What was the average price paid? 3, Has the locally manufactured article been offered to the department? 4, Will he have inquiries made as to the suitability of the local product for the requirements of the Railway Department?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, White lead in oil, 21 tons; white lead dry, 6 cwt.; red lead in oil, nil; red lead dry, 2 tons 7 cwt. 2, White lead in oil, £59 per ton; white lead dry, £73 per ton; red lead dry, £63 10s. 3, Yes. 4, Tests are being made.

### QUESTION—ARBITRATION COURT CONGESTION.

Mr. McCALLUM asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact that owing to the congested condition of its work certain industrial awards of the Court of Arbitration are likely to

expire before the court can hear applications for interpretation and breaches of such awards? 2, Is it a fact that pressure is being brought to bear to persuade the court to hear applications by employers for wage reduction ahead of cases which were listed many months before such employers' applications were lodged? 3, Will the Government see that the usual practice is followed of giving preference to the hearing of applications for interpretation and breaches of award, or else that cases are taken in the order in which they were listed?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The work of the court is undoubtedly congested. 2, I am not aware of any such pressure. 3, Dates of hearing are fixed by His Honour the President alone.

## BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING.

### *In Committee.*

Resumed from the 6th September; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

### Clause 2—Interpretation:

The CHAIRMAN: The member for North-East Fremantle has moved an amendment "That in line 2 of the definition of 'Scaffolding,' 'eight' be struck out and 'four' inserted in lieu."

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	21

Majority against .. 7

### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Chesson	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Heron

(Teller.)

### NOES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Piesse
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Denton	Mr. Sampson
Mr. George	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Harrison	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Johnston	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Maon	Mr. Mullany
Sir James Mitchell	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

*That in the interpretation of "Scaffolding," after the word "structure," line 5, there be inserted "The term includes all gear used in connection with scaffolding,*

*and includes any swinging stage used or intended to be used for any of the purposes aforesaid."*

The object of the amendment is to extend inquiries in the case of serious or fatal accidents so as to include gear as well as scaffolding.

Mr. A. THOMSON: On a point of order, an amendment which I have on the Notice Paper should, I think, precede this one.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Thomson's amendment should come before Mr. McCallum's.

Mr. McCALLUM: In that case I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

*That in the definition of "Scaffolding," after the word "structures," line 5, there be inserted "exceeding one storey in height."*

The object of the amendment is to restrict the inspections to be made and the fees to be charged to buildings of more than one storey. Having many years experience of the building trade, I say it is quite unnecessary to have inspection of one-storeyed buildings. It will mean increased cost. I hope the Committee will accept the amendment.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Already in this clause have we agreed to the words "not exceeding 8ft." A church is of but one storey, and an ordinary building under which the ground level varies may be 17ft. high on one side, and only 10ft. on the other. We have already limited the height of scaffolding to 8ft. Consequently the amendment is opposed to what we have agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope the Committee will not take the proposed amendment seriously, for if they do we might as well have no Bill at all. The Bill provides safeguards for life and limb, and 8ft. was considered by practical men as the point at which the provision should stop. Under the amendment the scaffolding might be taken to the height of even this building in which we are.

The CHAIRMAN: Before further discussion takes place, I will give a ruling. The Committee has already decided that the Bill shall apply to any building of a height exceeding 8ft. Therefore I rule the amendment out of order on the ground that it would clash with what the Committee have already agreed to.

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

*That after "structures," in line 5, the following be inserted: "The term includes all gear used in connection with scaffolding, and includes any swinging stage used or intended to be used for any of the purposes aforesaid."*

If loss of life or serious injury is caused through faulty gear, there is nothing in the Bill to deal with it.

Mr. Richardson: Read Clause 13.

Mr. McCALLUM: But I want "gear" to be distinctly associated with "scaffolding."

The Minister for Works: The interpretation of "gear" covers everything required for a scaffolding, except perhaps nails and bolts.

Mr. McCALLUM: But gear is not scaffolding.

The Minister for Works: You cannot have scaffolding without gear.

Mr. McCALLUM: I want it definitely set out that if an accident occurs through faulty gear, the clause shall apply. That is the object of the first part of the amendment. The second part deals with swinging stages, which are not scaffolding, yet are the most dangerous contrivances men are asked to work upon.

The Minister for Works: The definition of "gear" includes the words, "or other moveable contrivances of like character."

Mr. McCALLUM: Why should we not explicitly state, "swinging stages"? If we make it clear it will save subsequent litigation.

Mr. Latham: Why not insert the words "or gear" after "scaffolding" wherever "scaffolding" appears?

Mr. McCALLUM: That is what I want, but I want to make doubly sure and include it in the definition of "scaffolding." As the Bill stands, it would require a stretch of the imagination to say that "gear" is on the same footing as "scaffolding." The amendment will leave lots of room for subsequent quibbling.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I see no necessity for the amendment. It will serve merely to afford lawyers opportunity for quibbling. The definition of "gear" covers swinging stages. There is no necessity to add anything to the definition of "scaffolding." I am willing to add "or gear" after "scaffolding" wherever "scaffolding" appears, but I am anxious that the interpretation clause shall not be interfered with. There is no necessity for the amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	22

Majority against .. 3

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Chesson	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Munsie
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Troy
Mr. Denton	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Heron
Mr. Lutey	

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Carter	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Denton	Mr. Samson
Mr. Durack	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. George	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Mann	Mr. Mullany

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

*That the following words be added to the end of the definition, "but it includes structures and gear in wells."*

Plumbers who go down in wells to repair pumps have no protection at all under the Bill, and I have in mind the fact that for its population, our metropolitan area has more wells than any other of a similar size in the Commonwealth. Protection in this direction should certainly be given. Where electric current is used as power, engineers have to go down wells to effect repairs, and often they work from flimsy stages. We know that the country is sandy, and unless adequate protection is afforded the work will involve some danger.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well sinking is altogether different work from that of building houses. Those who are engaged in sinking wells do so, in most cases, with ladders and timbering, which are sufficient for safety. That accidents do occur of course we know.

Mr. Underwood: Where?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was one at Cottesloe lately, where the sand collapsed.

Mr. Latham: Scaffolding would not stop that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But there have been accidents, and they will happen at any time. I hope the amendment will not be pressed.

Mr. CHESSON: In very few cases do we find ladders in wells as stated by the Minister. Men work in wells from a bosun's chair. It is necessary that the gear that is used should be the best, and that it should be inspected. If wells were being sunk by miners they would put in good staging, from which the work could be done with safety. On the goldfields this work is done by miners, but on the coast it is carried out by carpenters, and we know that the staging they build cannot be too good.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I hope the amendment will not be carried. I give the member for South Fremantle my assurance that there are many men besides plumbers who put in windmill pumps. If we had to wait for plumbers to do this work there would be no progress outside the thickly populated areas. As soon as one started to put in a windlass

on a well, it would be necessary to wait for an inspector to come along. If we put anything of this description in our Statutes the only effect will be to stop development. At any rate, the effect will certainly be that the law will not be observed, and we have no desire to pass laws that will not be observed. Accidents have occurred, but not as the result of the staging erected in wells. The Minister quoted an accident at Cottesloe, but in that case the well collapsed, though not on account of defective staging. It was due to the lack of timbering. As a matter of fact, it was an old well, really a dry well. If a woman sprains her ankle while shopping, must all the shops be closed? The amendment would mean providing a brigade of inspectors to supervise matters that are looked after already without them.

Mr. PICKERING: I oppose the amendment. It would increase the cost of development in this State. Most of the wells sunk in my district are put down by the farmers, who see to it that the gear is not faulty. No special plumbing is required in erecting a windmill, and there is no necessity to provide any particular kind of scaffolding for such work. The metropolitan area may want this amendment, but it is not required for the country districts. It is absurd to pass legislation we do not mean to carry out.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If it is necessary that a swinging scaffold from a building should be provided for under the regulations, it is also necessary to include a swinging scaffold in a well. There is no difference between the two from the point of view of the safety of the men.

Mr. Underwood: Wells are perfectly safe as they are.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is a certain amount of danger in going down a well and fixing a stage and a ladder. I hope the amendment will be passed.

Mr. MANN: I support the amendment.

Mr. Underwood: Another metropolitan advocate!

Mr. MANN: All the brains are not in the bush.

Mr. Underwood: But all the wells are.

Mr. MANN: If it is necessary to give protection to a man swinging 30 feet above the ground, similar protection should be afforded to the man swinging 30 feet below it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There is a big difference between going down a well and working on a swinging stage in the air. As a well goes down it is generally timbered. One would think the workmen of Western Australia had no intelligence and would be likely to swing on to a rope that would not carry them. When a pump is first fixed in an ordinary well, with a windmill above, the gear that is provided will generally be ample to safeguard the lives of the men going down the well. We should be practical in our suggestions, and not pass legis-

lation that will mean increased taxation upon the people.

Mr. LUTEY: I cannot understand exception being taken to the amendment on the score of expense. Prospecting and mining generally have not been stopped because legislation has been passed regarding the inspection of mines and because inspectors carry out the provisions of that legislation. If the amendment be agreed to, it will simply mean that people will see that proper gear is available for any work that has to be carried out. It is merely a bogey to say that there will be an army of inspectors running round the country, insisting upon proper gear being used. That is a paltry argument.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot understand the attitude of the member for Katanning, because he knows that the position will be entirely different from what he suggests. It is a question of dealing with the gear after it has been provided, not before. The last well I worked in was about 160 feet deep and there was no timber used at all; the well was sunk through limestone. I had to use a bosun's chair to examine the well and do the work necessary.

Mr. A. Thomson: I would have started from the top.

Mr. Chesson: That shows you know nothing about this work.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If a start were made from the top, the timbers would interfere with the tackle. I have put down scores of wells in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Latham: And never had an accident?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. I had good gear.

Mr. Latham: You would not ask a man to use gear you would not use yourself?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is so. It is only necessary to provide that gear shall be liable to inspection, and the necessity for that inspection is when the work is being carried out. The danger is not so great after the platforms have been put in the wells.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. I have sunk many wells and the amendment will work hardships in the back country, because of the necessity for inspections. Practical men carry out the sinking of wells and they are always careful to see the tackle is in good order.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: It is important that the amendment should be agreed to, because the Bill may not apply to the whole State. The Minister for Works has an amendment on the Notice Paper dealing with that point. As the Bill will apply principally to the metropolitan area, we should recognise the class of land in which the work will be carried out. If sand be exposed for a little while to the atmosphere, it becomes liable to slide and accidents may occur.

Mr. Latham: The amendment will not prevent such an accident.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I contend it will. The real purpose of the amendment is to see

that gear up to standard shall be supplied. With such a provision in the Bill, it will be known that if an accident occurs, an inspector will be called upon for a report as to the plant used in connection with the well. I know the dangers attendant upon well-repairing, and we should not wait until an accident occurs to pass legislation of this type.

Mr. CHESSON: The Bill will apply principally to the metropolitan area.

Mr. A. Thomson: It does not say so.

Mr. CHESSON: Wells in the metropolitan area are not sunk by miners. No one would dream of using the ladders or staging in such wells without first inspecting them with the aid of a bosun's chair. The gear necessary should be inspected, so that the man using it would know he was safe. In many wells, not a stick of timber is used apart from the logging at the top. Many wells are without ladders. If the pipe has to be repaired, it is done from a bosun's chair. The amendment should be accepted. It will not involve the appointment of an army of inspectors.

Mr. McCALLUM: Every argument directed against the amendment applies with equal force against the Bill. An army of inspectors would not be required. An inspector inspecting scaffolding could also deal with the gear in wells. It would not be necessary to visit every well. Many men devote the whole of their time to well-sinking, and their gear and equipment could be inspected at a given place. We are asked to deny protection to a man working in a well, though the law already provides protection for a man working in a mine shaft. There is no part of Australia where well-sinking is more dangerous than in our metropolitan area, particularly where the ground contains a little limestone. Yet we are told our suggestions are ridiculous. Presently I shall be tempted to state some plain facts that will not be pleasant.

The Minister for Works: I do not know to whom you are referring.

Mr. McCALLUM: I am not referring to the Minister. There is another danger in the metropolitan area; it contains more wells in proportion to population than does any other city in Australia. Some of them are on properties let or leased, the occupiers of which are constantly changing. The accident at Cottesloe occurred at a well that had been closed down for some time. Similar accidents might easily occur in hundreds of places around the city in consequence of wells not being inspected and of new tenants not being aware of defects. The need for protection to well-workers has been a subject of frequent argument between the unions and employers. If there is any substantial objection to the amendment applying to the outback country, the proposal of the Minister that the measure shall apply to only proclaimed portions of the State will meet it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Paragraph (c) of Clause 25 provides that written notice shall be given to an inspector before scaffolding is erected. It is all very well to argue that this

is not intended. Under the Bill every well in Western Australia must use approved gear, written notice must be given and fees must be paid.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That paragraph contains only the power to make regulations.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Is it reasonable to assume that the framers did not intend regulations to be made?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They will be made only if necessary.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not agree with that. The member for Kalgoorlie said it would not be necessary to have an army of inspectors, and he instanced the mining industry. That does not afford a fair comparison. The mining areas do not cover the whole of the State, but wells are found in every part of the State and will have to be inspected. There is no analogy between the two cases.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	21
Majority against				6

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mann
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Corboy	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Davies	Mr. Troy
Mr. Heron	Mr. Wilton
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Broun	Mr. Money
Mr. Carter	Mr. Pickering
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Denton	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Durack	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Latham	Mr. Sampson
Mr. C. C. Maley	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

*That in the interpretation of "serious bodily injury" the word "fourteen" be struck out and "seven" inserted in lieu.*

The Minister for Works: I accept that amendment.

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

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Appointment of inspectors: .

Mr. A. THOMSON: I move—

*That the following subclause be added: "A board to be known as 'The Scaffolding Board' shall be constituted under this Act,*

and the following bodies may each appoint one representative to the board: (a) The Builders and Contractors' Association, (b) the Architects' Board of Western Australia, (c) the Fire and Accident Underwriters' Association of Western Australia, (d) the workers engaged in the industry. The Chief Inspector of Scaffolding and all other inspectors shall be appointed from qualified persons recommended by the said board."

Mr. Hughes: Three to one!

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept the amendment. It does not make sense with the rest of the clause, which commences "The Governor may from time to time."

The Minister for Mines: The amendment is a new clause, not a new subclause.

The CHAIRMAN: I rule the amendment out of order. It can be moved later as a new clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6, 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Occupiers to allow entry and inspection:

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

*That after the word "scaffolding" there be inserted "or gear."*

The Minister for Works: I will accept an amendment to insert the words "or gear connected therewith." This is a scaffolding Bill.

Mr. McCALLUM: But then the clause would apply only to gear connected with scaffolding. Clause 2 defines "gear." Under this clause, would ladders be liable to inspection? The great majority of painters work on ladders. Recently I saw a man working on the top of two ladders which were lashed together 30 feet above the ground. The definition of "gear" under the Bill at present goes for nothing, because gear will not be open to inspection and the inspectors will have nothing to say with regard to it. In a number of cases throughout this Bill the word "scaffolding" appears without the word "gear."

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. McCALLUM: Before tea I was pointing out what the effect would be if the amendment were not included. Clause 7 makes provision for the inspection of scaffolding or gear. Clause 8 deals with those who offer obstruction to the inspection of scaffolding. Surely it is merely by an oversight that the words "or gear" have not been included in Clause 8.

The Minister for Works: Scaffolding includes gear connected with the scaffolding.

Mr. McCALLUM: But I want all gear to be included. Without the amendment, ladders will not be included. Men work on ladders apart altogether from scaffolding. Most of a painter's work is done from lad-

ders. Without the amendment, premises where ladders alone are used will not be subject to inspection.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not prepared to accept the amendment unless the words "connected therewith" are added to it. A little while ago the hon. member was speaking about swinging stages. Had he referred to Clause 25 he would have there found provision for the making of regulations covering all gear, including swinging stages.

Mr. McCallum: Another field for legal argument!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member can evolve a Bill that will eliminate legal controversy he will thus do more good for the world than any man has yet done. I will accept the insertion of the words "or gear," but will afterwards move to add to those words the words "connected therewith." I suggest that to save time the hon. member include "connected therewith" in his amendment.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot understand the Minister's objection to the amendment. Clause 7 provides for the inspection of any scaffolding or gear, whereas Clause 8 provides that the owner or occupier of a building shall give reasonable facilities for the inspection of scaffolding. Nothing is said about gear. The Minister has overlooked that point.

The Minister for Works: No. I will accept the amendment, with the addition of the words "connected therewith."

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If those words were added, the owner or occupier would not be obliged to afford facilities for inspecting gear not connected with the scaffolding. Is it not better that the inspector should inspect gear before, rather than after, it is put in the scaffolding? Under the Minister's proposed amendment inspection could be made only of scaffolding and gear that is erected.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

*That after "gear" the words "used in connection therewith" be inserted.*

The Bill had its genesis in a desire to eliminate all possibility of accident through defective scaffolding or gear. Without my amendment the clause, as already amended, could be applied to gear not connected with the scaffolding, and in consequence we should require an army of inspectors to look after ladders and gear not intended to be used on a building, even ladders in an orchard. The Crown Law Department advises that in view of the amendment we have passed, my amendment will be required. Under Clause 25 regulations can be framed covering all scaffolding and gear and the manner in which they are to be set up and used to ensure safety, even to the point of notice being given to the inspector before the scaffolding is erected. I venture to predict that when the Bill comes into operation it will be found to entail con-

siderable expense upon the owner of a new building, although that is nothing as against safety for life and limb. My amendment is in the interests of all concerned.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The amendment the Minister proposes will mean increased expense.

The Minister for Works: Why not give it a trial?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Inspectors must examine gear and if the owner or occupier gives to the inspector reasonable facilities for making the inspection, the work will be quickly done. The amendment of the Minister will not have that effect. If the scaffolding is built, the inspector must go on it to examine it, but if we provide that he may inspect the material "to be used," that material may then be inspected while it is lying on the ground. I move an amendment on the amendment—

*That "to be" be inserted before "used."*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot accept the amendment. It would mean that before any step can be taken, an inspector must examine the material to be used. That may mean that operations may have to wait until the inspector has seen and passed the gear. That will block all work. Of course the proposal could be carried out if we had an army of inspectors. The hon. member's amendment will simply hamper employment.

Mr. McCALLUM: We have already passed the clause which provides for the inspection of gear and the Minister's argument therefore does not apply. The position is whether the person who owns the gear shall give facilities to the inspector to inspect.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Minister has gone a long way towards meeting the wishes of members opposite and I trust the member for North-East Fremantle will not press his amendment. If we are not careful, we will have not an army, but, as the member for Pilbara said, a division of inspectors all over the country.

Amendment on the amendment put and negatived.

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

Progress reported.

## BILL—REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from 11th September.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [8.0]: My position is somewhat different from that of the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood). That member claimed that as the four North-West electorates were exempt from the provisions of the Bill he could discuss the matter as a spectator, and said that the onlooker could probably see most of the game. The position of the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) is also somewhat different. I

gathered from his remarks that he was in favour of the main principles of the Bill, but was dissatisfied with the boundaries of his electorate.

Mr. Pickering: And the province.

Mr. MULLANY: I am in the position of being one of the big five who find themselves without an electorate. We have been given a quick death, and have not been left lingering as some other members who are unsatisfied with their boundaries.

Mr. Davies: You will have to be resurrected.

Mr. MULLANY: We got it where the chicken got the axe, and know our position exactly.

Mr. Chesson: We got it in the neck.

Mr. MULLANY: Our electorates will have disappeared. If we are still imbued with a burning desire to give our valuable services to the country we must look for fresh seats. I believe the five members concerned, yourself, Mr. Speaker, included, are sufficiently men of the world to realise that these things are sent to try us, and that we must accept them in the spirit in which they are given. I agree that a redistribution of seats and an alteration in the boundaries of the electorates are necessary. In 1913 the Scaddan Government came to the same conclusion. A Bill was passed through this Chamber, but was rejected in another place. For various reasons, principally because of the war, it has not been found opportune to bring up the matter again. Speaking as a representative of the whole country, I believe that the basic principles of the present Bill are infinitely more favourable to the outback parts of the State than were the provisions of the Scaddan Government Bill. Of course, the work of the Commission may not suit all parties or individuals. It is generally accepted by most people, who study these matters, that the principle of giving increased representation in proportion to the numbers of people living outside the more accessible portions of the State, as compared with the metropolitan area, is a sound one. This principle has been recognised both in the Electoral District Act and in the work the Commission have placed before this House. The principles of the Bill are roughly these: that the quota in the metropolitan area shall be 6,000; in the agricultural and central mining district 3,000, which is one-half the representation of the metropolitan area and gives twice the value to a vote in the agricultural or central mining districts as compared with the vote in the metropolitan area; and that the quota in the outside mining districts, which are less accessible, shall be based on the principle of giving a vote that has a value three times as great as the vote in the metropolitan area. This is a reasonably fair basis for a redistribution of seats. Critics claim it is a right principle that increased representation should be given to people living in the less accessible districts of the State. I ask them, if they think the quota provided under this Bill is

not sufficient, how far they would go. It has been said during the debate that various people, members of Parliament and others, received accurate information before the map was placed on the wall, as to what the report of the Commission was going to be, and what the recommendations would contain. I cannot believe that any individual outside the members of the Commission had any such information. It was quite easy for people who gain certain information, to which they are entitled, as to the number of electors on the roll for any particular district, as was ascertained when the Commission were doing their work, to apply their knowledge of the local geographical conditions of the different districts and form an accurate idea as to what the Commission would be likely to recommend. I think that is how the position arose. The member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) was particularly emphatic about the matter. He knew exactly, even to a house, what the boundaries of his electorate were going to be. I do not know what he was driving at, and whether he meant to infer that the information had come from a source from which it should not have emanated, or whether he had in his mind something even more sinister. He certainly gave me the impression that definite instructions had been given to the Commission as to what they had to do, and that members on this side were aware of them.

Mr. Teesdale: He practically stated that.

Mr. MULLANY: I trust it is not so.

Mr. Hughes: Was it not said that the information came from a member opposite?

Mr. MULLANY: The member in question must either have made a shrewd guess, or have got the information from some official. No other construction could be placed on the words of the member for East Perth than that definite instructions had been given to the Commission as to what they had to do. I believe the hon. member intended to convey that impression to the public.

Capt. Carter: Would you not have thought it was his duty to protect the House?

Mr. Hughes: To protect the country against you.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

Mr. MULLANY: I, together with other members, had some curiosity as to what the Commission were likely to recommend for the northern goldfields districts. I knew approximately the numbers in the electorates of Menzies, Mt. Leonora, and Mt. Margaret. I also knew that unfortunately, although there had been these three seats for the last 22 years, the numbers on the roll were not sufficient to keep them going. I knew further the geographical position of the principal centres of these three electorates. When I was asked on many occasions, when the Commission were doing their work, what my opinion was as to what they were likely to do with the northern goldfields electorates, I invariably replied that, whilst I had no information as

to what they were doing, knowing the country as I did, I could see there would not be more than one electorate in place of the present three, and that Leonora should be the centre. I gave this forecast from my own knowledge of the numbers, and of the geographical positions of the various centres in the districts concerned. Despite the fact that my own electorate has, in name, gone out of existence under this scheme, still, if I were doing the Royal Commission's work as regards that particular district, I could come to no other conclusion and put up no other recommendations than those of the Royal Commission. The attitude of the Opposition towards this Bill, and more particularly that of the Opposition Leader, is somewhat remarkable. That gentleman, who is recognised throughout the State to be one of our fairest public men, in his opening remarks on the Bill said that, having perused the Royal Commission's report and analysed their work, he had either to impugn their good faith or to express his utter contempt for their report. I distinctly remember the Opposition Leader, when the Electoral Districts Act was going through this Chamber last session, making and repeating the statement that it was not necessary to have a Supreme Court judge, the Surveyor General, and the Chief Electoral Officer for the work under that measure, because any office boy could do the whole of the work on the lines that were laid down. The Leader of the Opposition claims that he does not make wild statements, and I quite agree that he does not. He does not impugn the good faith of the Royal Commissioners, and admits that they have done the work to the best of their ability. He admits also that they were not acting under instructions from the Government or anyone else. And yet he says he must impugn their good faith or else feel the utmost contempt for their report. That is the language which has been used concerning the gentlemen acting as Royal Commissioners by a member of this Assembly who leads the Opposition and aspires to become the Premier of the State. That is the opinion he has expressed concerning three very high public officials—the Chief Justice, the Surveyor General, and the Chief Electoral Officer. The Opposition Leader has stated that those three gentlemen are not competent to carry out work which he himself declares can be done by any office boy. I do not think the Opposition Leader spoke with his usual fairness when he made that statement. There was an interjection made at the time to the effect that the hon. member was not sincere. I agree with that interjection. I have here a note bearing on that very phase of the hon. member's speech.

Mr. Hughes: Now you are impugning the future Premier of this State.

Mr. MULLANY: I do wish to pay the Opposition Leader this compliment, that he is one of the ablest and most convincing debaters in the State, always provided that he believes in the case he is endeavouring to

put up. I am sorry the hon. member is not here to-night. As one who has frequently heard him speaking during the last 15 years, I will say that I never heard him to such great disadvantage as when he was opposing this Bill; and I believe the reason was that he was not sincere in his opposition. I at any rate believe that I can easily tell when the Opposition Leader is sincere in his opposition. He is unlike some public men in this State, who are equally effective whether or not they believe in the attitude which they are adopting, whether or not they think they have a good case. I will pay the Opposition Leader the further compliment of saying that he is very easily detected when he is not sincere. I think it would be well for the public life of this State if more of our prominent men had the same failing—if it is a failing. The Opposition Leader made such a poor case against this Bill because he did not really believe in his opposition to it. It is most regrettable that a subject such as this should be made a party question. No party principle whatever attaches to the Bill. It would be well if all political parties said to their members, "You are absolutely free to go into the House and express your own convictions as to how the Bill suits you and as to how it affects the interests of the State." Had that course been adopted by all political parties in this State on the present Bill, the measure would be passed, not merely by a constitutional majority, but by at least 35 votes in a House of 50. Such, I believe, would be the result if every member came to this Chamber to vote as he thinks on this question.

Capt. Carter: A lot of people wish that.

Mr. Munsie: Is the member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) speaking from experience?

Mr. Corboy: The member for Leederville knows nothing about this side of the House.

Capt. Carter: You people will be the most disappointed crowd in the House.

Mr. MULLANY: The member for North-East Fremantle also opposed the second reading, but again there was a lack of that keen application to the subject which we usually find in the hon. member's speeches. Certainly he opposed the Bill, but his opposition was purely nominal. He did not appear to have any enthusiasm, any bite.

Mr. Marshall: The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) had all the bite.

Mr. MULLANY: It appears to me that the Labour Party, who are the Opposition at present, as regards their attitude to the Bill, find themselves in a peculiar position. I believe that at least one-half their members, and possibly two-thirds, if they were permitted to come into this Chamber and express their opinions, would say that the Bill suits them admirably.

Mr. Corboy: Where did you get the impression that that is not the case?

Mr. MULLANY: I have been round about Parliament for a number of years, and have also resided for 27 years in Western Aus-

tralia, and have mixed with people of all shades of political opinion, and have used my observation and judgment.

Mr. Corboy: Which is very faulty.

Mr. MULLANY: Possibly. However, I would very much like to see the adoption of what was suggested by the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), to take a secret ballot on this Bill.

Mr. Hughes: So would I. It would be goodnight to the Bill.

Mr. Teesdale: And to Billy Hughes!

Mr. Richardson: Tom Hughes, this time.

Mr. MULLANY: I think there is no real opposition to the Bill in the ranks of the Labour Party, and that its members would be disappointed if the measure were rejected. However, they are getting in a useful quantity of propaganda work. Whilst really desirous to have the Bill, they want to create an impression that the passing of the Bill is an outrage upon democracy, and that the measure represents an interference with the popular franchise. They really wish to see the Bill passed, but they also wish to make out that it is something awful. They want to be enabled to go to the electors next year saying, "This Bill was passed against our wishes; we fought all we could against it; it is an outrage." At the same time, if the Bill should be rejected, possibly some of the Opposition would be more disappointed than some members on this side.

Mr. Corboy: Was that your attitude in 1911?

Mr. MULLANY: Members who have spoken against the Bill have said that if things were carried out under the State electoral law as they are under the Federal electoral law, everything would be quite all right.

Mr. Marshall: Who made that statement on this side of the House? No one here made it.

Mr. MULLANY: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made it.

Mr. Marshall: He did not.

Mr. MULLANY: Then I will say the Leader of the Opposition made it.

Mr. Marshall: No.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MULLANY: My good friend from the Murchison is a little put out.

Mr. Corboy: Not as much as you are.

Mr. MULLANY: I am getting on very nicely.

Mr. Marshall: You can read the writing on the wall, and you could do so some years ago, too.

Mr. MULLANY: In reply to that interjection, though I do not like being drawn off the track, let me say that I won the Menzies electorate on two occasions, six years ago and three years ago, without the goodwill or sanction of the member for Murchison or of any other member of his party.

Mr. Marshall: By the huge majority of 12!

Mr. MULLANY: As regards the writing on the wall, let me tell the hon. member that

if this Bill does not pass and the present position remains, I shall still retain the Menzies seat. If the Bill does pass, I shall have more than a fighting chance of winning the Leonora seat.

Mr. Hughes: It is just as well to put on a bold front.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not say what you stated I said.

Mr. MULLANY: The reference to things being carried out under our State electoral law as under the Federal electoral law was made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No.

Mr. MULLANY: It was made to this extent, that if the State rolls had been put in as good order as the Federal rolls before this Commission went to work, it would have been all right.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not say that. I said I believed in manhood suffrage, but we could not do it in this State.

Mr. MULLANY: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition also claimed that we should have had a Bill more upon the lines of the Federal Electoral Act passed last year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not say that.

Mr. MULLANY: Undoubtedly the hon. member said that Federal electoral affairs were carried out infinitely more satisfactorily than State electoral affairs.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not say that either.

Mr. MULLANY: With regard to the representation of the outback portions of this State in the House of Representatives, 12 years ago, or thereabouts, there were two goldfields districts—Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie. The Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie districts, together with the North-West, then returned two members to the House of Representatives. Those two members represented two-fifths of the representation of Western Australia in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Munsie: The North-West was never included in Coolgardie.

Mr. MULLANY: You are quite wrong.

Mr. Munsie: It was only after the Dampier seat was provided for.

Mr. MULLANY: Even so, that makes it more glaring.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That shows that the Bill of 1913 was on a different basis.

The Premier: It was not as good as this Bill.

Mr. MULLANY: In any case, that was the position regarding two-fifths of the representation of Western Australia in the House of Representatives. Unfortunately, our population has fallen away in these times to such an extent that, in order to secure one representative for the division of Kalgoorlie, it has been necessary to embrace not only the whole of the goldfields, including Murchison, but the North-West—that part is represented by four members in the Legislative Assembly—and four State electorates along the Midland Railway line, namely, Geraldton, Irwin, Moore, and Greenough. In

other words, to secure one-fifth of our representation in the Federal House under the Federal electoral arrangements, with which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Hon. W. C. Angwin) is so much enamoured, it was necessary to take 16 of the electorates dealt with in the proposed redistribution. Those 16 seats are Coolgardie, Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Kanowna, Hannans, Leonora, Murchison, the four North-West seats, and the four seats along the Midland line. Those 16 seats supply practically one-third of the total representation of the whole State in the Legislative Assembly. That is how the outback portions of the State are treated under the Federal redistribution! Who can say that the outback country is not better treated under the Redistribution of Seats Bill than under the Federal redistribution last year?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not say that.

Mr. MULLANY: Not now, of course.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not say that the other night when I was speaking.

Mr. MULLANY: The member for North-East Fremantle conveyed that impression right through his speech, more particularly when he was referring to enrolments. He said then that if the hands of the Commissioners had not been tied and they could have acted on the lines of the Federal Commission, it would have been different.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. MULLANY: The hon. member was distinctly in favour of the Federal methods as against those adopted in this State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I said they could not be applied to Western Australia.

Mr. MULLANY: I will accept the assurance of the hon. member that he did not say so. Even if he did not, I want to contrast the treatment of the back country under the Bill before us, with that meted out by the Federal Electoral Department. This vast area, covering 16 Assembly seats, has to be allocated to secure one-fifth of our total representation in the House of Representatives, whereas those 16 seats represent nearly a third of the Parliamentary representation in this Chamber. I leave it to hon. members to say whether the Federal Government or the State Government have shown greater consideration for the people outback. As to the enrolments, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was emphatic in his contention that the Federal Electoral Department was much more alive and up to date than the State department. The member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy), too, was emphatic on this point. I am not altogether enamoured of the compulsory enrolment system with penal clauses affecting those who are not enrolled. Neither do I think it is the legitimate function of a Government to spend large sums of money to see that people are enrolled.

We all know that if people have something forced upon them they will, at times, refuse to accept it. Instead of a system

of compulsory enrolment, I am inclined to think we should have one providing for optional enrolment, leaving it to the electors, if they take sufficient interest in the matter, to enrol themselves; if they do not take that interest, they can stop off the rolls. Their punishment would be their disfranchisement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You know most people are off the rolls, because we have two rolls.

Mr. MULLANY: You should see your Federal friends and get the matter fixed up.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are on the Federal rolls, but not on the State rolls. The Federal Department has the necessary machinery to cope with the work.

Mr. MULLANY: I do not know why they should be on the Federal rolls and not on the State rolls. I have not found that the Federal Electoral Department take further steps than the State department to see that people's names are included.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the postal officials do.

Mr. MULLANY: Seeing that both the Federal Parliament and the State Parliament have passed legislation making enrolment compulsory, I do not see that it is the function of either Government to spend money in order to get people on the rolls.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But they do.

Mr. MULLANY: The principal argument put forward in favour of compulsory enrolment was that the Governments should not be called upon to spend large sums of money to give the people something they should look after themselves. If the Electoral Department had undertaken to spend a considerable sum of money to carry out the enrolments, I would not have been surprised to hear the Deputy Leader of the Opposition query the item on the Estimates which would have provided for that expenditure, because—I believe he used the argument himself—the Government should not be compelled to spend such sums when there was provision for compulsory enrolment.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Don't try to put that argument in my mouth. You have not heard anyone oppose items on the Estimates less than I have done.

Mr. MULLANY: It was contended by the member for Mt. Magnet that had there been a satisfactory enrolment of electors in the Murchison district, there would have been at last another thousand persons on the roll, in which event that part of the State would have been entitled to an additional seat. While the member for Mt. Magnet pointed out the number who should have been enrolled in that district, the member for North-East Fremantle informed the House that he had found out that over 1,100 names, that should have appeared on the rolls for his district, were not there and that he had not yet completed his investigations.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There are more than that.

Mr. MULLANY: As the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) pointed out, there is no more likelihood of names being left off the roll in one electorate than in another. Despite the contentions of the member for Mt. Magnet, that people in the outback areas were placed at a disadvantage because of the long distances from post offices and so on, we find that the member for North-East Fremantle ascertains that so many have been left off the rolls in his electorate.

Mr. Teesdale: His is the best combed-out part of the State.

Mr. Marshall: Will some one stop that emery stone?

Mr. MULLANY: When we find such results, it is apparent that the argument has no bearing on the general result.

Mr. Hughes: But it will mean that a lot of seats will be over their quota.

Mr. MULLANY: What does that mean?

Mr. Hughes: That there must be another redistribution.

Mr. MULLANY: The member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) had his most interesting dissertation the other night, and his mind does not carry him any further than that.

Mr. Hughes: Your mind is as barren as the desert.

Mr. Teesdale: Don't bother, there is an allowance for septic tanks.

Mr. MULLANY: I do not claim that the proposed redistribution is perfect. It would not be reasonable to expect a perfect redistribution. I believe that the main principles of the Bill are sound. There may be anomalies regarding the boundaries of some electorates, but I do not possess sufficient local knowledge of the several localities to be able to say whether that is so or not. Notwithstanding the fact that my own seat is eliminated under the proposed redistribution, I do not wish to join the general outcry from the Opposition side and from some members on the Government side of the House, that the Commissioners have shown themselves utterly incapable of carrying out the work they were asked to do. They have done their work reasonably well. I do not know whether there is any practicable method of amending the proposals outlined in the Bill. If it were possible to do so, we might obviate some of the dissatisfaction that exists at present. I realise that, in justice to the people, it is time the political representation in this Chamber was put upon a fairer basis than it is at present. I say this with the full realisation that the Bill may not be carried, and that the next general election may be fought on the present boundaries. Even so, I have sufficient confidence in my constituents to know that they do not desire undue representation. They are prepared to accept a fair quota. Even when I pointed out to them what had been done by the Federal Electoral Department, there was no complaint. The goldfields people are too sound in their views to com-

plain of a reasonably fair redistribution. Certainly the people of the Menzies electorate do not expect me, as their representative, to ask for anything unfair. I would not vote against the Bill, even though I were assured that my vote would be the means of rejecting it, thus leaving me to contest the Menzies seat, which I have held for 12 years. I know almost everybody in the electorate, and I believe I could win it again, but I do not think those people would have the same respect and confidence in me if I were to refuse to support a fair-principled measure such as I believe the Bill to be. If, as we are told, there be no possibility of amending the Bill with a view to the removal of its anomalies, I will support it as it stands rather than have the present unjust distribution continued.

Mr. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.47]: It seems to me there are only two courses open to us, namely either to reject the Bill or to accept it. There are no means of referring it back to the Commissioners for the further consideration that, undoubtedly, it requires at their hands. On the hustings I advocated a redistribution, so I am awkwardly placed in having to make up my mind whether to vote for or against the hybrid measure before us. Murchison has been very badly treated. The people in that electorate have a just grievance. Indeed it would not take very much to induce me to vote against the Bill. The rolls are in a deplorable condition. The Premier ought to have had everybody in the electorates placed upon the rolls before the Commissioners got to work. Business people who have been 18 months in Bridgetown are not on the roll, although it still contains the names of Bridgetown soldiers who were killed in the war. I regret that the Commissioners have provided 15 seats for the metropolitan area. Last session the Premier led us to believe the metropolitan area would have but 14 seats. I cannot understand how the Deputy Leader of the Opposition reconciles his attitude with his statements. He declared that the metropolitan area had not sufficient members; yet he is going to oppose the Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I meant, not sufficient in proportion to the population.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: On analysis I find that nearly all the metropolitan seats are below the quota, while in the agricultural areas many of the electorates are above it. The Commissioners were instructed to take into consideration community of interests, and lines of communication. If the Premier can inform me where community of interest between Balingup and Collie is to be found, I shall be pleased to know it. While putting Balingup in with Collie, the Commissioners took from Collie a timber mill at Kirup and put it into Sussex. There was community of interest between Collie and Kirup, but there is none between Collie and Balingup. To make the new seat of Plantagenet, the Commissioners bring Katanning within eight

miles of Bridgetown. If there be any line of communication between the Great Southern and the South-West, I have yet to learn of it.

Mr. Johnston: There is a railway across.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have letters of protest against the proposed inclusion of portion of the Nelson electorate in Katanning, letters from the Upper Blackwood Road Board, from a public meeting at Boyup Brook, from the Primary Producers' Association at Boyup Brook, and from the progress associations of Denninup and Culicup. Also I have a letter from an indignation meeting of over 100 people, which I think I had better read, as follows:—

Re transfer of portion of the Nelson electorate to Katanning, I beg to inform you that at a very largely attended meeting of Upper Blackwood settlers held on the 2nd inst. to protest against the proposed transference, a motion was unanimously carried which I am instructed to forward to you with a view to your protesting in the House against the very unfair transfer of the Boyup and Denninup districts to the Katanning electorate. The motion reads as follows: "That this meeting protests against the proposed transfer of territory for the following reasons: That Boyup Brook is the natural business centre in this district, that road board and all other public meetings are held there, that a large hospital is being built, and that telephone exchange, local court and other public facilities exist. There is no community of interest between this portion of the district and the new Katanning electorate, which is now extended east as far as Kanowna. It would be almost a disaster to transfer our town and Denninup and Culicup to the Katanning electorate, this being a mixed farming and fruitgrowing district almost identical with the major portion of the old Nelson district. Therefore our interests are not in common with the Katanning electorate. We trust you will be successful in having our motion put into effect, for although the whole redistribution may have been carried out in the most impartial manner, no body of men knowing the local conditions would have fixed the new boundaries as they have been. In fact, rather than have our territory referred to put into the Katanning electorate, we would prefer to see the Redistribution of Seats Bill defeated. Trusting to hear that this very anxious protest will have the desired effect.

Mr. Corboy: Will it have the desired effect?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know. On top of that, we have the petition that I presented the other evening from Balingup, and I think the Minister has received letters from Balingup protesting against the transfer to Collie. Those people have nothing whatever against the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson); in fact he is held in high esteem down there.

Mr. Wilson: They do not know me.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They object to having a purely agricultural community transferred to a mining and timber electorate.

Mr. Latham: And what is the matter with the Katanning electorate?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I think it must be the member in that instance. Another seat was warranted in the South-West, but it should not have been put where it is. The new electorate of Plantagenet appears to be a pocket borough for somebody. Plantagenet has a settled area, with no possible chance of increased population.

The Minister for Mines: I am afraid I must ask you to withdraw that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Indeed, I believe that since the Commissioners concluded their work, Plantagenet has lost population, some of the settlers having left Kendenup. Albany has 2,835 electors, Katanning 3,090, Wagin 2,699, Narrogin 3,214, Pingelly 2,509, and Plantagenet 2,472. In the aggregate those six electorates are 434 below their quota. In the South-West, Murray-Wellington has 3,287 electors, Forrest, 2,568, Bunbury 3,435, Sussex 3,263, Nelson 3,309, and Collie 3,397, or in the aggregate 1,823 above the quota. On top of that there is a new seat, Plantagenet. I am not blaming the Chief Justice, and I suppose all the Chief Electoral Officer knows is something about his rolls, but the other member of the Commission is a special favourite of the Premier, a good man who knows the conditions of the South-West. If the House last session was justified in voting £800,000 for railway construction in the South-West, then Mr. Camm does not know his business and the Premier should not have put him in that position. Nelson is 403 over its quota. There are group settlers in that district not on the rolls. If the rolls were brought up to date 500 people who were not eligible for enrolment but who have since qualified should be added. All the settlement will take place between Pemberton and Denmark. The Premier is going to settle thousands of people there, and he must do it to warrant the construction of the railway. What then is the position regarding redistribution? If Denmark were in Plantagenet, I could understand it.

The Minister for Mines: You are asking for two railways from Bridgetown to run into Plantagenet.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But 60 odd miles will be in Nelson.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, look at the map; right to the Frankland River. If the authorisation of the Pemberton-Denmark railway was warranted and all this settlement is going to take place along the route, another redistribution will be necessary in 12 months time, because there will be 6,000 or 7,000 electors in that district.

The Minister for Mines: Denmark and Norralup are in the Albany electorate.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, and the Albany electorate will grow, but there is no chance of the new Plantagenet electorate growing.

Mr. A. Thomson: Nonsense! Plantagenet must grow.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There is no nonsense about it. The Commission have taken a number of electors from the Katanning district and put them into the Plantagenet electorate. If the Commissioners knew their business or were worth their salt, they would have proposed a new seat from Denmark along the route of the proposed railway. The Katanning electoral boundary has been carried to within eight miles of Bridgetown. Is that a fair redistribution? I admit that redistribution is necessary, but I do not like a hybrid thing of this description where no thought has been given to boundaries, means of communication, community of interest, or anything else. Mr. Camm should have known his business.

Hon. M. F. Troy: He did, too.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: He should have known better than to put up these proposals. He has the confidence of the Premier; he was specially appointed; he has a good knowledge of the South-West, and he should have advised the other members of the Commission regarding the activities down there. The Minister referred to a railway that has been promised for 20 years, one for which I have been fighting ever since I have been in the House, and he as good as said it was going to be built. If I can accept his remark as an official intimation that it will be built—

Mr. Munsie: You had better give him notice of that suggestion.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister said the railway is to be built.

The Minister for Mines: Certainly it will be built, but you are suggesting two railways.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We have committed ourselves to one railway, but the Premier has not yet introduced a Bill to authorise the other.

The Minister for Mines: You need faith.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have not much faith in this Bill. Before I vote I should like a statement from the Premier—

Mr. McCallum: Put the acid on him.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: A definite statement whether this measure can be referred back to the Commissioners or not. Everyone must admit that if the expenditure voted last year was warranted, the new seat should have been given to the South-West portion of the State. If the Bill cannot be referred back to the Commission for alteration—

Hon. M. F. Troy: And repairs.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I shall adopt the lesser of two evils. Despite all the protests I have received from all over my electorate, protests on behalf of 800 or 900 people—and if there was an election to-morrow, they would be my staunchest supporters—I shall be guided by the test whether a redistribution is necessary in the best interests of Western Australia. I say a redistribution is necessary, and I be-

lieve this Bill will represent the lesser of two evils.

Mr. McCallum: Now the Premier will give you the information.

Mr. Teesdale: Another supporter!

Mr. CORBOY (Yilgaru) [9.8]: I intend to be very brief in my opposition to the Bill.

Mr. Marshall: As one of the slaughtered innocents?

Capt. Carter: Not too innocent.

The Minister for Mines: Out of sympathy for your own feelings?

Mr. CORBOY: Some of the slaughtered will possibly be resurrected, and I feel there is a chance of that being my experience. I wish to refer briefly to some of the remarks that have fallen from members on the Government side. Particularly was I struck by some of the statements made by the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale).

Hon. M. F. Troy: Who has 246 electors.

Mr. Teesdale: No. 247. Another was born last night.

Mr. CORBOY: I was particularly struck with his advocacy of the Bill. Apart from the Premier, he was the first member to defend the measure. It was somewhat startling to find such assurance on the part of a member representing an electorate that in the first place had been exempted from the operation of the measure—

Hon. M. F. Troy: That is why he supported it.

Mr. CORBOY: From one who had been granted complete immunity from the recommendations of the Commissioners, and from one with an enrolment of 537 constituents. Roebourne contains the smallest number of electors of any of the present districts.

Mr. Teesdale: It is the quality that counts.

Mr. CORBOY: If the hon. member is a fair sample, 5,087 would not be sufficient. The enrolment for the district of Roebourne is considerably smaller than that of any of the electorates that it is proposed to cut out.

Hon. M. F. Troy: It is the irreducible minimum.

Mr. CORBOY: I do not know that it is irreducible, but it certainly is the minimum. At the latest election 246 electors were favourable to the hon. member's candidature and, despite his claims regarding inaccessibility, distance travelled inland and all that sort of thing, the whole of those votes were recorded in three seaports.

Mr. Teesdale: And he still hears up.

Mr. CORBOY: The hon. member spoke about inaccessibility—

Hon. M. F. Troy: And he spoke about camels.

Mr. CORBOY: He spoke about tripping 600 miles into the back country with not a soul to talk to, going out with a buggy and camel. Yet the whole of his electors were in three seaports!

Mr. Latham: Not even a postal vote from outside.

Hon. M. F. Troy: That is so.

Mr. Teesdale: All round the blacksmith's shop.

Mr. CORBOY: There might be enough to keep one blacksmith going.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Or about the store which the member for Roebourne managed and from which he insinuated I purchased a suit of clothes.

Mr. CORBOY: I can quite understand the feelings of the member for Roebourne. It was the loss of the little 200 per cent. profit to himself that has caused him to worry about that transaction.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! This Bill has nothing to do with suits.

Mr. CORBOY: The member for Roebourne spoke of the number of electors in the Federal subdivisions, and compared them with the number in the State subdivisions in order to demonstrate that the State rolls were up-to-date. He pointed out that the numbers were approximately the same. The comparison he made was entirely misleading. Not only are the boundaries different, but there are five more Federal subdivisions than State subdivisions. There are 55 Federal and only 50 State subdivisions, so, in claiming that the figures were the same, he merely proved the contention that has been advanced by members on this side of the House. The number of electors contained in five Federal subdivisions is approximately the number by which the Federal rolls exceed the State rolls. It was said by the member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany) and others, that no one in the Chamber would regret the defeat of the Bill more than members on this side. I am in a better position to judge the views of members on this side than is the hon. member. If he could find any means of taking a secret ballot, such as he spoke of, I would be prepared to bet him more than new hats upon the result.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Betting is not allowed here.

Mr. CORBOY: I am aware of that. The hon. member was wrong and misleading in his assumption. The position regarding this side of the House has been explained by the Leader of the Opposition and others in a way that shows the real ground for our objections which, despite assertions to the contrary, are sincere. No better proof of the real position can be afforded than by the fact that members sitting on the Government side seem so determined to support the Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some of them.

Mr. CORBOY: There was one member opposite who announced his intention of opposing it.

Mr. Teesdale: And he is not certain yet.

Mr. CORBOY: He may receive a promise similar to that which the member for Neison (Mr. J. H. Smith) was attempting to extract and this may influence him. Knowing the hon. member as I do, however, I cannot think it would influence him.

Mr. Pickering: I will vote as I speak, you can rest assured of that.

Mr. CORBOY: I have always found the member for Sussex to be a gentleman of his word. I am sure he will always vote as he speaks. Members opposite claim that we would regret the defeat of the Bill. They suggest that it is something that will benefit us. I am as convinced as I stand here that if the Bill had been going to do so it would not have been introduced.

The Premier: You have no right to say that.

Mr. Latham: You know it is unfair.

Mr. CORBOY: I withdraw that. There would not have been such loyal support of the Bill on the part of members opposite if what is inferred had been true.

Mr. Latham: You know it is not true.

The Colonial Secretary: A very improper remark.

Mr. CORBOY: I have withdrawn the remark to which the Premier objected. Members opposite would not have supported the Bill so loyally if they had dreamed for a moment that we would profit by it.

The Premier: Why not?

Mr. CORBOY: It is all very well to talk about putting aside party bias and the like. Just as I am influenced by party so is every member opposite influenced.

The Premier: You are entitled to speak for yourself, of course.

Mr. CORBOY: Fair as the Premier usually is, he must admit that he is very frequently influenced by party considerations.

The Premier: Not in the slightest.

Mr. CORBOY: Then he must be one angel amongst many. There are many aspects of this Bill to which I object, but attention been drawn to them in a very able manner by other speakers on this side of the House. Apart from the injustices, some of them minor ones, that will follow in the train of this Bill, the greatest of all is that which is being done to the Murchison district. At present the district, which is referred to as one district in the Bill, has three seats. The total enrolment for these three seats is 2,654. From that number the Commissioners have subtracted 452 electors, and made one seat for the whole district. Altogether 2,202 electors have been left in the Murchison seat. Compare that with Roebourne, which has 587 electors.

Hon. M. F. Troy: And compare the area of the two.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes, and the inaccessibility of the greater portion of it. The people of the Murchison are just as much out of touch with the capital as are the people round about Roebourne.

Mr. A. Thomson: What about the 19 railway stations?

Mr. CORBOY: I did not wish to refer to them. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) submitted information with which he was not personally conversant. His statement as to the number of railway stations is as misleading as many of his other statements. As a matter of fact there are three

railway stations in the Murchison district; all the others are merely unattended sidings.

Mr. Teesdale: That is a deliberate misstatement and you know it. There are 19 railway stations, and I will prove it to you to-morrow morning. Don't make a statement like that. It is a deliberate untruth.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I rise to a point of order. The member for Roebourne has stated that the member for Yilgarn uttered a deliberate untruth.

Mr. Teesdale: That is what I said, by Jove it is.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The hon. member must withdraw the statement.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to withdraw the remark.

Mr. Wilson: Stand up!

Mr. Teesdale: I would like to know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether the hon. member affected took exception to my remarks.

Hon. M. F. Troy: That does not matter.

Mr. Teesdale: Then any member can call upon me to withdraw?

Hon. M. F. Troy: Yes.

Mr. Teesdale: Very well; I withdraw the statement.

Mr. CORBOY: I was about to ask for a withdrawal of the remark when the member for Mt. Magnet rose in his place. Let me say this to the member for Roebourne: I have not been in the Murchison district, but I have been supplied with information in just the same way as the hon. member was supplied. The information I possess is that there are only three railway stations there, and that the remainder represent unattended sidings.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is splitting straws.

Mr. CORBOY: Not at all.

Mr. Marshall: It is correct.

Mr. CORBOY: The information I possess gives an entirely different impression of the position from that given by the statement of the hon. member that there are 19 railway stations.

Mr. Teesdale: Here are the names of every one of them.

Mr. CORBOY: Names do not constitute stations.

Mr. Teesdale: Of course not. You whistle for them when you want them!

Mr. Marshall: Take "Teesdale" for the name of a man.

Mr. Teesdale: Very crushing!

Mr. CORBOY: I have endeavoured to make my position clear.

The Minister for Works: You have not made your point clear.

Mr. CORBOY: I would not attempt to make anything clear to the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works: You know your limitations.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes, and I know the limitations of the Minister. The Commission have seen fit to take away 452 electors from the Murchison district, and substitute one seat for three. By adding exactly the same

number of electors, 452, to the Murchison, they could have reached a quota requisite for the creation of two seats.

The Premier: I do not think so.

Mr. CORBOY: I have worked it out.

The Premier: I have worked it out also.

Mr. CORBOY: There were 2,564 electors, and the minimum number necessary for two seats would be 3,006.

The Premier: Not for two seats.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes. The minimum quota for one seat would be 1503.

Mr. Marshall: According to "Hansard" you said that 1,500 would be the quota for the Murchison.

Mr. CORBOY: Approximately the number of electors required to give a minimum quota for two seats could have been obtained by absorbing the Northampton lead fields into the Murchison. We would then have had attention paid to community of interest. The Northampton lead fields would have been placed in an area that is essentially a mining area, and this would have given a quota sufficient to provide the two seats to which the Murchison district is entitled.

The Minister for Mines: What would the country districts get by the time the Murchison got its two seats and the metropolitan area got the rest?

Mr. CORBOY: I could have referred to the Plantagenet seat.

The Minister for Mines: I can always go to Maylands.

Mr. CORBOY: I have come out into the open with regard to Maylands. The Minister had sufficient of Maylands on a previous occasion.

The Minister for Mines: The trouble was I did not get sufficient.

The Premier: You were saying something about putting the Northampton lead fields into the Murchison?

Mr. CORBOY: There is very nearly the number required in the Northampton district, and if this were added to the Murchison it would bring about the result I have stated. I think there are between 400 and 500 people in the Northampton district.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is in addition to the number struck out.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes.

The Premier: How would you connect it with the Murchison?

Mr. CORBOY: That could be arranged. If the Premier will look at the map, he will see there would not be any difficulty about it. I appeal to the Premier and members generally to do justice to the Murchison district, whether in Committee or by referring back the report to the Commissioners so that the wishes of the House may be carried out. It is possible even now to undo this injustice. I specially appeal to the member for Roebourne to assist us in achieving our desire.

Mr. PIESSE: I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	25
Noes	..	..	..	..	11

Majority for .. 14

#### AYES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Money
Mr. Carter	Mr. Pickering
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Davies	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Denton	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Durack	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. George	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Johnston	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Mann	Mr. Mullany
Sir James Mitchell	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Troy
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Heron
Mr. Marshall	(Teller.)

Motion thus passed, the debate adjourned.

### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1923-24.

#### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 11th September; Mr. Munsie in the Chair.

Department of Lands and Repatriation (Hon. Sir James Mitchell, Minister).

Vote—*Lands and Surveys*, £96,446:

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [9.36]: In dealing with this vote, one feels he is dealing with a subject of vital importance to the State. It seems to me that between the various departments dealing with land settlement and development in our State there is not sufficient co-ordination. Recently I was written to by some people in South Africa for particulars of our system of land settlement. Some correspondence which was handed to me to be sent on to South Africa I found rather interesting, and I propose to read it to the House. Here is a copy of a letter sent to intending settlers outside the State, and presumably the same terms are available to intending settlers within the State—

In reply to your letter . . . , I am forwarding, under separate cover, the various pamphlets issued by this department, which fully explain the conditions of land selection within this State. (2) Any male over the age of 16 years may acquire an area up to 160 acres as a free homestead farm, also additional areas under conditional purchase conditions up to an area

of 1,000 acres of cultivable land, or 5,000 acres of grazing land. Full particulars regarding this class of selection will be found on pages 10 to 17 of "Western Australia for the Settler"; also on page 26 of the same book will be found the particulars of the financial assistance rendered by the State Agricultural Bank on approved holdings. (3) The area of wheat lands is limited, and will be absorbed by returned soldiers and sons of present settlers, but large areas are available in the heavy rainfall portions of the South-West of the State. These are suitable for dairying, pig-raising, intense culture and fruit, and 80 to 100 acres make an ample holding. This land may be selected under free selection or the group settlement scheme, particulars of which are attached. (4) The cost of complete establishment on these holdings is from £700 to £1,200. Local markets for dairy produce, eggs, etc., are under-supplied—approximately £2,000,000 worth of foodstuffs being imported annually from the Eastern States. (5) In addition, Western Australia offers special opportunities for men with capital of £1,000 upwards. Private lands, as going concerns, may be purchased at prices very much lower than those ruling for similar quality land in the more highly developed Eastern States. At present improved wheat lands run from £3 to £10 per acre. (6) The Government will control or supervise the investment of capital to see that good value is obtained, making the purchase, and advising as to stock, machinery and crops, and further improvements through its experts and inspectors. (7) Capable, experienced Government inspectors visit holdings monthly to advise on all matters of management, cropping and purchase.  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. will be allowed on money waiting investment and unexpended balance. A small committee of prominent citizens will act as voluntary workers to make the newcomer feel at home and watch his interests. (8) Local experience will be arranged when necessary before settlement on the new settler's own land—no charge is made for advice, supervision or control of investment. (9) A special offer of fruit farms is made to strong, healthy boys of eighteen upwards, who require training for land work and who possess capital of £600 and upwards. They will be taken in groups of fifty—land secured, either by purchase at a cheap rate or Crown land on which they will be housed together in a central position, under the charge of a capable fruit-grower, who will supervise their housing and thorough training. The boys will acquire their knowledge in the work of preparing the farms, i.e., in clearing, fencing, erecting cottages for each, planting vines or apples, etc., cultivating, pruning, etc. (10) They will collectively make a farm for each member of the group. (11) In the case of vineyards, profitable bearing should be reached three

years from planting, and the boy should be capable of handling the property himself, including marketing. Apples take up to six years to reach this stage, and the longer period will be covered by dairying or stock raising, pigs and poultry, in addition to fruit-growing. (12) The boys work for themselves, and the total cost of the preparation of the group will be charged against it, work of equal value being carried out on each block, the cost being defrayed from the capital lodged by members. Boys who fail to work satisfactorily, or who are not well-behaved, cannot remain in groups. (13)  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest will be allowed on unexpended balances of capital lodged. Yours faithfully.

I have made inquiries, but have not been able to discover where any of these groups are established.

The Premier: We have had no applicants offering.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is a most astounding statement for the Premier to make. I know of some who have offered.

The Premier: Two.

Mr. A. THOMSON: More than two, and I can get plenty more. The people of Katanning caused a property to be offered to the Government for viticultural purposes. The Government, after waiting for about six months, did not even take the trouble to inspect the property to discover whether it was suitable, though the offer of it was backed up by the opinion of experts. It may be information to the Premier that private people have started a group settlement on that property, and are farming there profitably today—a fact which shows that the land was suitable, notwithstanding that the Government did not seize what in my opinion was a good opportunity. The property should at least have been inspected by the Government, in view of the fact that the Premier on his return from Britain asked for the assistance of the people in his development scheme. The committee at Katanning set to work and gave their services to the State. After devoting considerable time and trouble to this matter they found that the Government would not even inspect the property.

The Premier: The property was inspected.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It was never examined from a viticultural point of view. The last letter on the subject stated that the Government were desirous of making further inquiries as to the possibilities of frost, and as to whether grapes produced in the district would have sufficient sugar contents. Both these matters were already well established by the production of currants and raisins by growers in the vicinity. In the matter of land settlement, I repeat, there is a great lack of co-ordination between the various departments. I hope to be able to prove to the satisfaction of this Committee that things are not as they should be in connection with land settlement. I have here letters of protest from some of my electors, who acted in accordance with the

conditions laid down in the regulations of the Lands Department. The department throw open lands for selection at 9s. or 9s. 6d. per acre. Newcomers have been told that on their coming to Western Australia the Government will provide them with land, giving them so many acres free, and advance them money to do clearing and fencing, and, in fact, do everything for them to bring the farm into a state of productivity. What seems to me a scandalous case has been brought to my notice. It is the case of an ex-Imperial soldier, who believed the statements which were made in the Old Country as to land settlement here. He had a perfect right to do so, having regard to the pamphlets which were placed before him. He was led to believe that he would be justified in coming out here and taking up land, since the Agricultural Bank would make him the necessary advances. We find, however, that the Lands Department will throw the land open for selection and permit a settler to take up a block. I propose to read the letter forwarded to me by the ex-Imperial soldier. It is one of the most astounding cases ever brought under my notice, and shows that there is a lack of co-ordination between the Agricultural Bank and the Lands Department, whose officers are supposed to work hand in hand to assist new settlers. This is the man's statement—

I took up my block, Williams location 11299, on the 1st June, 1922, and got to work immediately to try to get 250 to 300 acres ready for the plough, and was rather pleased with myself when I succeeded in getting about 280 acres ready. On 6th October, 1922, I forwarded, duly completed, with the necessary deposit, applications for loans for stock, machinery, and house, these being witnessed by a local justice of the peace, who gave me advice on all these matters. On the 8th July, 1923—

This man put in his application, it should be remembered, in October, 1922—

—I am worse off than when I started. I am still awaiting the arrival of the necessary promised help. My small capital is gone, and I am owing money for stores. My work has all been done in vain, and therefore I have to quit my block and seek work elsewhere.

When he says—

They do not need to ask me to send the rent. I have three demands now.

The Premier: The settler would not pay rent for five years, so how could he receive free applications for his rent?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am simply making the statement as submitted to me by this ex-Imperial soldier in his letter. In my opinion, the man's statements are truthful.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What would be the position with a forfeited block?

The Premier: That becomes Crown land.

Mr. A. THOMSON: And that is this man's position.

Mr. Corboy: For some reason or other, the five years' exemption from rent has not been given in some instances.

The Premier: But that is the law.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Then the man goes on to say that he has never refused any work that was offered to him, and that he had taken a small contract with the idea of earning some money to support his wife. In common with the majority of people, this man was under the impression that as an ex-Imperial soldier, he was entitled to come under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act. The interpretation section of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act of 1919 defines what is meant by "discharged soldier," and proceeds—

The Minister may extend the above definition to include any person who, not being or having been resident in the Commonwealth or the Dominion of New Zealand, was appointed as an officer or enlisted as a member of the naval or military forces of the United Kingdom or of any of His Majesty's Dominions, and has been on active service in the said war, and has received his discharge and is resident in the Commonwealth.

This man was led to believe in the Old Country that he would receive financial assistance in Western Australia if he settled here.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How long is it since he came out?

Mr. A. THOMSON: He took up his land in June, 1922.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Long before that they knew in England that they could not do it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am giving the statement made by the man himself. He was led to believe that he would get assistance. No doubt he was led to believe by the officers of the Lands Department that he would get that assistance.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They could not have done that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Then why make this application? Why was not this man told at the outset that he could not get any assistance?

Hon. M. F. Troy: Hear, hear! That is the position.

Mr. Chesson: That would have been honest.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is different if he comes under the Soldier Settlement Scheme.

Mr. A. THOMSON: This man had to wait for 12 months before he received this notification. It would be giving a square deal to the settlers if they were told the position at the outset. This man spent all his capital in clearing 280 acres ready for the plough, and he expected to secure loans from the Government in accordance with the statements contained in pamphlets that were made available to him. These things should not occur, and it emphasises the lack of co-ordination. Then this man goes on to com-

pare his position with that of an ex-A.I.F. man who was settled to the east of him. That man was settled through the Repatriation Department, and his case presents a contrast. The ex-Imperial man writes—

He can come fully equipped with horse and cart, house, tools, and £1 per week sustenance allowance. He has only himself to think about, yet here I am with a wife in an 8 x 10 tent, moving from pillar to post to scrape together a meagre existence and a very meagre one at that.

He stated in his letter that in his last communication to the Agricultural Bank asking if he could receive assistance under the Soldier Settlement Scheme, he wrote—

Failing that assistance, I asked if I could get a start off with a bit of seed and super. In reply to that communication, this settler received from the manager of the Agricultural Bank a letter dated 8th March last, reading as follows:—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 28th ult. I know nothing of any application for further assistance made by you, but presume it is with our Narragin inspector, to whom I have already written on the subject. I am sending him another urgent reminder to-day. In reply to the other paragraphs in your letter, the pamphlet you allude to concerning soldier settlement applies to ex-A.I.F. soldiers only, and, in any case, no regular visits are made by our inspectors until after a loan has been approved. Imperial soldiers are naturally not entitled to apply for assistance under the Australian Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act.

This man stated that he was not asking for charity or doles in any shape or form. He merely wanted a little help, and he promised to do his best. He said—

I have stuck it so far, and I will stick as long as I have a leg to stand on.

The position is most astounding. This man made his application for a loan in October, 1922, and mainly through my instrumentality he was ultimately successful in receiving a communication in which the Agricultural Bank authorities said they did not think it was in the interests of the settler to go on as he had not sufficient money. Fancy keeping a man waiting for 12 months for such a reply! I want to read a letter that I received from the Agricultural Bank—

With regard to the correspondence, which I herewith return to you, Mr. — selected an abandoned property of ours in the Nyabing district, and the mortgage in connection with the debt he was taking over was only registered on the 16th inst. So far as I can gather from the correspondence, he has, in the meantime, applied for a loan of some description through the Narragin district office of which, of course, I have no particulars. I will, however, communicate with the district inspector down there, and ask him to finalise as early as possible. Probably owing to the fact that the security

was not completed, the district office has not considered the inspection a matter of urgency. I regret that I can offer no satisfactory explanation to Mr. —'s complaints with reference to unanswered correspondence. I find that we have two letters from him on our file dated 26th November, neither of which has been attended to, and I am taking this matter up with the officers concerned.

If that is not a glaring case of negligence on the part of some officer, I do not know what can be regarded in that light. The most unfortunate part is that this individual has been deprived of the possibility of making a home for himself on the land, and he has to wait 12 months before the department can let him know that it is not in his interests that he should proceed with his holding!

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Was this an Agricultural Bank property?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, it was one of the properties taken over in the Nyabing-Pingrup area, where the settlers were led to believe they would have a railway.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You put out the Labour Government, so that they could not build it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I admit that if that Government had remained in power for a little while longer, in all probability this trouble would not have occurred. Residents of the district are of the opinion that the man would have made good. His property was within five or six miles of the railway station when the line was constructed. The Lands Department make the block available and then the settler is turned down by the Agricultural Bank! I have another instance, that of a man who has resided in the Tambellup district for 25 years and has raised a family.

The Premier: Is that Saggars?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes. His sons took up a certain area of land that the department valued at 9s. 6d. per acre, with a reduction to 5s. if, after a period of four years, the poison was eradicated. Those young men took up the land as a grazing proposition. But when they put in an application for a loan of £75, it was turned down, the opinion of the Agricultural Bank being that the security was not sufficient. If 2,000 acres of land is not of sufficient value to warrant an advance of £75, it is a very poor advertisement for the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the land belongs to the Crown. There is no security at all.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The land upon which the group settlements are situated also belongs to the Crown, yet advances are readily made on it.

The Premier: But we cannot advance on all the lands in the State.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the land were not good enough for a loan, why was it ever thrown open? To-day that land is not producing any revenue whatever, either to the State or to the railways, yet the Lands Department appraise it at 9s. 6d. per acre.

The settler is willing to put in his time and expend certain money, yet when he asks the Government to perform their part of the contract, they refuse.

The Premier: There was no contract at all.

Hon. M. F. Troy: If the land is valued at 9s. 6d. per acre it ought to be worth a loan.

Mr. Corboy drew attention to the state of the Committee.

[Mr. Angelo resumed the Speaker's Chair.]

#### *Point of Order.*

Hon. M. F. Troy: You are not the deputy Speaker. You are the deputy Chairman of Committees. The deputy Speaker is Mr. Stubbs. You, Mr. Angelo, have no business in that Chair, and you cannot call for a quorum.

The Premier: Of course he can.

Hon. M. F. Troy: But he cannot. The procedure is most irregular. The deputy Speaker is Mr. Stubbs.

The Premier: Mr. Angelo can do it if he likes.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Give me "May."

The Premier: I am not going to get "May" for you. I think, Mr. Angelo, you are entitled to take the Chair. Standing Order 21a provides that the Chairman of Committees shall take the Chair as deputy Speaker whenever requested so to do by Mr. Speaker, without any formal communication to the House. In case of the unavoidable absence or illness of the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Speaker may nominate a member, who shall perform the duties and exercise the authority of the Speaker in relation to all proceedings of the House during the temporary absence of Mr. Speaker from the Chair. Clearly, then, the point raised by the member for Mt. Magnet cannot be regarded seriously.

Mr. Marshall: But Standing Order 21a deals with the Chairman of Committees.

The Premier: The Speaker may nominate a member to perform his duties and exercise his authority. There is nothing to argue. Surely the hon. member will not attempt to argue that because the Speaker is not here the House cannot go on! You, Mr. Angelo, have been appointed to exercise the authority of the Speaker in his absence.

Hon. M. F. Troy: This proceeding is most irregular. Mr. Angelo should not be in the Chair when this point of order is raised. It is highly irregular.

The Premier: No, it is not. Mr. Angelo, may we have a quorum?

Mr. Angelo: The question of a quorum will have to be settled first, in any case.

Hon. M. F. Troy: But I have taken the point that you are not entitled to settle it. You have no business to be in the Speaker's Chair.

Mr. Angelo: That cannot be decided without a quorum.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I know that. A temporary Chairman of Committees cannot go into that seat and demand a quorum. That is for the Speaker or his deputy to do.

Mr. Angelo: I have been requested by the Speaker to act for him.

Hon. M. F. Troy: He cannot request you. He must in the House nominate you as his deputy.

The Minister for Works: The Speaker inducted him in the Chair.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Whenever a temporary Chairman of Committees is appointed, the Speaker announces the appointment to the House, and objection can be taken by the House. The Speaker has never announced this appointment.

The Minister for Works: You were in the House when the Speaker inducted Mr. Angelo.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I do not care about that. The Speaker's business is to notify the House that he nominates the member for Gascoyne. Why, any one of us has just as much right to go and take that Chair! The proceedings are most irregular, although I do not know that I ought to bother my head about it. I think we had better report progress until we can get the Speaker or his deputy to settle the point.

Mr. Angelo: I will have to direct the Clerk to ring the bells and get a quorum.

Hon. M. F. Troy: But you cannot so direct him.

Bells rung.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No doubt it is all contrary to the Standing Orders.

The Premier: Standing Order 21a applies.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Most certainly it does not.

Mr. Angelo: I have counted the House. A quorum is present.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You have no more right to declare a quorum than have I.

Mr. Marshall: This is becoming a pantomime. Wait till I get up in that Chair.

The Minister for Works: Don't be an ass.

Mr. Marshall: It requires the Minister for Works to be that.

The Minister for Works: I should like to deal with you.

#### *Debate resumed.*

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Munsie): I wish to make an announcement. The vote we are dealing with is "Minister for Lands and Repatriation." Later on we shall come to "Agricultural Bank," "Industries Assistance Board" and "Soldiers Land Settlement." Hon. members wishing to discuss any matters coming under these headings must do so on the vote now being dealt with. On "Group Settlement" and "Land Settlement for Soldiers" there can be no discussion, because there are no items.

Mr. Pickering: But they can be discussed on the general discussion.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I was dealing with the lack of co-ordination between departments. A man, who had resided in Tambellup for 25 years, had sons that desired to take up land in the district, and the department placed a value of 9s. 6d. on the land. Yet the Agricultural Bank refused to grant a loan of £75. The department were quite prepared to take the man's money, but were not prepared to grant him assistance. The father of these boys made a pertinent statement as follows:—

I feel that, after perusing the same, you will have the matter brought up and thoroughly looked into. If such a state of things is allowed to exist it would be a standing disgrace to those in authority to think that sons of our own soil are refused monetary assistance, when thousands of pounds are being spent to even educate the imported people how to work.

That is a very pregnant statement. This man had resided for 25 years in an agricultural area and brought up a family with a knowledge of the conditions in that district. They recognised that the land, on which the Government placed a value of 9s. 6d., would make good grazing land for sheep. Yet the Agricultural Bank practically said it was worth nothing. I could quote other instances from various portions of my district. It is time our land settlement was put on a proper basis. The other day I heard a member say that our group settlements were like protoplasm.

The Colonial Secretary: Is that a new kind of breakfast food?

Mr. A. THOMSON: He meant to convey that they were being evolved as we went along. I feel inclined to apply the same term to our land settlement generally. We have our Lands Department, Agricultural Department, Group Settlement, Soldier Settlement, Agricultural Bank, Titles Office, and L.A.B., seven different departments, and I honestly believe there is absolutely no co-ordination between them.

The Premier: And I absolutely deny that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have proved it with regard to two departments by the letters I have quoted to-night. What is the use of saying there is co-ordination when every member knows there is not? If we are going to make a success of land settlement, it must be properly managed. There must be co-ordination between the departments.

The Premier: What do you mean by co-ordination?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Proper working. It is all very well for the Premier to talk like that. Regarding the I.A.B.—

The Premier: We shall come to that later.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is part and parcel of the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The whole of this should come under Loan Estimates and should not be here at all. It is paid for out of loan.

Mr. A. THOMSON: A letter from Nyabing states—

Will the board allow settlers to receive costs of manure, machinery parts, oils, twine, and other first charges against crops? The case in point is a farmer who is obliged to find all this and the board comes along and takes all the wheat sold. It is obvious this farmer has little prospect of carrying on under these conditions.

The Premier says there is co-ordination. The Premier is attempting to achieve too much. It is time we put these various departments under an administrative head. If the Under Secretary for Lands were given a certain amount and a free hand to administer his department, we would get very much better results than are being obtained to-day.

The Premier: He has a free hand.

Mr. A. THOMSON: He has not; he cannot select his officers; he has to take the officers allotted to him.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That applies right through the Public Service.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am dealing with the principle. We are spending the whole of our money on land development, and yet I say advisedly we have nothing but muddling. In one portion of my district the settlers definitely stated that an inspector had not been there for 16 months. Yet those people have been waiting for an inspector to visit them and approve of loans. If the Lands Department were working in harmony with the Agricultural Bank would a value of 9s. 6d. an acre be placed on land by the one department and an advance be refused by the other? This proves conclusively that there is something wrong. The different departments are doubtless aiming at the one object, but there is no cohesion. Each is playing a lone hand; all are pulling in different directions. If these departments were brought under one head, we would get better results for the State and certainly better results for the settlers. I commend this matter to the earnest consideration of the Premier. It is a scandal that such things as have happened should be possible. We advertise Western Australia as the one country that grants both land and assistance; yet a man who takes up land and wastes 12 months is told that he cannot get any assistance. This man wrote to the department on the 6th October, 1922, and despite repeated letters—I myself wrote three—he did not receive a reply until the end of August.

The Premier: That is your statement.

Mr. A. THOMSON: And it is correct. The official responsible for the delay was the Premier's brother.

Mr. Johnston: He is one of the best workers in the service.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I consider he was responsible, though the officers under him might have been to blame.

The Premier: You have made a statement; I shall get the facts to-morrow.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am not such a fool as to make statements that I cannot sub-

stantiate. The Premier loves me too much for me to do that. I have done my duty in directing attention to the seriousness of the position—the absolute lack of harmony and co-ordination.

Mr. Teesdale: Was that man promised assistance when he bought the land?

Mr. A. THOMSON: He was guided by the pamphlets.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The pamphlet that stated such men were to receive the same preference as was granted to soldiers was withdrawn in 1920.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But that does not excuse the delay of 10 months in replying to the letters sent to the department. Any man taking up land is justified in assuming from the literature distributed that he will get assistance from the Agricultural Bank. If it is not intended to grant advances, the Lands Department should be able to notify applicants when they inquire for land.

The Premier: Where do you say we are spending the money?

Mr. A. THOMSON: In the group settlements. The Government have brought these men out. They have no money, and the Government are paying them 10s. a day sustenance. They are also teaching them how to work. Many of them have never seen an axe. Notwithstanding this the Premier makes that inane interjection. I have done my duty in drawing the attention of the Government and the House to the deplorable state of affairs connected with our land settlement policy and our group settlements, caused by the various departments not working in harmony with each other but working against each other. Large departments are being built up, and employment is being found for a number of civil servants. All this is detrimental to the interests of land settlement, and I trust the present position will no longer be allowed to continue.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 18th September, 1923.*

	PAGE
Question: Income tax collection ... ..	731
Assent to Bill ... ..	731
Bills: Amendments Incorporation, 1b. ... ..	731
Inspection of Scaffolding, Com. ... ..	731
Redistribution of Seats, 2a. ... ..	736
Annual Estimates: Vote discussed, Lands and Surveys ... ..	743

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

### QUESTION—INCOME TAX COLLECTION.

Mr. HUGHES asked the Premier: Of the £390,003 collected during the year ended 30th June, 1923, on account of income tax, how much belongs to that financial year?

The PREMIER replied: The amount of £390,003 consists of: Arrears from previous years, £103,849; on account of 1922-23, £286,154; total, £390,003. An amount of £121,966 was outstanding on 30th June, 1923.

### ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to Supply Bill (No. 1) £1,790,600.

### BILL—AMENDMENTS INCORPORATION.

Received from the Council, and read a first time.

### BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING.

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous sitting; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Scaffolding, etc., to be in accordance with Act:

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

*That the words "used in connection therewith" be struck out.*

As I argued on a previous clause, although the Bill provides for gear other than that which will be used in connection with scaffolding, the retention of the words "used in connection therewith" would prevent the Government from prescribing regulations as to the standard of gear, unless such gear is used in connection with scaffolding. The ladder on which a painter works is gear, and