

street corner. There are many people who hold the same opinion as I do. They would have been prepared to put their hands in their pockets and give their mites towards the Perth Hospital fund, had the nurses employed at that institution been treated as I consider they should be.

Hon. H. Stewart: Always some excuse!

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Perhaps on the part of the hon. member; it is an accusation on my part! I will not give a penny towards the Perth Hospital while the nurses are worked such long hours. If those nurses worked shorter hours and were treated decently, there are many besides myself who would be prepared to increase the amounts we give to the institution. I support the Bill. I cannot understand how it can be opposed by any hon. member who goes to a race-course, takes a fly in a gold mine, goes fishing, or does many another thing that amounts to a gamble. How can they possibly say they will vote against a Lotteries Bill and contend it is immoral to run lotteries? If that is so, then it is immoral to do the various things I have mentioned. If hon. members seek to prevent those things, then they will take away one of the little pleasures in life left to us to help us through this dreary world.

On motion by Hon. H. A. Stephenson debate adjourned.

#### BILL—FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS.

##### *Assembly's Message.*

Message received from the Assembly notifying that the Council's amendment had been agreed to.

*House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 29th October, 1924.*

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

#### QUESTION—EDUCATION, DRIVING ALLOWANCE.

Mr. LINDSAY asked the Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister): 1, Has the driving allowance for children living more than three miles from school been reduced? 2, If so, why?

The Hon. S. W. MUNSIE replied: 1 and 2, Yes. It is considered that the reduced amount is adequate.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAYS, PASSENGER SERVICES.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Railways: In view of the increasing competition of motor vehicles, is it the intention of the Railway Department to expedite the passenger services between Narrogin and Perth, particularly the day trains?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: This question was gone into some time ago, and provision has been made in the summer time-table—which operates from the 1st December—for a faster day service. The running time will be reduced by 1½ hours.

#### BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1, Albany Loan Validation.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

2, Bunbury Electric Lighting Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Withers.

3, Carnarvon Electric Lighting.

Introduced by Mr. Angelo.

## RETURN—LANDS VALUATION.

On motion by Mr. Lindsay, ordered:

*That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing (a) the estimated unimproved value of metropolitan lands; (b) the estimated unimproved value of agricultural lands; (c) the estimated unimproved value of country and goldfields town lands; (d) the estimated unimproved value of Crown leaseholds (as assessed under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907).*

## SELECT COMMITTEE, METROPOLITAN MARKETS.

*Report presented.*

Mr. Mann brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the establishment of metropolitan markets.

Report received and read, and ordered to be printed.

## BILL—FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS.

*Council's Amendment.*

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2, Subclause (2)—Insert at the beginning of the subclause the following words: "subject to the provisions of the Traffic Act, 1919":

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

*That the Council's amendment be agreed to.*

It merely brings the by-laws under the Traffic Act.

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

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

## MOTION—RADIOGRAPHER, COMPENSATION.

Debate resumed from the 2nd October on the motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson—

*That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that a special allowance should be made to Mr. W. J. Hancock, late Government Electrical Engineer, to compensate him for loss and suffering endured through his honorary work as radiographer at the Perth and Base Hospitals.*

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [4.58]: In supporting this motion it will be necessary for me to explain some misunderstand-

ings. These have occurred, I think, quite accidentally and largely through Mr. Hancock's illness being so serious that he was unable in the early stages, when his pension was being computed, to have a personal interview with the Public Service Commissioner. After the pension was computed, a number of his friends went to some of the Ministers, the Commissioner, and Dr. Saw. The Honorary Minister for Health, in the course of his remarks, stated that Mr. Hancock was very annoyed at the attitude of Dr. Saw. That is true, but it is not clearly stated. I had a long conversation with Mr. Hancock. My interest in the matter is easily understood, for I was a member of the board of management of the Perth Public Hospital for 16 or 17 years, and chairman of it for eight or nine years. During the whole of that time and prior to it Mr. Hancock was honorary radiographer. I am, therefore, thoroughly acquainted with him, his work, and of course his illness and trouble. I was naturally anxious, before addressing myself to the subject, in view of what the Honorary Minister said, to see Mr. Hancock, so that I might avoid causing him any more irritation than apparently has been occasioned to him. Really the position was that Mr. Hancock, as pointed out clearly by the mover, was of opinion, and he is to-day of opinion, that he should have had four years' service added to his pension rights because of having been taken over as an Imperial officer. In that case his pension would have been forty-sixtieths instead of, as it was originally fixed, thirty-six-sixtieths. The former basis would have given him £388. When the pension had been fixed on the lower basis, Mr. Hancock interviewed Dr. Saw; and Dr. Saw said that he, amongst other friends of Mr. Hancock, would see what could be done, and would endeavour to secure the additional four years to Mr. Hancock's length of service, as had been done in the case of many officers, or all officers, taken over from the Imperial service. Apparently in good faith, or rather in generosity, Dr. Saw interviewed the Public Service Commissioner, and the latter expressed himself as unable to add the four years. I assume that then Dr. Saw, again in a spirit of generosity, drew attention to the honorary work which Mr. Hancock had done at the Perth Hospital as radiographer, work which brought upon him the illness from which he suffers to-day. I have gathered that the knowledge of that work caused the Public Service Commissioner to become very sympathetic, and he increased Mr. Hancock's pension by about £19, bringing it up to £388 odd. I am confident that I speak not without knowledge when I say that Mr. Hancock was annoyed to think that his honorary services to the Perth Hospital should have been brought in. He was very proud of

that honorary work; and indeed was jealous of it. He had accepted the work in an honorary capacity, and did not feel disposed to accept remuneration in any shape for it. What occurred, however, was that his health was injured, so much so that he is now utterly incapacitated and requires the services of a trained nurse to look after him. He held that the case which should have been put up was that he was entitled to consideration from the Government for injury to his health while he was pioneering X-ray work in this State. He was among the earliest pioneers of X-ray work, as long as 25 or 26 years ago; and he is suffering like all the old X-ray scientists are suffering; that is, those of them who are not dead. In the early days of X-ray apparatus the scientists were not aware of the dangers surrounding its use. To-day the up-to-date X-ray specialist, having the benefit of the sad experience of the pioneers, conducts his professional operations with perfect safety. The difference between describing Mr. Hancock's claim as based on injury to health and describing it as based on honorary work is what Mr. Hancock quite rightly takes objection to. He was at the Perth Hospital for many years, and his association with the honorary medical and surgical and ophthalmic staffs was most cordial, and he was proud of it; and he does not feel that he is justified, or that anybody is justified, in asking for any remuneration on his behalf for that service. Unquestionably Mr. Hancock is now a very sick man. He is so ill that he requires continuous medical treatment and the constant attendance of a trained nurse. Therefore it is up to this House to do something to assist him. On his pension it is impossible for him to keep his home and also to keep a trained nurse.

Mr. Teesdale: What is the amount of his pension?

Mr. TAYLOR: £368.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The exact amount is £368 19s. 4d.

Mr. Teesdale: A very nice pension, too.

Mr. TAYLOR: The fees of the trained nurse and the cost of her keep absorb the greater portion of that pension. We know the scale of payment for trained nurses nowadays, four guineas per week, in addition to keep. Anyone who has had a trained nurse in his house realises that it is a most expensive matter. It was pathetic to see Mr. Hancock as I saw him two or three weeks ago, having known him for many years as a fine, robust man. It was especially pathetic in view of the fact that his present condition is due to pioneering work from which hundreds of the people of Western Australia have personally benefited, and from which thousands will benefit in the future. I feel confident that the House will carry the motion, although the reference to his work

as radiographer should be deleted from it, because of his objection to it. I hope the Government will grant Mr. Hancock such financial assistance as will enable him to retain the services of a trained nurse during his illness without taking the requisite amount out of his pension, which is then reduced to a very small amount. I heartily support the motion.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [5.9]: I am in accord with the intention of the motion, namely, to afford to Mr. Hancock the assistance that is necessary, and in that way to recognise that the State has obtained the benefit of very valuable work voluntarily carried out by Mr. Hancock, as described by the last speaker. I am at variance, however, with some of the arguments put forward in regard to the amount of Mr. Hancock's pension, as to whether he should or should not have had four years added to his length of service. That question should not have been imported into the discussion at all. We want to be very careful in that respect. The question of Mr. Hancock's pension went before the Public Service Commissioner, and was settled, and therefore I need say no more on that point. I hope the motion will be carried unanimously, without a single dissentient voice; thus showing that Western Australia is fully prepared to recognise pioneering work of this kind, work carried out at the risk of health, and to the actual detriment of health, and probably with the effect of shortening life.

Mr. MARSHALL (Murchison) [5.12]: I support the motion, with a slight reservation. I appreciate, however, that the motion is one which calls for little elaboration. All and sundry fully recognise the work done by Mr. Hancock as a pioneer radiographer at the Perth Hospital. I am fearful of saying something which might cause Mr. Hancock to think that there is not adequate appreciation of that work. I would go even further than the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) and say that Mr. Hancock is justified in taking up the attitude he has adopted. The House should grant him compensation for injury to his health. He is far too much of a gentleman to do honorary work and then, when adverse circumstances have befallen him, use that honorary work as a lever to secure recompense. Whatever the Government may contemplate doing, however, we appreciate to the full that such men as Mr. Hancock are all too rare, men who render valuable services in an honorary capacity for the welfare of humanity and the advancement of science. Mr. Hancock was courageous enough to undertake dangerous work for the benefit of the human race, and in his injured state we cannot be too generous to him. There is only one point I wish to raise, and I shall raise it in the form of an amendment to the motion. I do not,

however, wish it to be thought that I would curtail in the slightest degree what might be considered reasonable compensation of Mr. Hancock by the State. I do hold that the Federal Government should also recognise his work, and grant him something entirely apart from whatever he may be granted by the State. I move an amendment—

*That all the words after "Public" be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"hospital, and that representations be made to the Federal Government for some recognition of like service at the Base Hospital."*

I hope the Government will give serious consideration to the amendment, and make application to the Commonwealth authorities accordingly.

Mr. Wilson: He will get nothing from the Federal people.

Mr. MARSHALL: I hope the member for Collie is entirely wrong on this occasion.

Mr. Wilson: I hope so too.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member is never right, and I hope he is wrong this time.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford—in reply) [5.15]: On behalf of Mr. Hancock and his family, I desire to thank hon. members for the favourable consideration given to the representations made on his behalf. The motion has nothing to do with his pension, which is outside the scope of the proposal altogether. The object is purely to give him and his family some chance of meeting the extra expenses involved because of the unfortunate ailment that has followed on his work as an X-ray operator. I leave the matter in the hands of hon. members.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

#### BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

##### *In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 8 which had been amended and was still under consideration.

The PREMIER: When the Bill was last before the Committee, we were discussing the proviso to Subclause 9. This amendment is necessary, because persons, almost without exception, whose business is the buying and selling of land, capitalise rates and taxes and add the amount to the price of the land when it is sold. The cost of the land is deducted and they claim deductions because of the rates and taxes. The difference represents the taxable income. Under Subsection 13 of Section 30 of the Act, they

can also claim a deduction on account of rates and taxes. Thus in the past the deduction of rates and taxes has had to be granted twice over. The amendment will obviate that position.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 9—Repeal of Section 34:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Section 34 deals with refunds by the Commissioner of any excess of taxes paid. Will the Premier explain the reason for repealing that section?

Mr. Thomson: If the clause be agreed to, there will be no provision for refunds.

The PREMIER: Section 62 of the Act provides for refunds. That being so, Section 34 is unnecessary.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Amendment of Section 68 (a):

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The clause provides fairly stiff penalties. Why is this necessary?

The PREMIER: The clause is taken from the Federal Act. It has been found necessary to do this on account of the number of incorrect returns submitted to the Department. At present an individual who is late in furnishing his returns or fails to furnish any return, or submits incorrect returns, can be penalised for only one offence. The Federal Act provides that a man can be penalised for one or all of the offences he commits.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is it at the discretion of the Commissioner?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: When it comes to collections to be made by the Government, we are not slow in providing penalties. Many people pay more by way of taxation than they should pay.

The Premier: That is so with some, but a good many do not pay all they should.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If a person endeavours to avoid the payment of taxation, he should be punished. There are thousands of men who ought to pay taxes but do not send in returns. If a mistake is made, the individual should not be severely punished. I do not see where provision is made for the Commissioner exercising his discretion regarding penalties.

The PREMIER: I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that it is wrong to heavily fine an individual whose offence is due to a mistake. In the past I have been fined and I felt rather sore about it. My mistake was an innocent one. The Commissioner should take into consideration each individual case and the penalty should be based upon the circumstances of each case. If it is right to give the Commissioner power to fine a taxpayer for non-compliance with a certain provision of the Act, and to rely

upon his judgment regarding the penalties to be imposed, it is equally sound to give him authority to impose penalties on taxpayers for a number of offences, granted always that the discretionary power vested in the Commissioner is exercised fairly towards taxpayers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am satisfied with the Premier's remarks, especially if he sees that the Commissioner gets a copy of them, as reported in "Hansard."

The Premier: I shall have a copy bound and presented to him.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I mean it; it is only a fair thing.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

#### BILL.—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

##### *In Committee.*

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Power to write off:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I approve of the writing down of amounts, but by another process. The Government should get a vote of Parliament each year in order that accounts might be written down. Many of the recommendations of the board, following the reports of the special committee, were approved before I left office. I shall not oppose the Minister's way of doing the writing down, although I think it is pretty strong power to give the board. However, it has to be done. It would be possible for the Minister, if he wished, to close down the board altogether without consulting Parliament, because he could ask every client of the board to execute a mortgage and so terminate his connection with the I.A.B. However, I take it the Minister will not do that. When these clients have given a mortgage, they may require assistance for a time. Perhaps the board would take a lien over their wool and crop proceeds, and they would have very little money with which to carry on.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: From what I can gather from the officials, a client will be in a better position when free from the board. Immediately he gives a mortgage over his holding, he will be able to deal with the proceeds of his crops. Thus he will have that money to work on. The Leader of the Opposition, when in office, agreed to write down the amount of £46,776 recommended by the special committees, but no power existed to enable that to be done. Additional amounts are—in the Onkerup district £15,000, in the Ajana district £10,000, and in the Esperance district £7,000. With losses, etc., dealt with

up to the present, including abandoned properties, the total amount is £363,000, and that is equal to a subsidy of 3d. per bushel on every bushel of wheat grown by the farmers who have been assisted by the board. Members of the board have gone into the matter fully. They state that in almost every instance creditors are willing to assist the settlers by writing down portion of their debts or giving them time to pay. They will make that arrangement prior to the I.A.B. indebtedness being written down.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They must do that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The board will not do anything to handicap a settler whose account they think it necessary to write down. A large number of the clients of the board are desirous of having freedom of trade, instead of continuing under the control and management of the board. They ask that their indebtedness be capitalised. It may not be necessary to write down the amounts, but if pressure were put upon them at the moment, they would not be able to meet their obligations. We have about 700 abandoned farms, of which 178 are under the soldier settlement scheme.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They are largely around Perth.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know, but a great number are farms that were purchased. We do not want any more abandoned farms on our hands. We want to sell what we have. The Minister for Agriculture is repeatedly reminding me of the depredations of vermin and steps must be taken to dispose of abandoned properties.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: This will not help that situation.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am glad the Leader of the Opposition agrees with our proposal, though he differs regarding the method. Seeing that the report of the board has to be laid on the Table of the House every year, Parliament will be fully acquainted with all the accounts written down, and will have an opportunity to question any amount and receive an explanation of it. Under the method we are adopting, there will not be the loss of time that would occur under the method of the Leader of the Opposition between the time the board thought fit to deal with a client and the time when Parliament decided the question. The officers are satisfied that this measure will lead to much good, and will further assist not only the men on their holdings, but the State in general by permitting freedom of trade.

Mr. THOMSON: I am pleased that there is a measure of relief in view for a number of settlers. It is gratifying to hear that the Leader of the Opposition does not oppose the method. Last year a section of his supporters strongly urged the introduction of a Bill of this kind, and it is gratifying to members on the cross benches

that the present Government, without any request whatever from us, have seen fit to introduce this Bill. The measure, after all, was suggested by the board. The method adopted by the Government is much fairer than that suggested by the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Mine would have had the same result.

Mr. THOMSON: Except that anything done under your method would have been at the will or whim of the Minister for the time being, and would have been in the nature of a special favour.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are absolutely wrong.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not.

The Minister for Lands: That applies now; the Minister must approve.

Mr. Richardson: But we have a different Minister.

Mr. THOMSON: A recommendation has to be submitted, and I presume the Minister will adopt the suggestion of the board. The Leader of the Opposition thought the Minister should have the say and that each case should be dealt with on its merits.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If it is not, I do not know where we shall get to.

Mr. THOMSON: I have faith in the board, who have always been reasonable and willing to assist. Many farmers were in good faith placed on land that has proved unsuitable. It is reasonable that settlers under the board be given an opportunity to trade freely. If there is a legitimate writing down to be done, the man who has battled for 10 or 12 years, and who has been a genuine trier all the time should be given the advantage.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I admit we shall require to have inspectors to watch some people. Of course a man who needs to be watched will not get too much consideration from the board, if he should be found out. Areas of crop have been seen on adjoining properties, one held by a private individual and the other by a man under the Industries Board. In the case of the privately owned crop it looked as if it might go three bags to the acre while the crop put in by the Industries Assistance Board farmer appeared to be four-bushel. When the harvest return was made the position was reversed, the private man having the four bags and the Industries Assistance Board farmer the smaller crop of the two. It is necessary that a careful watch should be kept. The present members of the board as we know, are not likely to be influenced by political pressure, and they are the men who will deal with all these questions under the Bill.

Mr. LINDSAY: One matter has been overlooked, and it is the position of the unfortunate individual who has taken over a farm from the board and who, after the lapse of a few months, has found him-

self quite unable to carry the load. I have approached the trustees and they told me that there was nothing in the Act that would permit them to write down the debt on the land, notwithstanding that it was recognised that the debt was much more than the property was worth. Those who hold property of this description are suffering an injustice. One might say it was their own lookout, but at the same time they were on the land and unless something was done to write down the capital they would walk off it. The Bill will enable them to remain on the land and pay their way. There is also the individual whose operations are restricted by the I.A.B. Some of these men wish to get off the board and if the debts were funded, they could get outside assistance which they cannot secure to-day.

Mr. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition remarked that I was not aware of the conditions of the proposed writing down. I am quite aware that the board have instructed their clients to approach the outside creditors and ask what measure of relief can be expected from them. Some of the clients have asked to be relieved of the whole of the liability, and in many instances that has been done, the creditors realising that there is no earthly hope of getting anything. If the value of the property is less than the client's indebtedness to the board and the bank, the outside creditor cannot get anything.

Mr. Mann: He gets his dividends out of the earnings.

Mr. THOMSON: If the outside creditors had to depend on that, their chance would indeed be hopeless.

Mr. Latham: That is not fair. A great deal of money has been paid back.

Mr. THOMSON: But I am alluding to those clients whose accounts are to be written down. The Bill does not deal with those in a position to pay their outside creditors, nor with those who have already paid. If it be necessary to render assistance of the sort at any time in the future, it should be done through the Agricultural Bank.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3, 4—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1924-25.

##### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 23rd October. Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

*Vote — Public Works and Buildings, £87,500:*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [6.6]: There is not much to say about the Public Works Department under the heading of revenue, for most of the expenditure of that department is from loan. The most important change affecting the department is the decision of the Commonwealth Government to establish a Public Works Department of their own in this State. Up till now the State has been doing the work for the Commonwealth on a commission basis, and all the records show that the Commonwealth have been well satisfied with the way the work has been carried out. Nevertheless, they have decided to set up a department of their own, which means increased cost of administration on State works, and undoubtedly increased cost to the Commonwealth by the establishment of a separate organisation. Under the past arrangement our officer going along to inspect, say, some State building could, without increased expenditure, inspect the Commonwealth post office as well. So, too, in country districts, the one officer easily attended to work for both departments.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You will not let the Commonwealth do our work, will you?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is not much fear of that. However, their decision to do their own work means increased expenditure for us. We are the last State in which they have set up their Public Works Department.

Mr. Teesdale: Will there be any retrenchment as a result?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We will have a little, but we cannot expect to effect a saving to the full because, as I have said, our work for the Commonwealth was done in our stride and cost us very little. Coming to the works section of the department, the amount expended last year was £87,220, and a similar amount is asked for this year. The Estimates are mainly made up of portion of total salaries, certain incidentals, rents for buildings leased, usual subsidies to road boards, and the balance consists entirely of money required to maintain certain public works and Government buildings. Salaries total £83,177 as compared with £74,127 spent last year. Practically the whole of the increase, £9,000, is on account of increased staff in the roads and bridges branch, necessitated by the large sum expended by reason of the Commonwealth main roads scheme. The £83,177 represents the total salaries payable. Of this, £43,722 is transferred to Loan Account, £2,553 to the Property Trust section of the Estimates, £15,897 to Goldfields Water Supply, and £10,070 to Other Hydraulic Undertakings, thus leaving a net sum chargeable against revenue for the public works section of £9,442, compared with £8,554 last year. The largest item is "roads and bridges throughout the State," which, of course, includes the annual subsidy, slightly in excess

of £25,000, the vote being £30,597, practically the same as last year's vote. The only other item under the heading of roads and bridges is the maintenance by the Government of the main road to the caves, £900. This road has been under the control of the department for some years past. Maintenance of that portion of the Karrakatta-road parallel to the Karrakatta Cemetery fence is £150. There are three small items for maintenance of bridges. I want to give some particulars of the expenditure under the Commonwealth road grant. I think we have now arrived at a better understanding with the Commonwealth authorities and know what is in the minds of the Commonwealth people and what they desire.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: This is final, is it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, I think we know now where they are—which is not to say that we are satisfied with the decision, but merely that we know what they will permit to be included in the expenditure under the Act. They lay it down that the money is to be used on main developmental roads leading to new settlement. If there be a number of roads leading to different settlements, one must be chosen as the main road, and Commonwealth money can be expended only on such road.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They interfere too much altogether.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have suggested to them that, as we are expending pound for pound with them and, in addition, we have to meet the overhead charges, there should be sufficient confidence displayed between the two Governments to allow us to see that our own money is expended to the best advantage, that they should trust us to select the roads for expenditure.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They dictate to us as to how we shall spend our own money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, that is so. However the Commonwealth engineer advises me that when the programme for these roads to new settlements is completed, probably the branch or subsidiary roads, what we term feeder roads, will be included in the next programme.

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

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Before tea I was explaining the conditions under which the Commonwealth authorities make money available for road construction. Amongst the provisions that we are advised the Eastern States are complying with is one that limits the expenditure to a radius outside 100 miles from a capital city. That is not a strict condition laid down by the Commonwealth, but it was put up to us that two of the Eastern States were complying with it, and that we should live up to that condition. I have stood out against it and pointed out that our conditions in this State

are entirely dissimilar to those in the Eastern States, where they have developed fully to within 100 miles of their capital cities. They have no new settlement within that distance, but in this State there is plenty within 100 miles of Perth. I have not agreed to that condition and the department has not adopted it. The Commonwealth Government cannot enforce it, because it is not a provision of their law. Some of the conditions set out are that the grade of the road, upon which the Commonwealth money is to be spent, must not exceed 1 in 16; that no Commonwealth money can be expended on roads connecting railway towns. No plant is to be bought out of the grant, but the hire of plant may be charged for and the department has agreed on the percentage. The State Government shall do all surveys and supply all the staff. The dimensions of the roads and construction must be in accordance with the plans and specifications approved by the Federal Department of Works, which insist upon permanent and durable roads. The minimum width of 20ft. formation is prescribed; the minimum width of gravelling or metalling to be 12ft., and the minimum width of clearing to be 22ft. None of the money is to be expended within municipalities. All the supervision shall be paid by the State Government except wages of the foreman and his subordinates. The schedule of the proposed roads must be approved by the Federal Department of Works. We are permitted to deduct from the expenditure the first year's maintenance, which shall be made a charge against the fund. It has been agreed that up to 5 per cent. of the expenditure can be held for maintenance for the first year.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Is the 100-mile radius cut out?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not a condition of the Act that the Commonwealth Government passed, and they cannot enforce it. We have declined to adopt it. The Commonwealth insisted that there should be a minimum of £1,000 spent on each particular road.

Mr. Thomson: That is a rotten thing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. I had a proposal before me the other day for the construction of a road in the Merredin district. This would have cost £1,000 if it had been done under the Commonwealth grant, which would have meant an expenditure by the State of £500, and a similar amount spent out of the Commonwealth fund. The road board, however, was willing to do the whole of the work to the satisfaction of the settlers for £200. It naid me better to get the work done for £200 than to put £500 of State money into it. It is argued that what is required is main roads leading to new settlements, and that the money shall not be used for small subsidiary works. This is to save the cost of supervision.

Mr. Sampson: They must be parallel roads?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They cannot link up two railway towns. The jobs must not be small, otherwise the cost of supervision would be too great. When the Government came into office, on April 17, the expenditure, including the liabilities in regard to this work was £26,000. The amount expended since the Government came into office is £151,000, giving a total of £177,000. We have cleared 241 miles of road; cleared and formed 133 miles; cleared, formed and gravelled, 78 miles; and the amount expended from the first moiety was £133,000, and from the second moiety £43,000. Commonwealth approval has been sought for about half of the remaining works, the schedule of which is in Melbourne. We expect to have the balance of the work approved within a month or so.

Mr. Latham: Does that mean we have only £1,000 left to spend out of the two years' grant?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is £190,000 to be spent each year, half being put up by the Commonwealth, and half by the State.

Mr. George: Are they letting you carry over the money not spent last year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I arranged that. The original condition was that the balance of last year's grant should be returned to the Commonwealth Treasury. I took up the matter with the Commonwealth authorities, and, the other States having been bombarding them, they agreed to allow the unexpended balance to be carried over. I have issued instructions that road boards are to be given an opportunity to tender for the work to be done within their districts. If the price they quote is fair, and the engineer is satisfied that they have the organisation and machinery with which to do the work, it will be given to the road board to do. I am also informing the road boards that they shall not take men off their holdings to put them on to road construction, but shall employ upon road work men who look to that class of employment for their livelihood. In my travels around the country evidence has been given to me of the importance of importing new men into districts to carry out road work. In no fewer than three districts it is considered that 25 per cent. of the men who were imported into it for road construction have remained there. They have either become interested in farm work or have taken up land for themselves. I am laying it down to the road boards that they shall not take men off their holdings, but shall give the work to the others I have mentioned.

Mr. George: In the South-West there are men who have time to spare on their own holdings at a particular period of the year, and it would assist them to develop

their holdings if they got some of this work.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** There are plenty of other men walking about the city with time to spare, and they cannot get a living. This work should not be given to settlers. There are, of course, cases where a settler has been assisted to develop his holding by reason of his being able to get outside work of this description to do. But as a matter of principle road boards are not to be permitted to employ such people.

**Mr. Sampson:** In some cases the opportunity to get outside work makes it possible for a man to remain on his holding.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I know of cases where men have left their holdings to be worked by boys so that they might earn money on road construction. I will not have that sort of thing.

**Mr. Sampson:** But some of them find it difficult to develop their holdings without such assistance.

**Mr. George:** In the South-West there are some holdings that would not be occupied to-day but for the outside work the owners have been able to get.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The following is a list of road boards carrying out work under this grant: Denmark, Albany, Plantagenet, Broomehill, Katanning, Woodanilling, Wagin, Dumbleyung, Lake Grace, Kent, Serpentine, Jarrahdale, Rockingham, Armadale-Kelmscott, Fremantle, Wanneroo, Swan, Chittering, Gingin, Melbourne, Dalwallinu, Esperance, Coolgardie, Harvey, Sussex, Augusta, Capel, Warren, and Darling Range.

**Mr. Sampson:** Did you say the Darling Range Road Board? They have not any authority yet.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The following road boards have contracts: Albany, Broomehill, Katanning, Woodanilling, Dumbleyung, Lake Grace and Kent. We have had materially to increase the staff of the Roads and Bridges Department. By arrangement with the University we are giving encouragement to young graduates from that institution. We think it a sound policy that the Government should encourage young men who are studying there, and give them a chance to make good. There are no fewer than seven graduates devoting part of their time to the engineers of the Public Works Department, and part of their time to study at the University. They get a practical knowledge of their work with the engineers, and carry on the theory by attending lectures at the University. We have engaged 11 graduates from the University as engineers in this department. We have set a policy that is sound and can be followed with advantage to the State and to the benefit of the young men con-

cerned. They are our own citizens, and have had the benefit of a State education.

**Mr. Sampson:** It is a very good policy.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The Harbours and Rivers vote this year is £2,882, the largest item being £1,200 for the repair of the fishing boat breakwater, which was destroyed at Fremantle by a recent storm. The other items are the usual recurring ones. A sum of £3,500 will be used for traffic expenses for railways under construction. I refer to the Esperance line, the Margaret River-Flinder's Bay line, the Narembeen-Merredin line, and the Piawaning-northwards line. On these lines it is expected that the receipts will balance the expenditure. The Narembeen-Merredin line is open for traffic from Merredin to Crampthorne, which is about 19 miles from Narembeen. It is expected that the through traffic to Narembeen will be open in about three weeks. We anticipate handing the line over to the working railways in February next. The Busselton-Margaret River line was handed to the Railway Department last Monday week. That department is now inspecting the Margaret River-Flinder's Bay section. We expect to have that running for through traffic from Busselton to Flinder's Bay within a few days, and we shall probably hand the railway over to the department at the end of January. The Piawaning-northwards railway contract originally provided for completion at the end of May. Now that a further 3½ miles of extension has been arranged for it will probably be the end of June before the line is completed. The Esperance Northwards line traffic now runs from Esperance to the terminus. We shall probably hand this over to the Working Railways some time in May next. Under the heading of public buildings there is nothing special to draw attention to. It is realised that the amounts voted are insufficient to maintain public buildings in first-class condition; but the necessity for balancing the ledger precludes proper provision being made in this respect, and consequently only such works as are urgently necessary will be carried out. In connection with the Department of Labour, the amount spent on Arbitration Court salaries last year was £1,346; this year £1,164 is required. The incidental expenditure last year was £1,895; for this year it is estimated at £2,007, the small excess being accounted for by the fact that certain items of expenditure under "Miscellaneous" were last year charged against the general Crown Law vote. With regard to shops and factories inspection, salaries this year total £2,328 as against £1,780 for last year. The increase is accounted for by provision that is made for two additional inspectors. The total vote in this connection is £2,703, as compared with £2,094 for last year.

Other matters will be dealt with under the various headings if any member wishes detailed information. The appointment of a new Engineer-in-Chief has not yet been definitely settled. The Government are awaiting advices by mail, and these should come to hand any day. Therefore it is hoped that an appointment will be made shortly.

Mr. Latham: No provision is made on these Estimates for any additional salary?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. We are still considering whether the appointment will be under the Public Service Act, or for a term under contract. We are not sticking closely to the advertised conditions, but are making inquiries in various countries, as well as throughout the Commonwealth, with a view to ensuring that the State shall obtain the best man for the position.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [7.49]: I congratulate the Minister on his statement. I do not think that ever in my public life have I seen so much humbugging as our Public Works Department have been subjected to by the Commonwealth in connection with the plans to which the Minister referred. I am pleased that the Minister has shown as much outspokenness in this connection as the Premier displayed regarding the rinderpest trouble. The Commonwealth sent our Public Works Department instructions with regard to the plans, and the plans were got out, but of course they were not right. Then the Commonwealth sent a man over to tell us what they wanted; and the work was done again, and then it seems the plans were once more unsatisfactory. I am glad the Minister for Works has the Commonwealth Government by the wool, and I hope he will maintain his hold. The Minister referred to the proposed appointment of an Engineer-in-Chief. I commend him and the other members of the Government for the prudence and care they are evidently using to get someone to fill that important position who will rise to the occasion and accept his full responsibilities. It is out of the question to expect those responsibilities to be carried by the mere accident of an accident; for a man becomes a member of Parliament mainly by accident, and a member of Parliament becomes a Minister mostly by fortuitous circumstances. Those factors do not render him capable, without previous training, of bearing the full responsibility of a department, the work of which requires the skill resulting from special training and special study. The Engineer-in-Chief should not be an Engineer-in-Chief merely in name, but should so advise the Government that they do not fall into error, with consequent loss to the State. The Government have the full sympathy of every member of the Chamber in their arduous task of selecting an Engineer-in-Chief. I have always held that a Minister should stand up for his officers. Loyalty from the Minister to his

officers should beget not merely loyalty from the officers to their Minister, but also to the department and to their fellow officers. It is a shocking spectacle we have had during the last few weeks of one officer backbiting and belittling another officer. Such a spectacle assuredly does not redound to the credit of either the officer or the department. If the opinions given by leading officers of this State with regard to colleagues doing work that will cost millions of public money are right, was it not the duty of the Engineer-in-Chief to advise the Government that vitally important work was being carried on by men who were incompetent, and that the work must result in trouble and loss? As a fact, for the waterworks now in process of construction the estimates were passed by a gentleman who has given evidence, and they were sent back by me to him with a minute, which is on the file, stating that the Government required his advice as to the estimates. A reply came transmitting the estimates; and if that gentleman did his work, how could he pass estimates for the guidance of the Government without having seen the plans? If the Leader of the Opposition were here, he could bear testimony to the fact that, apart from what appears on the files, the engineers were in his office, when he was Premier, not once only, but three times, and that on those occasions all the plans were discussed and considered. I regret that the Minister for Works did not make some slight reference to a main roads Bill, though of course I know he has it in mind. I do hope he will introduce it this session. To bring in a main roads Bill has been one of my ambitions, but unfortunately the fates did not permit me to go beyond the process of getting the various ideas together. If there is anything connected with the matter on which the present Minister would like to ask my opinion, then my experience and knowledge are available to him. It is impossible for the main roads to be dealt with by the road boards. They must be dealt with by a strong central authority, and the funds will have to be provided from a source other than the rates obtainable from the farmers. The development of traffic consequent upon the increase of motors has been so tremendous that roads which would have served for the traffic of the residents and for the fugitive travel of other people are absolutely unfitted to carry the huge traffic of the present day. The more traffic we can have about Western Australia, whether by motor or horse-drawn vehicles or railways or shanks's pony, the more will this great country and its possibilities become known, and the broader and the better will be the settlement that shall be obtained. It means that the money necessary for the construction and upkeep of main roads will have to be obtained by taxation. Still, that is a burden which all of us ought to be prepared to carry if we wish to see Western Australia progress. The Minister did not refer to the

matter of traffic fees. I regretted to learn from the Press some time ago that the Minister had great difficulty in apportioning those fees. Members who were here when the Traffic Act was passed, will know that the disposition of the fees was not put forward as a matter for the decision of the Minister for Works. However, the House was good enough and generous enough to say that the distribution of the fees should be placed in the hands of the then Minister for Works, in the confidence of obtaining a fair deal. To my mind a perfectly fair deal has been given. The present Minister for Works will recollect that when he took office I told him that if there was anything in connection with the work I had done during the past eight years that he wanted explained, then if he would ring me up I would come to see him and give him the information he desired. The reason why I formulated the scheme and kept it to myself was that my experience of the versatility and the inventive faculty of road boards led me to the conclusion that in their case a little knowledge would be a dangerous thing. I thought that if I gave them the money, there would be no criticism and no trouble. But as soon as I got out of office the road boards wanted a bigger share of the fees. My scheme was agreed upon at a meeting of 22 local governing bodies held in my office, the present Minister for Lands attending that meeting. The roads in the various districts of the metropolitan area were classified as first, second, and third-class roads. On the basis of that classification I worked out a formula, as anyone possessed of a little mathematical knowledge could do, by which I could take the total amount of the fees and divide it into two parts. One part went to the local governing bodies east of Perth, and the other part to those west of Perth. The section east of Perth got 55 per cent., and the other section 45 per cent. There was no difficulty in dividing the money among the various local bodies, and the whole of them spent the money on the roads, with the exception of the City of Perth, which did as it darned well liked. However, the Perth-Fremantle-road was allowed to go to the devil. Nobody would do any work on it. Consequently the Government had to take it in hand. My first Premier, the late Mr. Frank Wilson, told me, "If you want to spend money on that road, you must get it from somebody." Well, I got the money. I had a census taken of the traffic on the road, and found that 47 per cent. of the traffic originated and ended in Perth, that 23 per cent. originated and ended in Fremantle, and that 17 per cent. originated and ended in Claremont, the rest being spread though the Claremont Road Board and other districts. The Claremont Road Board had  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles of main road to keep up, and got 10s. license for it. I worked out a formula which can be checked by anyone possessing the slightest mathematical knowledge. I made Perth pay for

damage to the Perth-Fremantle-road, and I made Fremantle pay similarly for damage, done by lorries, traps, and motors. I acted on the principle which was taught me in my youth, and which I have observed all my life, that the man who does the damage is the man who must pay. If the Perth-Fremantle road is for the benefit of Perth, let Perth pay for its upkeep. If that road is for the benefit of Fremantle, let Fremantle pay for it. It was mainly for the benefit of those two centres, and I made them pay for it. That is the whole thing in a nutshell. If the Minister requires any further information to show how that decision was arrived at, I will gladly go into the matter with him. I am sure the Minister did not know this; otherwise he would not have said what he did. The Press has not treated me kindly, nor given me that consideration I am entitled to. I am rather disappointed that I was not able to complete one job before I left office. I started it and had to stop it. I started again and once more it had to be stopped. I then convinced Sir James Mitchell of the necessity for the work, and I promised that it would be started.

Mr. Latham: Surely you are not referring to the Dwarda railway?

Mr. GEORGE: That is the work I refer to. Notwithstanding the silly lies that were spread about the Narrogin-Dwarda railway, that work was to have been carried out. I hope that the Minister for Works will be able to complete that job.

The Minister for Works: I would have started it by now, had you not spent all the money.

Mr. GEORGE: I know the people at Narrogin and at Dwarda, and, in fact, throughout the whole district. I know the struggles they have gone through, and I hope the Treasurer will be able to find the money to enable the Minister for Works to proceed with the construction of the line.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is time something was done.

Mr. GEORGE: I am glad that the Minister has under consideration the encouragement of our University. When I was in office it gave me some cause for worry when I realised that we were training men as engineers and that they had to leave Western Australia in order to secure positions. Most engineers visit foreign countries to gain experience, but it should be possible to have the public works necessary in a State like Western Australia carried out by engineers trained in the State and, therefore, acquainted with our conditions. The Minister referred to the main roads question. There was one feature of the Commonwealth grant that came under my notice; it applied to the road from Lake Grace to Newdegate. We were told by Captain Hill, the Commonwealth officer sent to Western Australia to discuss matters relating to the Commonwealth grant for main roads, that roads had to be constructed at right-angles

to railways and that we could not use the Commonwealth grant to construct a road connecting two railways. I drew his attention to the proposed road from Lake Grace to Newdegate, and he said that the grant would apply to that work. I told him that I thought it was only right to explain that the State proposed to construct a railway from Lake Grace to Newdegate. He told me that as the railway had not already been constructed we could put the road through. When I quoted to him the position of the Bengier residents, he told me that I could construct a road from the Bengier swamp to the Bengier station, but I could not construct a road from Bengier to Brunswick, between which centres people were engaged in the same class of production and were experiencing greater difficulties. So far as I can understand it, the whole thing is wrapped up in a nebosity that requires a telescope capable of picking out the canals in Mars, to enable one to understand the position regarding the Commonwealth grant. In the consideration of public works, party politics is unnecessary, because there is involved practical work in the interests of the whole of the people of Western Australia. The provision of means of communication from place to place, the construction of public utilities necessary to make life livable and so on, are far above party politics. These activities provide common ground on which Ministers and members can meet without party considerations arising. So long as matters of administration are conducted cleanly, honestly and with common sense, there is no need for differences between us.

Mr. SAMPSON (Swan) [8.7]: I am glad to know that matters in connection with the Federal road grant are developing appreciably. The Minister has had a tremendous amount of work and anxiety in dealing with that problem. The conditions governing the grant are so drastic that it has been difficult to carry out necessary works. At one stage I believe it was questionable whether it was worth while going on with the proposition. I agree with all that has been said in criticism of those conditions. Undoubtedly the Minister, the officers of the Works Department, and the local governing authorities concerned know the requirements of the State better than any engineer or body of men, however competent, who are located in another State. The conditions regarding grades are in themselves difficult when one realises that Western Australia is a new State. That very fact makes the conditions all the harder. Then, as regards materials to be used, in some instances an unnecessary thickness is stipulated and the width demanded is unusual. However, progress has been made in the application of the conditions, and to-day many works are in operation in different areas. I hope that as a result of the Commonwealth grant, roads hitherto only partly

made will be constructed properly. This will enable producers to get their products to market expeditiously and satisfactorily. One of the principal requirements of any district is a good road to the station, siding, or nearest market town. The principle governing the Commonwealth move is good, and I hope it will result in a new era opening up for Western Australia. I thank the Minister for Works for the courtesy extended to me on numerous occasions when I have approached him regarding allocations under the grant. The Main Roads Bill has been referred to, and I am delighted that at long last the Bill is to be introduced. The construction and maintenance of main roads is an impossible task for local governing bodies with their restricted revenues. I look forward, therefore, with great anticipation to this measure. I am glad that it is not proposed to enumerate in the Bill the roads that are to be regarded as main roads but that they are to be determined as time goes on. Every district has experienced difficulty regarding motor traffic in relation to road construction and maintenance. We must have roads capable of carrying heavy motor traffic. I know of one section of road controlled by a local governing body, extending for 2½ miles, repairing of which last year cost £401. The expenditure of that amount was caused by the heavy motor traffic. Instances such as the one I refer to have made the task of the boards controlling roads and bridges increasingly difficult. I have frequently congratulated the former Minister for Works on his motor licenses pool. That was a splendid idea and I understand the principle is to be extended under the Main Roads Bill, so that it will not be limited to the metropolitan area, but will apply throughout the State. In past years centres like Narrogin, Katanning and York, for instance, have received the bulk of the motor license fees, while the road boards whose areas surround the municipalities have received trifling amounts. Those road boards have considerable lengths of road under their jurisdiction, while the municipalities have controlled smaller lengths of road. The municipalities, with their higher rating powers, have been able to secure funds whereas the road boards have not been in such a satisfactory position. In some instances this has led to the settlers arranging working bees to patch up the roads, because the local governing authorities have not been in a position to provide the necessary funds. The valuation placed upon a property cannot be above that which is fair, nor can there be a levy beyond the maximum prescribed by the Act, save in certain circumstances. In certain circumstances, with the permission of the Minister, in place of the unimproved value with a rate of 3d., the rate can be raised as high as 6d. in the pound. Many road boards, realising the need for roads, have voluntarily, with the approval of the Minister, increased the amount from what is set out in the Act as

the maximum. May I refer to a circular letter recently sent out by the Public Works Department. It set out that the boards that did not rate up to 2d. in the pound would not receive the benefit of the subsidy. The sending out of that circular was justified. Unless the ratepayers are prepared to help themselves, they cannot reasonably expect the Government to help them. I commend the department for having sent out that circular. If the valuations be fair, let those who require roads be prepared to face their obligations in respect to reasonable rating. I do not know whether it is quite good taste to refer to the officers of the department, but for many years I have come into contact with them, particularly with the clerk in charge of local government, Mr. A. E. Sanderson. Whenever any difficulty has arisen I have always received valuable advice from him. He has a thorough knowledge of the work and quite a sympathetic regard for the difficulties that confront road boards.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: He ought to be better paid, too.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not know what he is paid.

Mr. Taylor: He is a very good officer.

Mr. SAMPSON: He is a splendid officer and enthusiastic in his work. At our road board conferences, whenever questions arose that presented difficulties, he was always ready to give valuable help. I agree with most things that the Minister for Works does, but I do not agree with his dictum in respect to settlers not being permitted to work on the roads. Many settlers have a terrific amount of work to do on their holdings, but their efforts are restricted owing to the lack of funds. Many men previously engaged in unskilled work have taken up land, and only by going out to work for other settlers and local governing bodies have they been able to secure sufficient money to bring their own holdings to a state of productivity. If the Minister will accompany me on some Saturday afternoon, I shall show him such holdings as those I have referred to. He will realise the difficulties confronting the settlers, and in place of suggesting that work shall be provided only for those who have no holdings, he would encourage the giving of work, to at least a limited extent, to those men endeavouring to carve out a home for themselves and their families.

Mr. Taylor: If the farm will not keep them, they go out and work to keep the farm.

Mr. SAMPSON: In many instances that is so. There are hundreds of orchardists who, if they had to rely upon their orchards entirely, would go short. When an Act similar to the Queensland Fruit Marketing Act comes into operation here, I forecast that the fruitgrowers will have a better time.

The Minister for Works: You had better come over here.

Mr. Heron: You are slipping.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have not slipped regarding my opinion of the Queensland Act since investigating its operation.

The Minister for Works: Only while you were electioneering.

Mr. SAMPSON: Never yet have I condemned that Act. What I said was I would see whether, in its operation, it was feasible for Western Australia.

The Premier: Do not explain too much.

Mr. SAMPSON: The more I explain, the stronger my position becomes. It is delightful to be bantered on the subject, since the Premier and Minister for Agriculture have agreed that a Bill will be introduced at the earliest opportunity and at latest next session. I am glad that matters regarding the Federal road grant have been brought to a stage when there is daylight ahead. Time after time the local authorities have been under the impression that everything was in order, but then a new regulation or interpretation of conditions was issued and the matter was held up. Now I understand everything is in order, and that in the road district with which I am intimately associated, work will soon be in progress. This indicates that even if the picks and shovels are not actually at work, the Minister has received approval. I am thankful that the road districts of Gosnells, Greenmount, and Armadale-Kelmscott have been brought within the metropolitan area and are receiving a portion of the traffic license fees.

Mr. MILLINGTON (Leederville [8.24]): The Minister for Works said that a working arrangement had been arrived at for the administration of the Federal road grant. Although this appears to give satisfaction to members representing constituencies outside the metropolitan area, it is of no advantage to my district. I represent a local body that unfortunately bears the name of Perth Road Board, and consequently it appears to cater for a metropolitan district. No part of its area is within the town limits. The board has to administer an extensive and difficult district possessing all the disadvantages of a country district. It is truly a country district, with rural pursuits and production. I refer to the Osborne Park district, where the provision of roads is just as great a problem as in the country. The Balcatta-road and the Scarborough-road are main roads to the beach. In the first place they were costly to construct, and because of their traversing sandy and in some instances swampy country, they are expensive to maintain. The residents of the district are hard-working and thrifty, and they experience great difficulty in making a living and providing the necessary taxes to maintain the roads. Naturally they expected that a portion of the Federal grant, subsidised by the State

Government, would be available for the two roads I have mentioned. The Balcatta-road provides not only for the district traffic but also for a considerable volume of tourist traffic. By straining the interpretation, it was possible to give assistance for the Wanneroo-road, but not so for the Balcatta and Scarborough roads. I am pleased that £96,000 is to be made available by the Federal Government, but this means straining our own resources to add another £96,000, making the total £192,000. When this is done I assume the State Treasury will be so depleted that roads not coming within the scope of the Federal interpretation will have to go short. The Perth Road Board have borrowed up to their limit, and yet their roads are as bad as those in many parts of the State. I was interested in a remark by the ex-Minister for Works, referring to the Perth-Fremantle-road, that he had an infallible remedy, namely, that the men who did the damage to the roads should pay for it. I only wish I could get a similar statement from the present Minister. I have tried but failed.

Mr. Taylor: lie is more cautious.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The Balcatta-road, originally a plank road, fell into a bad state of disrepair mainly owing to the damage done by heavy motor lorries carting stone for the Mt. Hawthorn reservoir. The road board, in order to place the road in repair, found it necessary to raise a loan. They scrapped the plank road and put down a modern road. When they asked the Government, as they did by deputation, to accept the liability for the damage done to the road, we found that the Water Supply Department did not agree to the principle laid down by the ex-Minister for Works. The damage to the road was done in the carting of material to the reservoir, but in respect of that we cannot get the Government to accept any liability at all. I pointed out that the cost of construction was heavy, and that the cost of maintenance was also heavy, and in addition to the main roads in the district there are many cross roads that have to be maintained. Naturally the road board expect some assistance from the Commonwealth grant. I know of no instance where such a great injustice has been done as in this case. The people who are living in that district are working under great disabilities, but they are unable to get any advantage from the grant. I would also point out the importance of having good roads in that district by reason of the fact that the locality is not served by a railway. An idea of the state of the road last winter can be gathered when I tell the committee that to cart produce a distance of 12 miles to the Perth markets cost no less than 12s. a ton. On the railways it is possible to carry produce some hundreds of miles at

that cost. Hon. members will therefore realise the importance of having good roads in this district. The people there have reached their limit, so far as borrowing is concerned. They have approached the Minister, and although he has been most sympathetic, he has replied that his powers are limited, and that if he had discretionary power he would make some of the Federal money available. Under the conditions imposed, however, that cannot be done. Now we find ourselves up against the disadvantage of the Federal Government being in a position to dictate our policy. The Minister for Works, and the departmental officers are in a better position to know and to judge of the conditions under which the money should be spent in Western Australia, certainly very much better than the Federal authorities, who are 2,000 miles away, but who, indeed, are really farther away than that. We might as well have the administration of these affairs conducted from the other end of the world. The Federal people have no conception whatever of Western Australia's requirements, especially in regard to roads and bridges. We here are just as much in the bush six or seven miles from Perth along the Wanneroo road, as we might be 200 miles out in another direction. I have been credibly informed that an officer of the Federal service got bushed only five miles from Perth, and he presumably is one of the officers who has something to do with the recommendations to be made in connection with the distribution of the road grant. After all, the money that the Federal Government propose to hand over for road construction in this State is our money, and therefore the sooner the restrictions are removed the better it will be. Under the scheme as laid down by the Federal authorities our own Treasury will be depleted of funds, and even if the Minister were prepared to assist the district I have been referring to, he would find it impossible to do so. I do not know how the trouble can be overcome. The people I am alluding to have reached their limit, so far as borrowing is concerned, and at the same time I do not know of a more thrifty and hard working community, or a community that has done better service to the State. In many other parts of the State the Government are being called upon to do work which in Osborne Park has been carried out by the residents themselves for a period of years. They have carried out their own drainage, their clearing, and developmental work, and as is generally known it is all difficult work in the class of land to be found there. All has been done without assistance, while every other industry in the State has received help. Therefore these people are entitled to a fair deal in respect of the construction of their roads. I do not know of any way out of the difficulty. All I can say is that we shall have to keep the principle laid down by the ex-Minister for Works well

before the present Minister. Apart from the Federal proposals we are entitled to a refund for the damage that was done by the State in cutting material to the reservoir, and I propose to suggest to the Perth Road Board that they ask the present Minister for Works to perpetuate the principle laid down by his predecessor. In that way we may be able to get some assistance for our district, since it cannot be obtained from the Federal grant. I hope it will be possible to make arrangements to keep the roads in this important district in better order than has been the case in the past, and so remove the disadvantages under which the settlers at Osborne Park have been labouring.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [8.40]: We appreciate very much all that the Minister has done in trying to clear up the position regarding the grant from the Commonwealth Government. I am sorry he has not been able to spend any money at the east end of my electorate. In fact, I do not think any Government funds have been spent there in the last year or two, but I hope it will not be long before something is done. I particularly want to emphasise the fact that as the railway in course of construction will be completed soon, it will be necessary to form a number of roads to act as feeders to the line. There are many miles of settlement, but nothing in the shape of roads to lead to sidings. The Minister will need to go into the matter quickly, because the harvest is coming along, and if we are to utilise the railway this year the farmers will have to be provided with roads. There is a good deal of light country there and I am afraid that with the closing of the burning season on the 1st November some difficulty may be experienced in getting clearing done. On behalf of the settlers I thank the Government for the speedy manner in which the railway has been laid. Very little time has been lost since the men were first put on the work, and I was pleased to hear this evening that the line would be handed over to the Working Railways in February, and that in the meantime the Public Works Department would run traffic over it, probably within the next few years. I rather regret the attitude the Minister has taken up in respect of the men who have small holdings, and who find it necessary to go out and work to maintain those holdings. It is all right to say, as the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) remarked to-night, that it was a very poor class of farm that would not keep a man, but in the early stages of development, if an individual has not any money, and the Government are not prepared to make advances, as has been done in many other parts of the State, the individual must do something to make ends meet, I do not believe in taking men off farms, but if the individual has no means with which to carry on, it is only right that he should be assisted to earn something out-

side. If something like that is not done, we shall have a lot more land thrown back on the hands of the Government. Half of the land in New Zealand was settled in that way. The Government gave the land and guaranteed work on roads and other undertakings for six months of the year. That system was responsible for a great number of men making good. I hope the same consideration will be extended to the small man in Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: In New Zealand they never got assistance from the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. LATHAM: The Agricultural Bank here does not extend its operations to everybody. The trustees will not advance money on small holdings. If the Bank is prepared to advance money to a man who is on the land, the Minister then would have a perfect right to say that there was no work available for him, because he can earn his living on his own place. But if an individual does not get assistance from the Bank, I plead to the Minister not to be too hard.

The Minister for Works: I am not going to be hard and fast.

Mr. LATHAM: I am glad to hear that. In the South-West the bank trustees have not made advances on small holdings for many years past. This year a fair amount of money has been earned in road work and expended in the development of farming properties. However, I am sure the Minister will view it more kindly. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) stated that some districts were striking a 6d. rate. Personally I do not care whether they strike a 1d. rate or a 2d. rate, but I do like to see the valuations reasonably right. The Commonwealth Government have come along and made a very high valuation and the Public Works officers have laid it down that the boards have to strike a 2d. rate before they can get any subsidy. That is unfair, for since the valuations have been increased by 300 per cent., the board should be entitled to strike a lower rate. The land values have increased very rapidly.

The Premier: Not by 300 per cent.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes, they have.

The Minister for Lands: The Public Works cannot instruct the boards to accept the Commonwealth valuations.

Mr. LATHAM: But they have done so. On these higher valuations the department could accept a penny rate and get more revenue without imposing any hardship.

The Minister for Lands: Boards in my district have a 6d. rate.

Mr. LATHAM: That is all right for small holdings, but in districts of 2,000 acre holdings, what with road board rates, vermin rates, and loan rates a man has to pay up to 10s. a week, and in addition to meet cart and carriage fees. I hope the Minister will take this into consideration and see if it be not possible to grant a subsidy under less exacting conditions.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin [8.50]: I wish to congratulate the Minister on his tale of progress. I had not intended to discuss this department at all, but in view of what the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) said I should like to touch upon the subject of the Dwarda-Narrogin railway. The member for Murray-Wellington very properly referred to the splendid settlers in that district and the disappointment they have suffered through the delay in the construction of the line.

The Premier: Of course the ex-Minister for Works is now free from any responsibility as to what he may say.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is so. The settlers in that district share the heartfelt sorrow, so eloquently expressed by the ex-Minister to-night, that despite his long service as Minister of the Crown he was not permitted to build this very necessary work. In February of 1915 this line was authorised at the instance of a Government of which the present Premier was a most distinguished member. It is true that in June, 1922, the construction of the railway was put in hand, and Mr. Colebatch made an official statement to the effect that Cabinet had decided that it would be completed in time to carry the then coming harvest.

The Premier: How did this work come to be mislaid?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The work was started, and 12 miles of the line cleared. Then the ex-Premier returned from a trip to England and the work was stopped by him. The member for Murray-Wellington has told us how he persuaded the Government to review the position, how he dealt with those who traduced this line, and how his Government were prepared to build it when fate interposed and denied him the opportunity to do so. I have here the Loan Bill passed last year. Item 7 reads as follows:—“Dwarda-eastward line, £50,000.”

The Premier: I will be able to put a line on this year's Estimates for you.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am pleased to hear it, and I thank the Premier for that assurance. I know that when the present Premier puts an item on the Estimates to carry out a work, he intends to have it carried out. In last year's Loan Bill £50,000 was included for the work. The money lender lent his money knowing that it was going into this very necessary work.

The Premier: I do not believe he would have let us have his money had he known we were not going on with that line.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It helped the loan and Parliament has twice approved of this line, which is the only railway in the State twice authorised. The late Government borrowed £50,000 for the line, and it was included in last year's Loan Bill, so it is quite clear that the Minister

for Works has Parliamentary authority for the work.

The Premier: The residents of Narrogin informed me recently that, if we delayed much longer, they would build the line themselves.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: There are down there men whose beards have grown grey while they awaited this line. Many of those settlers have to cart distances exceeding 20 miles in order to reach a railway station. Just the same, it being a short connecting line of only 33 miles in length, it is clear that those men are not very remote from railways. The ex-Minister for Works has paid a tribute to the energy of the settlers. Members of the present Government have visited the district and seen for themselves. When the present Minister for Works visited the district he gave the settlers the most straightforward and satisfactory promise they have had when he said it was the intention of the Government to build the line, and that it was only finance prevented him from saying when the work would be started. My object in rising was merely to draw attention to this work, to point out that £50,000 has been borrowed for it, and to urge the Minister to give some assurance as to when that money will be spent.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [8.57]: After the eloquent plea we have had for the Dwarda railway I feel a little diffident in saying anything about the Yorkrakine-Baandee line. However, what I want is some idea as to whether there is to be any assistance given to those people out between the Dowerin line and the Eastern Goldfields line and also towards Lake Brown. Mention has been made of the Narembcen railway. The other evening I asked questions prompted by the wheat buyers, who approached me to see when trucks would be available. We now have the assurance of the Minister that trucks will be available within a few days. I have also been prompted to ask questions about the Lake Grace line.

The Premier: Does the Avon run down there, too?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No, it does not. These questions have emanated from people in the wheat business, who wish to get some idea as to how best to cater for the handling of the coming harvest. I was informed to-day that a map had been prepared showing proposed roads for motor traffic between the Dowerin line and the eastern railway line. I do not know whether such a map is in existence, but would like to know if such roads are contemplated. There may be something in the mind of the Minister upon this subject, and perhaps he will be good enough to enlighten us. He has given us a satisfactory assurance with regard to the Federal grant. Somebody asked just now if the railways I mentioned

were in the Avon Valley. They are not, but there are roads and road boards there. The Minister did not consider them worthy of any allocation from the Federal grant. I refer particularly to such districts as Westonia, where roads are very much needed. It is country that has been newly opened up for settlement, and where thoroughfares are badly needed. Large sums of money seem to have been allocated elsewhere, but districts like Westonia have been ignored. I admit the Minister has tried to help us, but I have to voice a complaint with respect to the ex-Minister.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [9.2]: I am pleased that satisfactory arrangements have been made with regard to the Federal grant. I have in mind one road that could well be assisted from that source, namely, from Wubin to Payne's Find. The road starts in the Dalwallinu Road Board District and goes right through the Mt. Magnet Road Board area. It is one of the main arteries from the North-West. All the people who motor go through Mt. Magnet, Payne's Find, and Warriedar to Wubin in order to reach the main line. The member for Murchison, the member for Irwin and I introduced a deputation to the Minister. There were also present representatives from the Dalwallinu, Mt. Magnet, Cue, Murchison, Lawlers and Wiluna Road Boards. Our object was to see if we could get a portion of the Federal grant spent on that road, which is in a bad state of repair. It is a narrow road and has many short bends in it, besides being thick with timber. Unless something is done a big accident may occur on it. I think it was the opinion of the Minister that it should be one of the roads attended to out of this grant. A good deal of wool goes through to Wubin from Mt. Gibson, and if some of the pastoral holdings are cut up there may be a good deal of wheat and oat traffic in the future. The roads in my district cover a big area, and many of them are in need of repair. The local people are taxing themselves to keep them in order. We have a rate on the annual values in the small towns, up to 2s. in the pound, and we have the unimproved land rates in the pastoral areas. A little while ago we struck a rate up to 3d. in the pound to clear off an overdraft. The rate is now 1½d. in the pound. All the land has been revalued. At one time we paid 10s. per thousand acres, and now in many cases it is £2 a thousand. The squatter is, therefore, paying up to four times as much as he did before. The people on the Murchison are bearing their fair share, and doing their best to keep the roads in repair. The roads are used by everybody who travels through. There are not many local motors on which traffic fees are paid, but we keep the roads in order for outside motorists to use. There is a road from Cue to Reedy's, a new district.

Mr. Taylor: It is an old district revived, is it not?

Mr. CHESSON: It was an alluvial patch, but now the lodges are being developed and it seems likely to become a fair-sized township. When towns spring up 30 or 40 miles apart it is a difficult matter to keep in repair the roads between them. Very often we ask for a Government subsidy at the outset, but after that keep the roads in repair ourselves.

Mr. NORTH (Claremont) [9.10]: I draw the attention of the Minister to the allocation of the traffic fund. It appears to me from the figures that this is more like a State lottery than a traffic fund.

The Minister for Works: The infallible system.

Mr. NORTH: Yes. The Cottesloe Council have received altogether the sum of £591 from this fund, whereas the Belmont Park Road Board received, during the same period, £5,312.

The Minister for Lands: How much of the Perth-Fremantle road has the Cottesloe Municipal Council to keep up? Is it three chains or five chains?

Mr. NORTH: It has very little to do with the main roads of the State, but within the municipality there are 30 miles of road which are just as much main roads as that between Perth and Fremantle.

The Minister for Lands: Every local authority can say the same.

Mr. NORTH: One road is used as much as another, whether it is called the Perth-Fremantle-road or any other. Along the sea front on a summer evening there are frequently 300 motor cars at Cottesloe, and yet we received this ridiculous sum of £591.

The Minister for Lands: We will relieve you of that very shortly.

Mr. NORTH: I urge upon the Minister to re-allocate the fund, or alter the system. During the same period the Perth City Council has received £15,000. It cannot have more than a mile or two of main roads within its boundaries. I know that the Cottesloe jetty is not a necessity in the true sense of the word, but it is a facility for the people. It is now falling to pieces, and will do so within a week if it is not attended to. The Minister should set apart a sum of money to meet us half way in repairing the jetty. The people who use it come from far and near. I am informed the Cottesloe Council intend to work in with the Rottnest summer resort.

The Premier: Has not the attendance at Cottesloe fallen away considerably since the regulation governing bathing costumes was passed?

Mr. NORTH: That may be so, but the regulation has been in force for nine years.

Mr. Taylor: In existence, but not enforced.

The Premier: Cottesloe has become unpopular since then.

Mr. NORTH: The regulation has certainly had some publicity. The jetty was built originally by the Public Works Department. The council have spent about £200 a year for many years in renewing the old jarrah piles. The department is now anxious to put in concrete piles, but it is a question as to how far the Government will meet us in facing this expenditure. I hope the Minister will be able to set aside a sum of money to satisfy the residents of the metropolitan area who wish to spend a day on the sea front.

Mr. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [9.14]: I hope provision will be made at no distant date for the extension of the Fremantle Harbour. We prided ourselves on the fact that it could accommodate the special squadron that visited these shores a few months ago, but only a few days ago it was unable to accommodate a big mercantile vessel. The harbour has shown itself to be inadequate during the last few months. Fremantle is growing, and the big harvest that is estimated for this year must draw the attention of the Government to the necessity for improving the harbour. I know that money is scarce, but I hope the matter will be taken into consideration at the earliest opportunity. Rottnest Island has been mentioned, and I would draw attention to the harbour started there some time ago, but stopped because it was considered likely to silt up. I understand that engineers have been testing the question of silting, and if the fear in that respect proves to be unfounded I hope the harbour will be pushed ahead. The present landing place is in a disgraceful state, and if not repaired is likely to lead to accidents during the holiday season. I trust the Minister will hasten the appointment of additional inspectors under the Shops and Factories Act. The administration of that Act has been hampered by lack of sympathy on the part of previous Governments. The gentleman in charge of the department is a very capable officer, but his duties cannot be carried out as they should be owing to the lack of sufficient inspectors. Foreigners trade all hours at their own sweet will, while Britishers have to comply with the Act. I hope good practical men will be appointed as inspectors, an ounce of practice being worth a ton of theory. The additional inspectors are badly needed.

Mr. MARSHALL (Murchison) [9.17]: I am surprised to learn that the Federal Government propose to establish a Department of Ways and Works in this State, as I understood there was likely to be amalgamation of State and Federal departments rather than a policy of further establishment of separate departments. However, the Federal Government have always shown a tendency to hamper and retard this State. I have little fault to find with the allocation of the Federal

road grant, provided the proportion to my particular road board materialises. So far it is merely on paper. I am pleased to learn that the Minister for Works will administer the expenditure of the money. The previous Minister for Works got into difficulties several times over the matter, but with the new Minister matters should work smoothly. I am glad that the Public Works Department will afford opportunities of obtaining practical experience to engineering students at the University.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That has been the practice for some time.

Mr. MARSHALL: I will take the hon. gentleman's word for it. The appointment of a new Engineer-in-Chief I am prepared to leave entirely to the Government, but I differ from certain members regarding the ability of this State's engineers. I have seen some very costly and extremely wasteful works constructed by those engineers. Among the faults committed by our engineers is the Meekatharra reticulation scheme. I do not know, and do not propose to inquire, who is responsible for that work; but it is no credit to him, whoever he is. Then there are the Mt. Hawthorn filter beds. Such occurrences point to the necessity for a competent Engineer-in-Chief, wherever he may come from. With respect to the Traffic Act, we have heard a good deal to-night about taxing the heavy traffic by way of making it pay for the damage it does to the roads. However, the light traffic, which is used purely for the purpose of enjoyment, should also be taxed more heavily. The heavy traffic serves to meet the needs of the community, and should not be burdened with taxation. Indeed, taxation should be lightest on that traffic which distributes necessities, because the taxation must fall back on the consumer.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle—in reply) [9.20]: I do not wish it to go out that I am satisfied with the conditions that the Commonwealth have laid down regarding the expenditure of money for roads. An arrangement has been arrived at with the Commonwealth, but I am not satisfied with that arrangement. I consider that this State should not be subject to certain restrictions imposed by the arrangement. The question of which roads are to be put in hand is decided by engineers who visit the various districts and consult with the local authorities. If the engineer and the local authorities agree, their decision goes without question; but if they cannot agree the matter must be referred to me, and I decide it. The plans are all in the department, awaiting submission to Melbourne; and any hon. member interested can, on inquiry at the office, learn what roads are suggested. The road recommended by the member for Cue has not yet been sub-

mitted to Melbourne, which step will have to be taken before the construction can be put in hand. We shall decide when the reports have come in. Regarding traffic fees, I explained to a deputation recently that although the ex-Minister for Works said he had controlled the system, that circumstance was not known to anyone in the department. However, his system strikes me as having some unfair features. The hon. member said that he had held a conference with the local authorities, at which an agreement was reached. That is correct but the agreement has not been lived up to, some road boards having received greater consideration than others. The whole scheme will, I hope, be recast before long. For the next distribution of fees I hope to set out my own ideas, though I do not expect them to prove infallible, as the ex-Minister considers his ideas to be. I have had applications for so many jetties and baths for seaports all round the State that the expenditure required to meet all the demands would be very heavy. In many cases where past Governments have constructed baths and built jetties and handed them over to the local people, the baths and jetties are now gone and the people have come to the Government with requests to build new ones. The local people should at least maintain baths and jetties constructed under such conditions. The Government cannot be expected to renew these works indefinitely. Railway and harbour construction will be better considered on the Loan Estimates. The appointment of additional shoos and factories inspectors has been decided upon, but the selections have not yet been made.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Labour, £5,874—agreed to.

Department of Colonial Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew, Minister); Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Votes.

Vote—Office of Colonial Secretary, £16,856:

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE (Honorary Minister—Hannans) [9.30]: I do not know what procedure is to be adopted in discussing the Estimates of the Colonial Secretary's Department. Will the general discussion cover the whole of the subdepartments controlled by the Colonial Secretary?

The CHAIRMAN: I refer you to Standing Order 386A, which provides that the general discussion on the whole of the Estimates shall be conducted on the first vote of the department.

Mr. Taylor: That is not what we did the other night, but your decision is correct.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: In introducing the Estimates for the Colonial Secretary's

Department I would draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that there are 10 subdepartments, two of which only come under my direct administration. In addition to the general administration of the office of the Colonial Secretary, the subdepartments under the control of the Department include the Gaols, State Ferries, Fisheries, Observatory, Friendly Societies and Registry, Aborigines, Medical and Health, State Children Department, State Labour Bureau, Lunacy, Harbour and Lights, State Hotels and Cave House. The department also provides for the office and staff of the Minister and the Under Secretary, the Accounts office, the Records office, including the records of the head office, Medical and Health Departments, State Ferries, State Hotels, Gaols, Fisheries, and Aborigines and the Observatory. It also has control of the cleaning and caretaking of public offices, including the Colonial Secretary's head office building, and the main public buildings including the Treasury, the Lands Department buildings, and the old G.P.O. In addition there is the Correspondence Despatch Office for the delivery of official correspondence between Government departments, town and country. Regarding the Despatch Office, the saving in postage alone for the year 1923-24, calculated on the current postage rates, was £16,632 8s., notwithstanding the reduction in postage rates from 4d. to 1½d. per ounce. This result is due to the increase in the volume of business, which consisted of the conveyance of 4,367 files and 134,131 letters. The method adopted in computing the value of the service rendered was to charge the exact postage on all weighed matter delivered to country stations. The service was rendered free to the various departments. A great increase has taken place in connection with the country work. The weight of letters handled was 103,842 lbs., showing an increase of 17,162 lbs. compared with the previous year. The saving on country postage was £10,493 15s. 9d.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The department is doing very good work.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: It is splendid work, and it is a great pity that the system was not in vogue years ago. There are constant deliveries in the metropolitan area, and two special messengers are reserved for urgent deliveries between the various offices. In connection with the aborigines, I hope the North-West members realise that the natives in the northern parts do not come under the control of the Colonial Secretary. Since the establishment of the Department for the North-West, only those aborigines living in the southern parts of the State are controlled by the Colonial Secretary's Department. We look after the welfare of the natives, including the old and indigent, who are rationed at various centres through the police. Medical attention and medicines are provided in necessitous cases and employment and wages of the natives are arranged.

The total population of the natives in the South is 4,162, and the cost of rations during the year represented £4,847; the clothes supplied included 1,026 blankets and 3,597 garments. The cost of medicine and medical services was £155, and of burials, £221. The area of the Moore River settlement for natives is about 10,000 acres, and the soil is poor except on the river flats. By cultivating those flats produce was grown and consumed of an estimated value of £658 during the year. The products include 75 tons of hay, 1,545 gallons of milk, 646 lbs. of potatoes, 5,073 lbs. of various vegetables, 195 dozen eggs, and 68 lbs. of butter. At the close of the year there were 284 natives at the settlement, mostly old natives, physically weak and defective. About 101 children attended the school. During the year a subsidy, which is only paid in approved cases, was paid to the New Norcia Mission, at the rate of £7 per annum per child; this is the only subsidised mission in the southern part of the State.

Mr. Taylor: Are the outer goldfields areas included in the southern areas?

Hon. S. M. MUNSIE: The southern part controlled by the Colonial Secretary takes in the whole of the goldfields. The control of the department extends to the area below latitude 25 degrees south, except coastal towns north of Geraldton. Regarding the Fisheries Department, the operations of the officials cover the whole coastline. Only 11 inspectors are employed, and the services of the police are availed of where possible. The estimated value of the fish, crayfish, and prawns captured during 1923 was £77,785; fishermen's licenses number 533, and the fishing boat licenses, 258. In connection with pearling, 208 "ship" licenses were issued for the year 1923, and 1,267 tons of mother-of-pearl shell were fished during the year of a stated value of £182,135, the stated value of the pearls recovered being £44,698. My information shows that there was little demand for Shark Bay shell throughout the year, but pearls of a stated value of £10,143 were obtained there. Regarding game, which comes under the supervision of that department, marsupial skins valued at £138,602 were secured during the year. The department issued during the year 1,172 licenses for the killing of kangaroos for food supplies.

Mr. Taylor: Those licenses are free, are they not?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes. The number of marsupial skins sold during the year included the following: Grey kangaroo skins, 122,872; red kangaroo skins, 205,248—

Mr. Taylor: Get rid of the reds!

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE:—euro skins, 47,408; brush kangaroo skins, 141,625; opossum skins, 10,166; and skins of other marsupials, 16,372. As a result of those sales royalties totalling £7,261 were received.

Member: There has been a great onslaught on kangaroos during the year.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I am sure North-West members wish that there had been a greater onslaught still, because the kangaroos have become a great pest in the North. Regarding the Registrar General's Department, hon. members do not desire that I should go into particulars regarding all the functions of that branch of the service. Hon. members know what duties are carried out by the officials of that department. They cover a wide range and one of the most important is the collection and compilation of statistics relating to stock and crops. The collection of this information is performed by the police by means of a personal canvass, which is undertaken twice a year in the South-West and once a year for the whole State. This work naturally entails some expense, and as more people become settled on the land and bigger areas are under cultivation, the expense increases. This year the area under crop exceeded that of last year by approximately 400,000 acres, while the number of settlers and cereal crop farmers increased by about 140. As to the Harbour and Lights Department, the activities include the administration of the various ports and harbours Acts that affect the several ports and harbours other than Fremantle and Bunbury, and the control of the harbour masters at Wyndham, Bunbury and Albany, and the crews and craft necessary for the carrying out of those duties. Five jetties are worked departmentally under the Jetties Regulation Act, 1878, while others are leased. The jetties worked departmentally are those at Wyndham, Derby, Broome, Point Samson, and Carnarvon. The department also controls all port lights and sea marks, except those under the jurisdiction of the Bunbury Harbour Board and the Fremantle Harbour Trust. All the coastal lights, beacons, and boating buoys are included. The department also controls the administration of the Navigation Act, 1904, including the survey of coastal vessels and harbour and river craft, and their equipment. The various boat licensing boards and the surveys of boilers, machinery and engines under that Act are also dealt with. Then there is the control of the Swan River, which embraces the supervision of the navigation of all craft thereon, and private jetties, etc. The department also supervises the operations of the Merchant Shipping Act Application Act regarding masters and seamen engaged in the interstate trade and the preparation and promulgation of hydrographical information regarding all the ports in Western Australia. Regarding the Lunacy Department, which is one of the largest departments controlled by the Colonial Secretary, hon. members will realise that the functions of that department relate to the care and treatment of those persons who cannot look after themselves. To give members a brief history of what is being

done, I would remind them that the following institutions are directly controlled by the department: Claremont Hospital for the Insane, Whitby Falls Hospital for the Insane at Mundijong, and "Greenplace." In addition to those there are certain soldier mental cases for whom the Repatriation Commission are responsible financially, and these are accommodated at "Stromness," Cottesloe Beach. While the patients at "Stromness" are included in the total number of insane under the care of the Lunacy Department, their maintenance, together with the purchase price and upkeep of "Stromness," are matters entirely for the Commonwealth authorities under the administration of the Repatriation Department. There are observation wards at the Perth Hospital where patients are received prior to being sent to Claremont if necessary. I am sorry to say that those wards have not been altered or brought up to date. Recently the Government purchased 19 acres for the purpose of establishing a new reception home at Point Heathcote, on the south side of the Swan River. The situation is an ideal one, and with suitable accommodation should prove most beneficial to those who are prepared to submit themselves for treatment during the early stages of their mental disabilities. Provision is made on this year's Loan Estimates for the establishment of the home. I do not think any member will say a reception home is not needed. The present reception home at the Perth Hospital is a disgrace to the State.

Mr. Taylor: And a menace to the hospital.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes, as well as to the patients sent there for observation. I hope that in the near future something may be done to improve the position.

Mr. Taylor: When the reception home is built, the other will be abolished.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes. Inebriate patients are sent to the Salvation Army Home at Perth and Claremont, the former being set aside for female and the latter for male patients. The Lunacy Department pays the Salvation Army authorities for their maintenance and care. The amount allowed is £1 per head for men and £1 10s. for women. Both these homes are licensed under the Inebriates Act and are supervised by the Inspector General of Institutions for Inebriates. On the 1st July last the number certified to be insane in the various institutions was as follows: Claremont, 699 males, 334 females; Whitby, 29; Greenplace, 14; Stromness, 15, a total of 1,081; and in the observation wards in the Perth Hospital, 15 males and 5 females not certified.

Mr. Thomson: How does that compare with the other States?

Hon. W. S. MUNSIE: For the year ended the 30th June last Western Australia's total per thousand of population was the most favourable. The State Children Department comes directly under my administration.

Its functions have recently been criticised, but while it is not doing all that I should like to see it do, it is doing as much as, if not more than, any other State in the Commonwealth. Wherever possible we favour adoptions and the boarding-out system. During the last two years two institutions have been closed. While I give the institutions all credit for the splendid work they are doing, I am satisfied home life is preferable for the children, no matter how good an institution might be.

Mr. Thomson: Under supervision, of course.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes. Let me give a word of praise to the officers of the department. The maintenance officer and the inspectors, both men and women, are doing magnificent work. I am only sorry that many of the recommendations submitted by the inspectors cannot be carried out.

Mr. Taylor: The select committee went into this matter four years ago.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes; I was a member of the select committee.

Mr. Taylor: The report could not have been more favourable.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The select committee secured a list of children boarded out in the metropolitan area, and visited 12 homes on each of four days. There was no preparation or pre-arrangement; they were surprise visits. With only one exception, the homes were first-class. The department deserve credit for choosing good homes where the children are treated so kindly. The number of children chargeable to the State on the 30th June last was 3,286. Payments were made to 739 mothers keeping their own children, who numbered 2,118; to orphanages 743 children; boarded out, 396 children; in receiving dépôt, 29 children. The rate of subsidy paid to institutions and to individuals is— orphanages, 9s. per week if children educated on the premises, 8s. per week when attending State schools; Industrial School for Girls, under 14 years, 9s., over 14 years 10s. per week; Seaforth Girls' Industrial School, minimum guarantee, £15 per week; Salvation Army Industrial School for Boys, minimum guarantee, £10 per week; Salvation Army Home for Mentally Defective Boys, minimum guarantee, £20 per week. Let me pay a compliment to the Salvation Army Home at Seaforth. This is the only institution that caters for the care of backward children. It has two teachers, one a trained psychologist, and both are doing magnificent work in training mentally deficient children. I am only sorry we cannot institute a general scheme to deal with mentally deficient children. The Education Department pays the salaries of both teachers.

The Minister for Lands: That is in addition to the £1 per week for each child.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: They ought to do very well at that rate.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Sometimes a child brought before the State Children Court is considered mentally deficient, and the only expert in the State is the teacher at the Seaforth Home.

Mr. Mann: The best in the Commonwealth.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I have approved of the payment to that gentleman of £1 per child examined in his own time. After finishing his school work at Seaforth he has to come to Perth for the examination and classification of children. I asked the Children's Court authorities how much would be required to cover the total number of children for a year, and £25 was considered sufficient. The scale for children boarded out is:—under one year, 11s. per week; one year to two years, 10s. per week; two years to 14 years, 9s. per week. For infants as much as 15s. per week is paid, and special payments are made for delicate children. I have received complaints that 9s. per week is not sufficient. I am sorry I cannot increase the amount, but the system adopted by the department is fairly liberal. If a mother is earning something but has children to keep and rent to pay, or if a child is working and has to pay rail or tram fares, the fares, rent, rates and taxes are taken into account and deducted from the actual earnings of the family. If then there is not the equivalent of 9s. per head including the mother, the amount is made up to 9s. That is quite as far as we can go at present, though I hope that in future more money will be available so that the amount might be increased to 10s. No relief to unemployed was granted from the 31st August, 1923, until July, 1924. From that date to the 22nd October, 1924, the amount granted was £253.

Mr. Mann: Does that include railway fares?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No, that is purely sustenance to unemployed. The number of adoptions arranged last year was 91, a record for any one year. Excellent homes have been found. The outlook of the children placed under this heading is bright, especially for baby girls. Every child available and eligible has been placed. There has been a steady decline in the number for the past three or four years. This is partly accounted for by the numerous adoptions arranged and the fewer children being committed to the care of the department. I wish to pay a tribute to the work that has been done by Mr. Bulley. There is no doubt about it that he has performed splendid work in the metropolitan area. It has been put up to me recently that a woman probation officer would do equally well. Under existing circumstances I hardly think it necessary, considering the state of the finances, to appoint such an officer because, week after week and month after month, the number of girls being committed to the State is decreasing, and while that is so the work of the officer becomes less.

Mr. Thomson: That is satisfactory.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: It is, and I do not wish to disturb that state of affairs. In connection with the Labour Bureau, branches are established at Fremantle, Northam, Kellerberrin, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, York, Beverley, Bruce Rock, Narrogin, Wagin, Katanning, Albany, Bunbury, and Bridgetown. During the year the number of applicants for work in Perth has been, males 7,337 and females 3,194. The engagements made in Perth numbered 5,333 males and 1,846 females, a total of 7,179. In the country branches the number of applicants for work was 1,691 males, and no females. The total number of engagements there was 842. There is nothing more that I can tell hon. members now, but I shall be glad to give any information desired when the items are reached.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [10.5]: I was glad to hear the remarks of the Honorary Minister with respect to the Charities Department, principally for the reason that I was a member of the select committee that inquired into the working of the department some few years ago. It is pleasing to know that many of the suggestions that were made by the committee in their report have been adopted. The question the committee inquired into was somewhat complex. We found that many of the things that had been said to exist, had been greatly exaggerated. On the other hand, there was a good deal of ground for dissatisfaction in regard to some of the then existing conditions at the Charities Department. From what the Minister has said, it is evident that things have been placed on a much more satisfactory footing. I rose merely to express my satisfaction at some good having resulted from the work of the select committee.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10.7]: There is one division about which I desire to offer some remarks. It would appear that the activities of this department have been eluded in past years. Last year I felt some concern because there was no report available for perusal by the general public who, no doubt, take a keen interest in this all-useful institution—I refer to the Observatory. A year or two ago a very important astronomical event took place, and that event brought astronomers here from all parts of the world. For the sake of convenient observation the scientists went to Wallall and amongst that contingent were several from our local observatory. They, however, kept at a respectful distance from the other scientists; they were two or three miles away from them, and it was felt by our representatives that even their wireless should not be tampered with in any way by the visiting astronomers. The public should be made aware that the Government Astronomer in this State is not lacking in a keen sense of his duty to Western Australia, and

that he has made up for not presenting a report in 1922, by furnishing a report for the years 1923 and 1924. It will, therefore, be seen that he is right up-to-date. When members read about some of the items of this observatory, which is costing the country £1,585 per annum to administer, they will have a better appreciation of the Government Astronomer's services to the State. I first draw attention to the fact that by not having last year's report before me I am not able to give even a fair idea of this officer's fatiguing duties. He dealt at some length with the subject of latitude in the year previous to 1923, even if he did not afford much information about tidal waves, which, he tells us, are peculiar to Geraldton. It is as well to know that this public officer is costing the State over £1,500 per annum and that he is performing a useful function. So that any criticism of the officer may not be regarded as being too severe it might be better to quote his own remarks. First I will refer to the installation of a mysterious machine for taking seismographic records. I understand that machine takes records of volcanic disturbances. If I am incorrect in that assumption I hope that the Government Astronomer will set me right. At all events, the ex-Premier should be sharply criticised for the fact that he has been so unmindful of this man's duties to the State that he kept the institution undermanned to such an extent that in the installation of the seismograph the whole staff had to take off their coats to put the machine in its place. It was a great oversight on the part of the ex-Premier to neglect the institution to that extent, and his action calls for the most severe criticism and castigation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Please do not talk so loudly; I do want to have a rest.

Mr. LAMBERT: Very well. Dealing with the seismograph, the Government Astronomer says that before proceeding with the work of erecting the instrument he was awaiting information from Canada. Whether he was waiting to ascertain what the machine was for or as to the correct method of erecting it, I do not know. He remarks—

I am waiting for information from the Dominion Observatory in Canada before doing anything in the nature of alterations to the present installation.

I commend the Government Astronomer for his Scotch caution in not touching this mysterious instrument until he is thoroughly primed by observatories in other parts of the world. He proceeds—

I should like to place on record the fact that all the work connected with the installation of this instrument was performed by the observatory staff, and I express my appreciation of their enthusiasm.

Now, listen to this epoch-making remark—

If they had not been willing to turn-to I am afraid the instrument would still be in the packing case.

I think that the ex-Premier, who is so lost to his sense of public responsibility and the importance of the high office of Government Astronomer, should certainly be castigated. Is it little wonder that another party has received a mandate from the people of this country, a party that is not unmindful of its duties to everyone in the State. It is a public scandal that this officer should have had to take off his coat and turn-to. Apparently there is another important function performed by him, for in his report he says—

The number of visitors to the Observatory, both day and evening, is steadily increasing, and it is becoming a problem, with a reduced staff, to cope with the demand for peeps through the telescope.

Think of the heartlessness of the ex-Treasurer who so reduced this staff that they find difficulty in coping with a demand for peeps through the telescope! The officer continues—

In 1922-23 no fewer than 104 evenings were given up to the general public, and close on 2,000 people listened to instructive information about the heavenly bodies, and then peeped through the telescope.

Here is another paragraph—

I would like to point out the time given up to these visitors, who consisted largely of school children and members of various societies, is mainly in the nature of overtime, and Mr. Yeates and I are the two sufferers.

Think of it! All this to allow people to peep through the telescope and get instructive information about the heavenly bodies.

Mr. Griffiths: They were not working on the 44-hour week.

The Minister for Lands: How do you know?

Mr. LAMBERT: In conclusion that officer writes—

The only consolation we have is that the children and grown-ups derive educative benefit and the Observatory is thought highly of by the general public, a consummation we are justly proud of.

If that would not make the great astronomers of the past turn in their graves. I do not know what would! To show my deep sense of appreciation of our astronomer's services to Western Australia, I move—

*That the vote be reduced by £1.*

Mr. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [10.20]: I wish to say a word or two on the subject of gaols. Prisoners sent to gaols are sent to be reformed rather than to be punished. Life in the Fremantle gaol is not likely to reform prisoners; more likely is it to make of them hardened criminals. Of course I appreciate the way in which the gaol is conducted by the staff, and I will admit that every consideration is given to the prisoners.

Mr. Griffiths: Is it a fact that they do not like leaving the place?

Mr. SLEEMAN: No, I do not think so, for they get out when they can. The trouble with the system is that the men are too much in company with each other, and so are likely to become hardened criminals. I hope the Treasurer will try to find funds for the establishment of a prison farm. Fully 80 per cent. of our prisoners, not being dangerous criminals, could be worked on such a farm. There is down there a gaol within a gaol, a reformatory, but I understand it is not nearly large enough, and not altogether suitable. It should be enlarged until the prison farm can be established. On the Police Estimates I brought up the question of the transport of prisoners, but the Minister for Police declared that it did not come within his department. Seemingly it is in the Colonial Secretary's department. But, wherever it may be, I hope that before I conclude my term in this House I shall manage to ensure a reform in the transport of prisoners about the metropolitan area. It is incredible that we should be still tolerating the system of chaining men together and exposing them to the public view on railway stations between the Perth courts and the Fremantle gaol. The Minister has admitted that, although he has done fairly well with the State Children Department, he has not done all he would like to have done. The amount of money allowed for outdoor relief and State children is altogether inadequate. Nine shillings per week will not keep any child. More money must be made available for the feeding of our State children. A little while ago a woman living in one of the suburbs of Fremantle came to me and declared that the 27s. weekly she was receiving for the support of herself and her two children was not sufficient to keep her. Thinking to do her a good turn, I managed to get her a position bringing in £1 a week. But then an officer from the Charities Department informed me that, in consequence, the State relief granted to the woman would have to be reduced. So, it seems I did her a bad turn after all. However, I understand she has not yet been reduced, and I hope she will not be. Indeed, as I have said, it is essential that these allowances should be increased. In conclusion, I should like to know what has happened to the ward that

was to be built for returned soldiers at the asylum. I am continually being asked about that ward and I have no answer to give.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [10.25]: I congratulate the Minister on the concise statement he has given to the House. I agree with the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) that we ought to have a prison farm. From policy we could then work the prisoners upon that farm and pay them for their work, so that on the completion of his sentence each man might have a few shillings in his pocket in order to get a clear start again. I, too, should like to know what has been done in respect of the ward to be built for our returned soldiers. In my view the whole of that responsibility should be undertaken by the Commonwealth. The report given by the Minister in respect of State children and outdoor relief is very satisfactory. I am quite in accord with the principle adopted in the boarding out of children in private homes rather than confining them in institutions. I must admit that every case I have brought before the department has received prompt attention. The method we have adopted is a good one. Where the bread-winner has been taken from a family, the children instead of being put into an institution, are left with the mother, and we assist her to maintain them until they are able to help themselves. There have been instances of a mother having a certain amount of money, but through having a large family, she has been compelled to use her capital, because the department would not assist her until she had spent the whole of her money. That is a wrong principle. We should assist a woman even if she has a certain amount of money. The member for Coolgardie gave an illuminating address on the Observatory. Some years ago an effort was made to strike out this vote. This is one of the activities that might well be taken over by the Federal Government. I suggest that the Premier offer the building and staff to the Federal authorities.

The Minister for Works: They cannot have the building and site.

Mr. Richardson: They would want to regulate our weather then.

Mr. THOMSON: I should like the Minister to inform us of what benefit the Observatory is to the State.

Mr. Teesdale: Great losses of sheep were avoided in the North as a result of the forecasts.

Mr. Latham: They are issued by the meteorologist.

Mr. THOMSON: I congratulate the Minister on the information supplied to us and regret that a larger sum cannot be provided for this department.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [10.30]: The member for Fremantle spoke of placing men from the Fremantle gaol on useful

work. If we had a farm where they could be employed, they would cultivate a liking for country life and might be improved morally.

The Minister for Lands: Thirty-six are at Rottneat.

Mr. LATHAM: They cannot do much good there. We ought to get them away from the city.

The Premier: They all come from country districts.

Mr. LATHAM: The Premier's interjection reminds me that I was once asked to table a question in this House as to the number of men in the lunatic asylum who came from the land, and the number who had been working light land. I did not have cheek enough to ask the question. The unsophisticated people come from the land, not the wrong-doers. In many other States great benefit has resulted from placing these men on farms. New Zealand years ago did a lot of good work with such people. The matter of the Observatory should be seriously taken up with the Commonwealth. If the astronomer is doing good work, it is being done not only for the State but for the Commonwealth and is a national work. I think the meteorologist does the work for the shipping. It is time the Federal authorities took over the Observatory and relieved this already over-burdened State.

The Premier: That is more unification. If it had been controlled by the Federal Government would we have had the eclipse viewed from Wallall?

Mr. LATHAM: Wallall was the most suitable place for observing the eclipse, or it would not have been selected. I believe in unification if it affects only the transfer of the Observatory.

Mr. Lambert: The astronomers arranged to have the eclipse there.

Mr. LATHAM: Then they must be more clever than I gave them credit for being. The Observatory is an unnecessary burden on the people of the State. The member for Coolgardie, in discussing this matter on one occasion, suggested that if the money spent on the Observatory were paid to an agricultural chemist, some good would result. If the money can be spent more beneficially and the Commonwealth will not take over the institution, we should strike out the vote. While I do not wish to see the work of Mr. Curlewis thrown to the winds, we should carry only such burdens as we can afford.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE (Hannans—in reply) [10.34]: I shall not attempt to reply to the complaint of the member for Coolgardie, who treated the matter of the Observatory as a joke.

Mr. Latham: I think he was quite serious.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Last session he complained because the officer controlling the Observatory had not submitted his annual report; this year he complains because

he submitted the reports of two years. The member for Fremantle has raised the question of the transport of prisoners to the Fremantle gaol. I will make representations to the Colonial Secretary in the matter. He also complained that children could not live on 9s. a week. I am sorry I cannot give more. I know of two families of which the breadwinner, though working every day in the week, cannot earn enough to provide an average of 9s. a week for every member of the family. I know of another family in which there are nine children and where the same thing appertains. I do not say 9s. a week is enough for a child, but there are many children whose fathers have to keep them on less than that.

Mr. Thomson: Compared with other parts of the world they are fortunate in getting that much.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: It is not possible to increase the allowance at present. The member for Fremantle also wanted some definite information about the mental home for returned soldiers. The agreement with the Commonwealth is not signed. It was gone into by the previous Government and practically agreed to by the then Colonial Secretary. This agreement practically committed the State to an expenditure of £40,000 on the erection of a home.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It was £20,000.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: It was £40,000 altogether. Western Australia did not get a fair deal under that agreement, but fortunately it was not signed as originally drafted by the Commonwealth authorities. The present Government are now negotiating for an agreement that will be more favourable to this State. We have succeeded in inducing the other Government to give way. We have had another conference with officers of the Repatriation Department. The Colonial Secretary recently received an influential and representative deputation from people who have been vitally interested in the matter, urging upon him the necessity of not entering into any agreement but compelling the Federal Government to do their duty.

Mr. Thomson: That is what they ought to do.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The State Government have no right to enter into negotiations with the Commonwealth for the treatment of mentally affected returned soldiers, and, if they had sat tight, the Commonwealth would have been compelled to do their duty.

Mr. Mann: Did they not threaten to remove their patients to another State?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I believe so. There is another unfair condition in the agreement. The Commonwealth say they are prepared to take the responsibility only for those returned soldiers who were proved to be mentally affected within two years of their discharge from the army. This meant that the total number of patients in this State the Commonwealth would provide

for would be 32, as against 33 to be provided for by this State. If the Commonwealth Government were prepared to accept responsibility for men who lost their reason within two years after their discharge, they should be equally responsible for those who have done so within four years afterwards.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Year by year the Commonwealth contributions to the expenditure will become less, and those of the State will increase. Ex-service men should be treated in the same way. I hope when the negotiations of the Federal Government are concluded a much more favourable agreement for this State will be made.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We will not be doing anything for the soldiers in the end.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: This Government is prepared to do as much for the returned soldiers as any other Government, but I believe it is the duty of the Commonwealth to carry out this work.

Mr. Davy: I hope this duty will not remain unfulfilled while the State and the Commonwealth squabble.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: It is not unfulfilled, although the present arrangement is unsatisfactory. I am bound to say that the State has segregated the returned soldier patients from the ordinary patients even at Claremont. Though the soldiers have been looked after pending the negotiations, I admit that the position is not altogether satisfactory. If they were being neglected altogether while the negotiations were in progress there would be some point in the interjection. I would rather let the returned soldiers remain for some time to come where they are, while we see whether we cannot get a better agreement from the Federal Government. The duty is one that pertains to the Commonwealth. The member for Katanning stated that it was the practice of the department to compel a widow who had some money when the breadwinner died, to spend that money before granting relief for the maintenance of the children. I assure the hon. member that his information is incorrect.

Mr. Wilson: It was the practice at one time.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: But it is not the practice now, and has not been for some time.

Mr. Richardson: It was the practice a fortnight ago.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: There must be something behind that case, apart from the fact of the widow having money.

Mr. Richardson: I will give you the particulars to-morrow.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I investigated several such cases, and found that the reason was not as alleged. If other cases are submitted to me I will inquire into them. Quite recently there was a case of a woman who had been left a few hundred pounds.

She applied for assistance, and in her statement mentioned that she had that sum of money but intended to use it in purchasing a home, as she was paying rent. The department agreed to that proposal straight away, and assisted her with further money to get the home. However, if a widow has money which is earning income, naturally the department deduct that income when granting sustenance for the children.

Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Aborigines, £10,333:*

Mr. MARSHALL: It seems to me a great waste of money to maintain the Moore River settlement. If the same amount of labour as is utilised on that settlement were transferred to a spot where ample land was available for development, the institution would pretty well maintain itself instead of being a drain on the Treasury. I drew attention to this matter previously, and the Government of the day promised to consider my proposals. Where it is, the institution has a fair block of land and also a fair block of sand. Even in those adverse circumstances particularly good work is being done. The Government might well grant a more favourable location further along the river or else further along the Midland Railway. I visited the place when the late Mr. Campbell was in charge, and a very efficient controller he was. I believe the institution is still being conducted efficiently, but on its present site it must remain a burden on the State.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Fisheries, £5,447; Friendly Societies and Registry, £9,076; Gaols, £23,408; Harbour and Light and Jetties, £2,810—agreed to.*

*Vote—Lunacy and Inebriates, £29,623:*

*Item—Dentist (two months), £54:*

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The appointment of dentist has existed for a considerable time. Does the fact of salary being provided for only two months of this year mean that the position is to be abolished?

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11 p.m.*