

when they cannot be included with the fair accounts—we get 44 per cent. of the total advances made. A position like this calls for the consideration of hon. members, when we are asked to continue the operations of the Industries Assistance Act. Of course, there is no likelihood of any opposition being offered to the Bill. It ought to be passed; there is no alternative to passing it; but at the same time some of the facts and figures and particulars regarding this board ought to be presented to the House. We had some presented in the form of this statement tabled last night, but the statement, as I have already pointed out, did not contain some particulars which we would have liked to get. Furthermore, when the Bill was passed, we were told that not only would the agricultural industry be assisted, but also the industries of mining and of pearling. I know of one case in mining that received assistance under the Industries Assistance Board. The money was paid back in full at the end of some months, and it certainly rendered very considerable help to one particular mine working to-day and employing a great many men, and which might not have been working but for the assistance rendered under the Act. I think we might have been given some particulars regarding what has been done in connection with mining and pearling. I do not know the extent to which assistance has been rendered, and my remarks have been made for the purpose of getting information. Further, as we are face to face with a very serious problem in connection with the rabbit invasion in this State, I would like to be sure that the estimates regarding the position of the Industries Assistance Board as to the losses entailed in connection with its operations have taken into account the fact that no doubt the country will suffer very severely as the result of the coming of the rabbits. I would like to hear from some members who know more about the practical working of this board how its operations are going on in their particular provinces.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Clarke, debate adjourned.

MOTION—PASTORAL LEASEHOLDS AND LAND ACT AMENDMENT ACT, 1917.

Debate resumed from Tuesday, 5th February, on the motion by Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom:—"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the Government should extend the time of application for coming under the amended Land Act to pastoral leaseholders who hold more than 1,000,000 acres in any one division, until twelve months after peace is declared, so that the owners, many of whom are in England working in connection with the war, may have an opportunity of visiting this State and personally superintending the division or disposal of their surplus properties on the terms that double rent be paid for the extended period."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.40]: I have nothing to say in regard to the motion except that,

having given the matter consideration, the Government see no objection to it. But I think Mr. Drew was right in saying that if the desire of Sir Edward Wittenoom is to be carried out, it will have to be done by Act of Parliament. The Government are now considering the drafting of a short Bill to meet these circumstances, and it will be submitted to Parliament presently, when members will have full opportunity of discussing it.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.41]: In view of the fact that the business likely to be available during next week will not occupy the attention of hon. members for more than a day, and understanding, as I do, that it will better suit the convenience of hon. members if we do not meet next week, I move—

"That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, 19th February."

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.42 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 7th February, 1918.

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

"HANSARD"—REPORT OF JOINT PRINTING COMMITTEE.

Mr. SPEAKER brought up the report of the Joint Printing Committee in connection with the suggested abolition of "Hansard."

The Clerk read the report as follows:—

1. In view of the suggestion that the publication of "Hansard" should be discontinued on the score of expense, your Committee have thought it right to hold an inquiry into the question whether any substantial economies can be effected, and with that object have called for suggestions from the Chief "Hansard" Reporter and members of his staff, and from the Government Printer. 2. As a result of the inquiry the Committee do not recommend the adoption of any substitute for the present system, because each of them would mean expenditure for a result of no practical value. Particulars of the schemes referred to are detailed in the appendix attached. The Committee have not dealt with publication by contract,

because no proposal has been made, but they see no reason to suppose that a contractor with his profit to make could carry out the work at a smaller cost. 3. The Committee, however, are of opinion that various economies may be effected in the present system without impairing its utility, and that members will not object to a trifling sacrifice in the way of convenience. 4. They recommend in the first place that the issue of the weekly edition be postponed from Tuesday to Thursday, and that no corrections by members be allowed after the type has been set up. From this they anticipate the saving of the greater part of the cost of corrections (which amounted in the session 1916-17 to nearly £200), of the employment of temporary typists, and of a special messenger for the use of the Hansard staff. 5. They also recommend that, as previously to 1912 the work was carried out by a staff of five reporters, the services of a temporary reporter in the place of Mr. Bridgman, now on military service, be discontinued. 6. They recommend that "Hansard" be printed in "brevier" in the style of the specimen page attached hereto, which would, in the opinion of the Government Printer, mean a saving of £250 in a session of 50 sittings. 7. As the Questions and Answers as well as the lists of papers laid on the Table are printed in the Votes and Proceedings, the Committee recommend that they be omitted from "Hansard," as well as the synopsis of the day's business printed at the beginning of each sitting. The saving effected by these omissions in the session of 1916-17 would have amounted to nearly £50. 8. The Committee anticipate from these alterations a saving in a session of 50 sittings of between £700 and £800. 9. The Committee also recommend a saving of £40 by the discontinuance of the free distribution of bound volumes of "Hansard" to members. Any member requiring the bound volumes, who makes application early in the session, may obtain them at cost price when completed. 10. The following is a list of the savings to be effected:—1, Savings from Thursday issue: Corrections £200, temporary typists £100, "Hansard" messenger £30; 2, Discontinuance of 6th reporter, £100; 3, Cheaper printing, £250; 4, Omission of questions, papers, and synopsis, £50; 5, Discontinuance of free issue of bound volumes, £40; 6, Reduction of incidental vote, £30; total, £800. 11. Instructions have been given to the Government Printer and the Chief "Hansard" Reporter to give effect to the above recommendations on the re-opening of the session on Wednesday, 23rd January. Appendix—Proposals in place of present system of "Hansard" rejected by the Committee: (1.) A summary printed in the Votes and Proceedings of each speech delivered, amounting to 20 lines in case of the mover, and five lines of other members. Cost—Three reporters at £350, £1,050; printing, £200. The Committee considers that the result would be of no value whatever, and the expenditure a dead loss. (2.) A condensed instead of a verbatim report. Cost—Five reporters, £1,900; two typists, £300; print-

ing, £1,600. The Committee are of opinion that only a verbatim report can meet the requirements of Parliament. (3.) Sessional "Hansard." If "Hansard" were brought out after the close of the session, four reporters would be necessary, no typists required; speeches would be condensed by one-half. Cost—Four reporters, £1,550; printing, £1,600. More than half of the requirements of "Hansard" would be sacrificed if this scheme were adopted.

[For "Questions on notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

BILLS — SEWERAGE WORKS VALIDATION.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—CURATOR OF INTESTATE ESTATES.

In Committee.

Resumed from Tuesday, 5th February; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 6—Order to collect and administer:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: As I told the Committee the other night, I do not like paragraph (g) because I think it gives the Bill the character of a Public Trustee Bill, which is inadvisable in view of the fact that we do not propose to create a public trustee. I move—

"That paragraph (g) be struck out."

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister has agreed to strike out the paragraph, apparently because some members have objected to it. Others of us would like to know what the objection is.

The Attorney General: The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) stated his objection very clearly the other night.

Hon. T. WALKER: The simple reason for the deletion of the paragraph is that if it be allowed to stand it practically creates the Curator of Intestate Estates a public trustee although he cannot be reached as a public trustee should be in the event of any mismanagement of an estate.

Hon. P. Collier: You could provide for reaching him.

Hon. T. WALKER: Not without altering the character of the Bill. The whole purpose of the Bill is to give this officer charge of intestate estates, whereas if we give him this function provided in paragraph (g) we will enable him to be the administrator of any estate which anybody likes to leave in his hands; and that without creating any responsibility in him. The bill does not give him the full functions of a public trustee, and there should be no half measures.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I will oppose the striking out of the paragraph, for I think it is a good one. The very unanimity between my colleague and the Attorney General in this matter should fill us with suspicion. Apparently many people are desirous that a Government officer should take charge of their estates, and I see no reason why he should not

be allowed to do so. In the case of small estates it would represent a substantial saving. I hope hon. members will retain the paragraph.

Mr. DRAPER: In view of the suspicion which seems to entirely overwhelm the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) I will again repeat what I said the other evening. When we reached this paragraph I explained that I had no objection to it, but that I recognised it would put a different complexion on the Bill. I said that paragraph (g) would make the Curator appear in the capacity of a public trustee, and that it would then be necessary that he should also have liability thrown upon him, as in the case of public trustees in the other States. I pointed out that if paragraph (g) was to stand it would be necessary to insert a provision making the Consolidated Revenue responsible for any negligence which the Curator of Intestate Estates might be guilty of. The Attorney General, I think, does not desire that the Consolidated Revenue should be held responsible, and he has therefore taken the course of moving that the paragraph be struck out. I also pointed out the other night that as a private member I could not seek, during the Committee stage, to insert a clause imposing liability on the public revenue, and that therefore if paragraph (g) were retained further discussion of the remaining clauses would have to be postponed and a Message from His Excellency brought down, which would turn the Bill into a money Bill and permit of the necessary new clause being inserted. I strongly object to the Curator of Intestate Estates being turned into a public trustee when those who might suffer from his negligence would have no recourse against him. The Curator is a corporation, and in the Bill he is not responsible for anything but gross negligence.

Hon. P. Collier: Then it is a question of striking out paragraph (g) or inserting other provisions which would make the Curator fully responsible.

Mr. DRAPER: That is my view.

Mr. PICKERING: I find that the select committee appointed to report on the administration of trust funds consisted of Mr. Butcher, Mr. Heitmann, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Willmott, and Mr. Smith. There seems to be some suspicion in the minds of members opposite that because those taking part in the discussion to-day are members of the legal profession there must be something hidden in the paragraph. Yet we find that the members of the select committee from whose investigations the Bill arose were all lay members. On reference to the interim report of the select committee it is seen that the main recommendation is contained in paragraph 4, which reads as follows:—

That the existing Act should be so amended as to permit small estates being expeditiously and cheaply wound up. It would be a mistake to introduce into a Bill of this nature a position so indicated, and I therefore support the excision of the sub-clause.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope this subclause will not be struck out. My own opinion is that we want a public trustee, and if people are de-

sirous of leaving to the Government an estate of theirs for administration, they should have an opportunity of doing so. For my part, in nine cases out of ten, I would prefer—without making any reflection—to trust the State than some solicitors.

Hon. T. WALKER: I advocate the elimination of the subclause because we have no provision for carrying it out with safety to the public, as the Bill now stands. Before we can reasonably approve of this we must make the revenue of the State responsible, and provide a fund in the case of litigation on the part of an aggrieved party for the maladministration of an estate. There is no provision in the Bill for making the Curator responsible to the parties interested in the administration of an estate. Before we can do this we must get a Message from the Crown and appropriate moneys for this purpose. I agree with the member for Katanning that what we want is a public trustee. There are public trustees in other parts of the world, and the office created in New South Wales has been found to work exceedingly well, with profit to the country and advantage to the parties concerned. This Bill does not give a satisfactory creation of a trusteeship. It makes the Curator a quasi trustee, but does not confine him to the duties of a public trustee. He still has all these intestate estates to deal with and those matters that are outside the ordinary administration under wills, and he has now as much as he can do. In fact, the gravamen of the complaint made by the select committee was that he was overworked. The salary paid to the Curator would be scorned by an ordinary wages clerk for the volume of work he has to do, and yet this officer has to take all this responsibility and, in addition to intestate matters, has now to deal with soldiers' intestate estates. If, in addition to his being a curator of intestate estates, he is also made a public trustee, the office will be swelled enormously without any provision for that being made. If we cannot get a public trustee Bill before the Chamber let us facilitate the work of that office and carry out the recommendations of the select committee.

The Attorney General: We would have to withdraw this Bill and bring in another.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Bill, as drafted, is not symmetrical, and is scarcely consistent with that clause standing in it. Its real object is to facilitate the administration of intestate estates, and if it does that it will have done a valuable service. The public trusteeship stands upon another foundation altogether.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No Government officer can administer an estate of a private person, though appointed by will to do so. Certain hon. members have stressed the point that to leave this clause in means altering the Bill in order to make it workable.

Mr. Draper: These are your words.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Let me say, then, that certain hon. members have stated that Consolidated Revenue should be responsible for any indiscretion on the part of the Curator.

Mr. Draper: That is so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Attorney General said to-day that it would be necessary to withdraw the Bill and bring in another. The Bill could well be allowed to go through and next session an amendment brought in making the Bill a money Bill, and providing for the objection raised by the members for West Perth and Kanowna. There is no necessity to provide any precautionary measures in this Bill, because these can be provided in another Bill next session. This is the first leg in. There has been an agitation for some time that a public trustee should be appointed, but nothing has been done and this is the first step in that direction. If we can do this there is no doubt we shall have the necessary machinery measures brought down in order to safeguard the public, if necessary. If this is struck out when shall we ever get as far as we are getting now? With regard to what has been said about the Curator the select committee was only able to find one instance of the Curator having been out of the State, which shows that we have nothing to fear in that direction. Surely a man who is capable of administering intestate estates is also capable of administering small estates that have been willed to him for that purpose.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have for some time been following up the inquiries made by my predecessor in order to acquire information as to the work and the duties of, and the result of the work of, public trustees in the Eastern States and New Zealand, to see how far this system can be made applicable to Western Australia. If it is desirable that the question of the appointment of a public trustee should be brought before the House, this should be done in a separate Bill dealing with that matter only. I brought this Bill down because the select committee had made a number of suggestions and got into direct touch with the Crown Law Department. I thought I should not take upon myself, as Attorney General, to cut out any of these recommendations and, therefore, brought the measure forward so that members might consider it. The Bill is for the purpose of enabling the present Curator to do his work more speedily and more simply. The member for West Perth suggested that we should provide that the State should be responsible for that officer's actions in the way of negligence, but if we adopt that we alter the whole scope and meaning of the Bill. I suggest we should clothe the Curator with the powers suggested by the select committee, that is that he should wind up small estates, and extraneous matter can be left over for a future occasion. We cannot be too careful in our legislation when dealing with matters of trusteeship and deceased persons' estates. What we may do hurriedly now we may regret later on. I do not know how the Acts in the Eastern States work, but I do not think that in Victoria the Government are responsible for the acts of the person who is the public trustee. I have no doubt, however, there are indemnities and insurances against his actions. We here have an officer whose duties are of a small nature. He has dealt all his life with estates running into £50, £60, or £70, and he is

not a highly paid officer, and to suddenly call upon him to deal with estates of a larger nature would be unfair not only to those estates, but to the officer himself. I think the Committee would do well to agree to the excision proposed and also to several other amendments which will only encumber the work of Curator.

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

Clauses 7 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Curator to advertise for creditors, pay debts and distribute residue:

Mr. DRAPER: This clause provides that an advertisement may be inserted dealing with two or more estates, that is to say, the particulars regarding the estates may be combined in the same advertisement. In practice people are accustomed to look at an advertisement and to merely notice the name at the head of it, and they regard that as the estate in question. That is to say, they seize upon the first name and stop there. I am certain confusion will arise if the clause is not altered.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The clause was drafted deliberately. A matter which was complained of in the House last session was that columns of advertisements appeared in the Press from the Curator's office. Sometimes it was said there were seventeen in one issue and they occupied two columns, and those advertisements dealt with half a dozen or perhaps a dozen estates. It seemed to hon. members that to advertise in that way was a waste of money, and the suggestion which was then made has been embodied in the clause. Ever since then too, the Curator's office has been following the altered practice, wherever it has been possible to get an order from the court. There will not be any confusion because the names in the advertisements are now set in heavier type. There was another objection. In many of the estates which come before the Curator's office there is not a penny of cash. At times there have been shares in a gold mine of problematical value, but whether those shares were worth anything or not, the Curator had to follow the course of expensively advertising and in many cases the cost of advertisements had to be written off as a loss.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12—agreed to.

Clause 13: Curator may take opinion of court upon any question arising in course of his duties:

Mr. DRAPER: I move an amendment—

“That in line one the words ‘without judicial proceedings’ be struck out, and ‘ex parte’ inserted in lieu.”

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You might give us some reason for the amendment.

Mr. DRAPER: When we go before a judge in any capacity, it must be a judicial proceeding, and if we leave in the words I propose to delete, they will have the effect of placing the judge merely in the position of an adviser not much higher than an ordinary practitioner. The amendment is purely a technical one.

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

Clauses 14, 15—agreed to.

Clause 16—If real estate has escheated:

Mr. PICKERING: It seems to me that the opening line of this clause reads peculiarly. It says "If it appears on office found." What is the meaning of that?

The Attorney General: It is a usual law term, which means if it appears on record.

Mr. PICKERING: It does not seem English to me.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: With regard to the estates of soldiers dying intestate up to £500 in value, the Government are now administering them free of cost. I would like to know where these estates go; is there any other Act in the British Dominions which takes away these estates; are the Commonwealth Government claiming and holding the estates of Western Australian soldiers under some English Statute?

The Attorney General: I am not aware of it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the Attorney General will look into the matter, I think he will find that the Commonwealth Government have laid claim to the whole of these amounts. The Commonwealth are going to take the whole of the money.

The Attorney General: I will look into the matter, and if any alteration is necessary to the clause it can be made in another place.

Hon. T. WALKER: At the present time I know of an instance where a young man who has enlisted was born before his mother was married. By the law his estate, whatever it consisted of, is escheated, and it goes to the Crown. I have had to interest myself in trying to get an estate of a son who had died on the battlefield transferred to the mother, whose sole support the son had been up to the time of going to the war.

The Attorney General: The practice is to accede to such claims.

Hon. T. WALKER: Not in such cases as the one I have brought under the notice of the Federal authorities. I am informed that the Federal authorities are considering this matter, but whether they will come to any conclusion or not I do not know.

The Attorney General: Were those claims made against the Western Australian Government by the Commonwealth Government in your time?

Hon. T. WALKER: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The point I raise is that the Western Australian Government today are administering the estates of soldiers up to £500 at a reduced charge for soldiers dying intestate.

The Attorney General: The escheat takes place when there is no one to claim the property.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But under some Imperial Act the Commonwealth Government are claiming all this money from the estates.

The Attorney General: I will look into the matter, but I have not heard of any case yet.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 17, 18, 19—agreed to.

Clause 20—Curator may appoint committee of estate on lunatic or curator of prisoners' estates:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have listened to the arguments of the member for

West Perth and the member for Kanowna, and as far as this clause is concerned it comes under the same category as the other clause which was negatived. So do Clauses 21, 22, and 23.

Clause put and negatived.

Clauses 21, 22, and 23—negatived.

Clauses 21, 22, and 23—negatived.

Clause 27—Inspection and audit of books of public curator:

Mr. MONEY: Would it not be better in passing an Act to define who the Minister is? It simply says "the Minister." If this were done the Act could then be read by a layman.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The same question was put to me by the member for Katanning. There is no definition of Minister in the Bill. To-day I had intended to give notice of the introduction of an Interpretation Act which would define the meaning of Minister. However, I shall give notice of that Bill probably at the next sitting. "The Minister" means the Minister for the time being charged with the administration of the department. If the new Interpretation Bill does not pass I will re-commit this Bill to give a definition to the word "Minister" in this measure.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 28—Moneys unclaimed for six years to be paid to Treasury.

Mr. THOMSON: Six years seems to be a short period. I would like to see it extended.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think six years is a fair time. At any rate I have never known of a case where a claim for a refund has been refused, provided a proper case is made out. I do not think any Government would refuse a claim. If a case is made out the money would be paid over.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 29, 30, 31—agreed to.

Clause 32—Curator not personally liable:

Mr. TEESDALE: Supposing there was certain jewellery and an agent was appointed by the Curator to dispose of that jewellery. The agent might have no idea of the value of the jewellery and might sacrifice it. Would the estate have no recourse on the Curator for negligence on the part of his agent? No Act of Parliament should, as it were, allow a Government to do the public an injustice. It appears to me that in this instance an estate is at the mercy of some unscrupulous agent appointed in an outlying township, that this man can sacrifice the stuff, and cause to some unfortunate woman who is dependent upon the money a heavy loss. Surely there is some redress in such a matter even from the Government.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not a question of redress, but a question of the personal liability of the Curator. That officer is liable for any act which has not been done bona fides and as a result of which there is gross negligence. It is of course a matter of opinion as to what amounts to gross negligence. I should say that, if the Curator received certain jewellery and did not take care to ascertain the nature of it and its pro-

per value, this would amount to gross negligence. In the case quoted by the member for Carnarvon, I should say that the Curator would be responsible.

Hon. P. Collier: Is the agent responsible or the Curator?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Curator is responsible for the acts of his agent. The usual course adopted is not for a sale to take place by the agent, but for the goods to be transmitted to Perth to the Curator, who has no right to dispose of valuable goods without first obtaining a report upon them. There is sufficient remedy here against the Curator in any ordinary case.

Mr. TEESDALE: I have had a lot of experience in the realisation of intestate estates. I have also seen such realisations carefully rigged beforehand, when the person appointed by the Curator as agent has acted in collusion with others, and when horses valued at £25 and more have been sold for not more than £5 or so. In one case that I have in mind an unfortunate woman, who was waiting for her money, was scandalously robbed as a result of such action. Great care should be exercised in the appointment of these agents, especially in outlying centres, where they have no direct contact with the head office. I have seen some shocking things done in connection with these estates.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In the case just quoted it appears to me that both the parties concerned should be put in gaol. It should be quite easy to do that, and if the hon. member will supply me with full particulars I shall have much pleasure in instituting an immediate inquiry into the matter.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 33, 34—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th January.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.53]: This small Bill has some features to which the House might agree, but others contained in it I hope the Attorney General will forego during the discussion in Committee. The measure aims at obviating the necessity for the Department printing and issuing the rolls for the Legislative Council in the month of February, and it is now proposed to have these rolls printed only after the issue of the writ. We might well agree to that, as it will economise in printing and expenditure, and will not be of any disadvantage to those concerned. In regard to the reduction in penalties for certain offences from the period of two years to 12 months. I think we might with safety agree to that also. The provision I do not agree with, however, is that contained in clause 3, which aims at abolishing the present method of printing and issuing supplementary rolls once in every quarter. It is proposed to leave the publication of these rolls containing any additions or alterations in the supplementary rolls to the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer. I hope

the Minister will not insist upon that provision, because, after all, the supplementary rolls have in the past been found to be a very great convenience not only to members but to the electors generally. It is the only means by which the public can ascertain what names have been struck off the rolls from time to time, or those which have been added, and also the only means by which any person who so desires can keep himself posted in that respect, namely, by comparing the rolls with the supplementaries. I, therefore, do not agree to the proposal to leave this matter to the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer. We can well understand how that discretion will be exercised, especially in these times of economy. It will really mean that no supplementary rolls will be issued or printed except once in three years when the general elections come along, or in between times should a by-election be held, or should there be a dissolution. Should an election come along other than at the usual time we should probably find the rolls in a very unsatisfactory condition. As the Bill can be discussed in Committee I will content myself with merely supporting the other provisions contained in it and expressing the hope that the Attorney General will agree to retain the provisions of the sub-sections of Section 26 of the parent Act.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. B. T. Robinson—Canning—in reply) [5.58]: I am glad that the leader of the Opposition agrees with the clauses of the Bill other than those referring to the quarterly supplement.

Hon. T. Walker: Which is very valuable.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I admit that it is very valuable. There are, however, 50 districts in Western Australia, and there are four supplements in the year, which means that there are 200 prints made in the course of the year. Any hon. member can get the information he wants upon inquiry.

Hon. T. Walker: It is the public who want it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The electoral registrar informs me that very few people bother their heads about these subjects.

Hon. T. Walker: And the more the pity.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There are one or two very keen men like the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin), who I am assured takes his supplement and checks it off with the original roll, and keeps his own roll up to date by this means. I venture to say that no other hon. member of this House is as careful as he is.

Hon. P. Collier: They generally compare them.

Mr. Green: We get busy at election time.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: At election time there are new rolls. In this matter it is purely a question of economy, without the Government wishing to cut down the privileges of members or those of the public. The Chief Electoral Officer assures me that any individual can get the information in his electorate that he may want, and that any institution or association which attends to the wants of an electorate, or any hon. member of this Chamber can also get the whole of the names for the electorate up to date at

any time. This officer also assures me that if there is a sufficient number of names to warrant a re-print he always of his own motion reprints the roll, or prints a supplement. I would point out that many of the supplements contain only 15 or 20 names in the prints that are made. He tells me that they run from half a dozen names upwards. I am glad hon. members accept the Bill as an attempt to put the Electoral Act on a proper footing. The attempt is made, in the first two instances, purely from a desire to save what has been characterised as unnecessary printing.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 26:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not agree with the Attorney General that the printing and issue of supplementary rolls periodically has not been availed of by members and also by the public to a very considerable extent. As a matter of fact, these supplementary rolls represent the only protection members, and, still more important, the public, have. A member, of course, has the sources of information indicated by the Attorney General; and he has time and opportunity to go to Government offices, where he may obtain information as to names added or struck off. But that is not so in the case of the ordinary elector; he has not that opportunity. From my own observation I can say that the supplementary rolls issued periodically have been of great service to the electors. The object of the clause is merely economy.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But it is no economy.

Hon. P. COLLIER: After all, the amount saved must be trifling, since the small supplementary rolls can only represent a correspondingly small amount of printing. This amendment was made in, I think, 1911; and, after experience, Parliament decided to revert to the original Act. I hope the Attorney General will not persist in retaining this clause. Perhaps reprinting might be restricted from once a quarter to twice a year. That, I think, is as far as we should be justified in going, having regard to the interests of the electors generally.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The object of the Attorney General, no doubt, is economy; but it is economy which will cost the State more for the printing of electoral cards than will be saved on the printing of supplementary rolls. In the absence of the latter, everyone must put in a claim card every now and then, to ascertain whether his or her name is on the roll. Moreover, in the absence of supplementary rolls we shall not know until after an election has been held who really is on the roll. In connection with the West Province rolls I have observed many names struck off that ought not to have been struck off; and, upon my notifying the persons concerned, those names have been restored.

Mr. Pickering: Is it not the practice to write to the person concerned, stating that his name has been struck off the roll?

Opposition members: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is frequently done, but, unfortunately, as much care is not taken with electoral notices as with ordinary letters. In case of a change of residence, the electoral notice goes to the dead letter office and thence back to the electoral office. Thousands of notices are annually returned to the electoral offices. If supplementary rolls are abolished, my own electorate, I guarantee, will require about 6,000 claim cards every year. The cost of the supplementary rolls is slight, and the existing section is quite satisfactory.

Mr. HARRISON: Has the Attorney General any idea of the saving which would result from the proposed alteration?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I cannot give the exact saving, because it is proposed that a certain amount of printing shall still be done; that is, the Chief Electoral Officer shall, whenever he thinks proper, issue a list. The Chief Electoral Officer advises me the saving might amount to £300 or £400 a year. In fact, this suggestion comes from him as a matter of economy. Personally I would be disposed to consider the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition, that we cut the thing in halves, and issue a list every six months; though I should prefer to see the hon. gentleman make it once in 12 months. In effecting economies, I quite recognise, we must not destroy the public services of the country. I think very few members indeed do as the member for North-East Fremantle does, who avails himself of the opportunity of checking the rolls. As regards this clause, however, I am entirely in the hands of the Committee.

Hon. T. WALKER: I hope the amendment suggested, but not yet moved, by the leader of the Opposition will be accepted by the Minister. There is no economy in keeping the public in darkness as regards their rights of citizenship. A registration which cannot be easily ascertained by every citizen is of no value. To get a good public spirit, we must make citizens feel their rights; but if we neglect to let citizens know who are and who are not really entitled to the exercise of the franchise, except at the will or convenience of the Chief Electoral Officer, or when an election comes on, the position will be altogether unsatisfactory.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

Message from the Governor received and read transmitting the Annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the financial year 1917-18 and recommending appropriation.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 1917-18.

In Committee of Supply.

The House having resolved into Committee of Supply for receiving the Annual Financial Statement, Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin) [7.35]: said: As I understand that at times my remarks are somewhat inaudible, alike to "Hansard" and to the Press, I will avail myself of the privilege of delivering the Financial Statement from the Table of the House. I regret extremely that the Estimates for the present year have been so late in their presentation. As one who has always advocated control by Parliament of its finances, I feel that the present position is extremely regrettable, but I think a review of the circumstances will show that much of it was unavoidable. The Government, with me as Treasurer, only came into office at the end of June last. Since then we have had a general election, and the Referendum, and I, unfortunately, have been absent from the State for a month. I make this promise to the House that every effort will be made to have the Estimates ready in July of next year. When I was Treasurer before, I made that promise. I went out of Parliament and sometimes I regret that I did not stay out, but at any rate previous Treasurers have stated that it is impossible to produce the Estimates in July. I am going to have a try—and if I fail, it will not be my fault—so that the House may have some control over the finances. I hope members will realise that we welcome from them any criticism of the items on the Estimates. Although at the present time a large number of them will have been spent, suggestions coming from members as to where economies can be made will be carefully gone into, and as far as possible given effect to in next year's Estimates.

The Sinking Fund.

When I asked for supplies last November, I anticipated that at the end of the present financial year my deficit, after making provision for the suspension of the sinking fund, and not taking into account the receipts from additional taxation, and further economies, would be £689,924. To-night I have to announce that, under the same circumstances, so far as I can see, my deficit at the end of the year will not be £689,924 but £936,311. The increased amount is due to the following circumstances which have arisen since I made my statement. I find that I cannot suspend £156,000 out of the £186,000 of the sinking fund. The £30,000 we can suspend is in connection with the liquidation of the deficit. The reason that the sinking fund cannot be suspended is due to an Order-in-Council dated 10th July, 1901. This Order reads as follows:—

The Treasury, Perth, 19th July, 1901. His Excellency the Governor in Executive Council has approved of the following order to facilitate the investment of Trust Funds, in the United Kingdom, in Western Australian Government Securities, registered in accordance with the provisions of the Colonial Stock Acts.

This is the Minute—

Whereas the Imperial Government has legislated in order to facilitate the investment of Trust Funds, in the United Kingdom, in Colonial Government Securities registered in accordance with the provisions of

the Colonial Stock Acts, subject to such conditions as the Treasury may by order, notified in the "London Gazette," prescribe: And whereas by Treasury Order, dated 6th December, 1900, published in the "London Gazette" on the 14th December, 1900, the following conditions are prescribed, viz.: 1. The Colony shall provide by legislation for the payment out of the Revenue of the Colony of any sums which may become payable to stock holders under any judgment, decree, rule, or order of a court in the United Kingdom. 2. The Colony shall satisfy the Treasury that adequate funds (as and when required) will be made available in the United Kingdom to meet any such judgment, decree, rule or order. 3. The Colonial Government shall place on record a formal expression of their opinion, that any Colonial legislation which appears to the Imperial Government to alter any of the provisions affecting the stock to the injury of the stockholder, or to involve a departure from the original contract in regard to the stock, would properly be disallowed.

And whereas the Legislature of Western Australia has passed an Act entitled "The Trustees Colonial Investment Act, 1900," complying with condition No. 1 above mentioned: Now, therefore, His Excellency the Hon. Sir Arthur Lawley, K.C.M.G., Governor of Western Australia, by and with the advice of the Executive Council, doth hereby assent to the conditions numbered 2 and 3, and undertakes that sufficient funds will be kept at the London and Westminster Bank, Limited, Lothbury, London (or such other bank as may be carrying on the financial business of the Colony) for the payment of any demands arising under any such judgment, decree, rule, or order: And the said London and Westminster Bank, or other institution as referred to, is hereby authorised to pay out of the funds at the disposal of the Government of Western Australia such sums as aforesaid. Any legislation of the Colony which appears to the Imperial Government to alter any provisions affecting the stock to the injury of the stockholder, or involve a departure from the original contract in regard to the stock, should properly be disallowed. G. Leake, Premier and Attorney General.

By this Order-in-Council it will be seen that the sinking fund cannot be suspended without satisfying the Imperial Government, that we are not altering any of the provisions affecting the stock to the injury of the stockholder. The trustees in London think that the suspension of the sinking fund does do this, and consequently they approached the Imperial Government. The Imperial Government will not agree to this suspension, so that for the present I am faced with the necessity of continuing these payments, although the money to pay them with has been borrowed at something over six per cent. I am hopeful, however, to be able to get permission to reduce the amount of the sinking fund on the Goldfields Water Supply loan, providing only sufficient to redeem it at maturity. This loan for £2,500,000, which matures in 1927, has a sinking fund provision of 3 per cent. If we continue to pay that 3 per cent.

sinking fund up to the expiration of the loan, we will provide £522,000 more than is necessary. A reduction of £34,000 per annum could be made in this and still provide the full sum to meet the loan at maturity. At present we hold stock against this loan to the face value of £1,589,247, varying in the return of interest from 3 to 4½ per cent. When I asked whether it was possible for the sinking fund to be suspended, the Order-in-Council had quite escaped the attention of the authorities, both legal and at the Treasury. The present Under Treasurer was not occupying that position in 1901. Consequently, there is £156,000 which I thought I would have the benefit of for this financial year, which I have to put out of my calculations. In addition to this I now have to face a reduction in the earnings of the steamship "Kangaroo" of £50,000 for the year. This is owing to the delay in towing the "Kangaroo," and to her subsequent accident and repairs. There is another £50,000. Consequently, this sum has to be allowed for in making my estimate for the year. Again, I anticipated that we should receive this year increased freights and fares on the railways to the amount of £54,000. There have been increases made in regard to the handling of wheat, but what we shall receive during the currency of the financial year is so problematical, that I have eliminated it from my calculations. With regard to the question of fares, I propose to refer to the whole question of railways at a later stage.

Estimated Deficit.

If these sums, totalling, roughly, £260,000, are added to my previous estimate, it will give a deficit of £949,924. But there are slight adjustments to be made which will bring it to the sum I have mentioned, namely, £936,311—this, of course, without estimating any return from further taxation. Assuming that I can get from this and additional economies £100,000 for the balance of the financial year, it will mean that my deficit at the end of the year will be £836,311. I may possibly receive during the currency of the year from the Commonwealth £13,500 for interest on transferred lighthouses—when dealing with the Commonwealth I use the word "possibly"—and possibly £15,000 for services rendered. Also in my estimate I have left in abeyance the question of the payment of 25s. per head for the soldiers, that being a question which will probably be decided at the Premiers' Conference in April. If I receive these sums so much the better, but at present I have not taken them into consideration. The estimated revenue for the year is £4,400,732, being £176,275 less than last year; while the estimated expenditure is £5,337,043, or £60,279 more than last year. So that, on this estimate I face the year £236,554 worse off than last year. The ultimate deficit of £936,000 on the year shows the position to be so serious that, instead of attempting to make a speech to-night as Treasurer of the State, I merely desire to have a serious financial talk with the other 49 directors of the State, representing 300,000

shareholders, to point out where the leakage is, and to solicit the counsel of every one of my co-directors in their collective wisdom as to how the position can be rectified, alike in the interests of the State and of every individual person earning his or her living in the State.

Revenue and Expenditure for 1917-18.

In order to give the Committee a clear understanding of the present position, I refer them to Return No. 1, which shows that whilst the anticipated revenue for the year is £4,400,732 the actual available cash after deducting the cost of earning this revenue, amounts to £2,427,520. The return shows that the net cash from taxation will be £434,000, from territorial £326,170, from law court fees £21,500, from Commonwealth revenue £582,607, from departmental reimbursements, £195,394, again from departmental reimbursements £202,475, cash surplus from sundry business concerns and groups of interest and other charges on trading concerns, £148,533, estimated cash profit from trading concerns £44,177, cash surplus from railways, tramways, water supply, etc., £472,664; making a total which I have shown as the net cash revenue I have to deal with, namely, £2,427,520. If the Committee will be good enough to turn to the next return, No. 2—I am not going to weary the Committee with a great mass of figures to-night, nor am I going to read out these items particularly; because the Committee can read them quite as quickly as I can talk them, and can grasp the facts from the printed return—they will see what I have to try to pay out of this available cash. To start with, under special Acts I have to provide £1,994,390, leaving me only a balance of £433,130 to pay for the general administration of the State. The general administration of the State costs £1,369,441. If we deduct the £433,130 from this it gives £936,311 as the estimated deficit. It can be easily seen by a further reference to return No. 1 that the big millstone round our neck at the present juncture is the amount of interest and sinking fund, totalling no less a sum than £1,879,390, or £113,550 more than last year. Other interesting figures are those dealing with Medical and Public Health, State Children's Department, and Education. These absorb the total amount received by us from the Commonwealth, leaving the balance of our expenditure to be provided in the best way we can.

The Railways and the Deficit.

The first thing the Committee has a right to ask me is, "Where is the leakage, and what are the principal factors leading to this unsatisfactory position?" My reply is, "Practically our Railways and our deficit." The Railways, when we charge them up with interest and sinking fund and the Railway Commissioner's salary, will show a loss for the year of £509,561, the anticipated net earnings being £141,000 less than they were last year. On the railway estimates the anticipated cash

shortage for the current year is £387,561. But this does not include £120,000 for sinking fund charges and the Railway Commissioner's salary. If we add that to their anticipated shortage we will find it totals the sum I have mentioned. Another factor is that at the present juncture interest on our deficit is involving us in at least the sum of £100,000 per annum. These two items, Railways and interest on the deficit, amount for £609,000 of our anticipated £936,000 deficit. We might easily arrange to stop the leakage in regard to the other £327,000, but the rectification of the position of our Railways and the elimination of our deficit cannot be anything but a matter of the gravest concern for some years to come. In regard to our Railways, it is hardly fair at the present juncture to take their position as being normal, because one of the most profitable sources of our traffic is the carriage of timber, and we have practically lost the great bulk of that. There are other ordinary sources of revenue, available in ordinary times, which are depleted to-day. Neither can we lose sight of the fact that at the present time everything we use on the railways, such as coal, rails, fastenings, and other necessities, have to be bought at an abnormally high figure. Then we come to the question of wages. The increase in wages has been a very big item, and it looks as if it will continue to be so. The last award of the Arbitration Court means an addition of £39,000 up to the present, and before it is ultimately settled it will probably be £50,000, to be provided as increased wages on the railways. In these circumstances we have to see how far the railway outlook can be remedied. It is asking a great deal from any member of the House, as we know members, individually or collectively, and asking a great deal of any Government, as we know Governments, to expect them to put their finger on the exact fault and remedy it. We have to realise that our railways are for development purposes. A recognition of that position is always with us. We have also to realise that both in our agricultural areas and in our mining centres the railways traverse a great number of miles of line absolutely unprofitable, earning no revenue. The simple remedy suggested would be to increase the freights and fares so as to rectify this position. However, no Government can be blind to the fact that to do this indiscriminately would be almost suicidal, as it would mean that our back country would stagnate for want of development. We cannot lose sight of the fact that wheat is no more valuable as wheat 200 miles from a port than it is 100 miles from a port; that gold is no more valuable as gold 500 miles away than it is 100 miles away. Yet in both instances they have to pay long distance freights both ways. The problem that confronts us is how can we arrange our railway freights so as to bring the lines somewhere near a paying proposition, and yet give encouragement to men to settle in our back country? The Government have devoted an immense amount of consideration to this position but, candidly, so far we have not solved it. We are endeavouring to ascertain in the meantime if we are working on most economical methods.

whether we are grasping the fullest facilities for development, and thereby increasing traffic. The Government honestly believe that by a thoughtful, considerate policy of encouraging the use of the railways, a traffic would be eventually created which, whilst probably not paying to a very large extent, would indirectly pay by the increased productiveness of the country served by the railways. So gravely do we view the position, and so necessary do we think it to do everything possible, that it seems to us advisable to have an expert opinion on the whole of the management of the railways. It is the intention of the Government to follow the example of Victoria and South Australia in this regard, and get a high authority to report on the whole subject, with the full intention of endeavouring to give to that expert's report its fullest effect. The Government intend at once to get into communication with South Australia, where they are almost immediately having their railway management investigated by a high authority—I forget his name, but I think he is from the Malay Settlements. The Government intend to make inquiries to see if his services can be obtained after he has finished his work in South Australia. In the meantime it will be our duty to realise that we will have to raise freights and fares on our railways, but within the policy stated we will try to make them bear upon those who can afford to pay. The deficit on our railways amounts to nearly £100,000 more than we receive from direct taxation. So far as the interest on the deficit is concerned, this looks as if it was likely to continue for some time, and we must therefore look upon it as an annual charge upon our revenue.

The Domestic Services of the State.

Now we come to items of grave public policy, which may be properly designated as the "domestic services" of the State. At the foot of return No. 2 it will be seen that these amount to no less than £814,077 a year, £85,873 more than last year. The question is repeatedly being asked, can we afford to pay for this, or ought it to be reduced? This is a question upon which the Government invite the opinion of every hon. member of this Committee. For a Government backed up by a majority to force a big reduction of any of these services, which have become a matter of public policy for all Governments, without full consultation would in our opinion be an extremely unwise step. As to the necessity for many of these domestic services there will be a divergence of opinion. He would indeed be a dogmatic man who would say that only his opinion could carry weight in this decision, and that this opinion should be based, when it comes to matters of this kind, purely upon the foundation of what it costs to give these services.

Education.

The principal item is that of education, which costs £360,048 a year, £26,500 more than last year. Personally, I confess that it was very difficult for me to bring to bear upon this

matter a purely unbiassed opinion, in that at the present stage I am obsessed by the money side and the cost of the question. I am inclined to think, however, that those who differ with me are taking a proper and a higher, and probably a nobler view when they insist that this should be the last place into which the Government should drastically put the pruning knife. After this candid admission may I be allowed to express what I think should be the ultimate outlook from the educational standpoint. The State's obligation is undoubtedly to give to every child in it a primary education, and this, being compulsory, must be free. When it comes to higher education, either industrially or scientifically, then I think it becomes rather a national question, and consequently a matter of concern for the Commonwealth Government. My opinion is that the Commonwealth Government ought to make a grant to the States on a pro rata basis, to enable that higher education so essential to a nation's greatness to be carried out by them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is no revenue from it.

Mr. Harrison: They do it in Canada.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: If this were done, it seems to me that there ought to be a uniform method of education in this particular. I do not wish to see States building up either fadlist or fantastic legislation. If the scheme is going to succeed it must be on a uniform basis so that a child going from one State to another can continue his education to finality. There is in the minds of many of the people of the State at the present juncture doubt as to whether we are getting full value for our expenditure, whether much of our secondary education should be given free or not, and whether the strictest inquiry should not be made to ascertain whether some of our educational methods are not being abused and utilised free by those who can well afford to pay for them. The question of education is a vital one. We here, looking at the question with bigger eyes than political eyes, ought to dissociate it altogether from politics, and I think a wise suggestion would be this: There are in this House men of divergent opinions on this question, who I believe wish to sift it to the bottom, and see whether we are doing good or harm, whether we are getting full value, and whether our methods outside of primary education are effective, and to what extent they should be paid for by those who utilise them. I should therefore like to see a committee of this House appointed—I do not want to go outside the House—outside of any political appointment, for in a big question like this politics should not be allowed to enter, and for this committee to say "We want to see what is the best for the coming generation." If that is done and education is to be provided free, all I can say is that we will have to tax the people in order to pay for it.

Hon. T. Walker: You do not want the committee to find a policy for you?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: There is one form of education which I would like to see effectually reduced in this State, and that

is the method of educating people to see how much they can take from the Government and how little they can pay for it in return.

Medical and Public Health.

Medical and Public Health services account for £163,478. Here again I think there is room for searching inquiry. The Colonial Secretary and myself have been going very closely into the question of the cost of the management, etc., of our hospitals, and the ability of many patients to pay, and we feel rather convinced that the generosity of the State in this direction is being abused, that many people are availing themselves of the conveniences, etc., attached to our hospitals who can well afford to pay, and do not. A perusal of the returns published on public health will show this: that whilst the expenditure on Government hospitals for the year ended 31st December, 1916, was £57,865, the fees and donations only amounted to £7,193, so that the net cost to the State was £50,672. We also contributed to the assisted hospitals a sum of £8,295. The cost per diem for patients in the Government hospitals varied from 6s. to £3 15s. 5d.

Mr. Holman: That is not a fair comparison.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Undoubtedly there are some circumstances which justify this expenditure, and which cannot be got over. If the population was a solid one, those figures would be ridiculous. There are places in which we must keep hospitals going, but in which there may be only two or three patients a year. Police account for £133,307.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You are not surprised at that, are you?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not know. I so frequently am brought into contact with law abiding citizens like the member for Forrest that I do not think we ought to have any police.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is a lot of money wasted over the police in Fremantle.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Here again arises the question as to whether we are not being over-policed, and whether now that our community has become more settled a system should not be evolved which would considerably reduce the expenditure in this direction. The rectification of any extravagance in these big spending departments can only be made by a careful scrutiny, and the general principle of their continuance Parliament alone can determine. In this direction the Government ask for the fullest discussion on the part of members.

Economy in Administration.

Now we come to the question of economy in administration, and I wish to make an explanation to the Committee upon a matter in which I am personally concerned. I made a pledge to the House and the country that as far as lay in my power I would endeavour to effect an economy in the administration of the State, and, if I remain in my present office, I am going to endeavour to redeem that promise. In this I have the fullest sympathy and concurrence of my colleagues. I want to point out the unfairness

in the few months that we have been in office, of expecting us to rectify the evils of administration which have grown up in the years of generous, if not lavish borrowing, and that we cannot be expected in that short time to put the finances upon a proper basis. When I entered office there were no Estimates. I had to get these in. It was not until August that I had a chance of considering them in conjunction with other Ministers. I promised the House that I would have the Estimates ready when we met in November, and I got them ready in March, so that practically whatever savings are shown in the Estimates—and there is a good number of them—are only the result of about two or three months' careful inquiry, during which time we have had a general election. We are continuing to effect economies which we hope by the end of the financial year will amount to another £25,000. What the Estimates show may be taken as fair evidence on the part of the Government, and every member of it, to fulfil the wishes of the State in trying to get a more satisfactory result to the taxpayer. In going into this matter, Ministers are beginning to be convinced that their present methods are too spasmodic. Every Minister who has been in office realises that this is to a great extent true.

Systematising of Departments.

With the consent of my colleagues I have, therefore, arranged to appoint an officer to go thoroughly into the departments, acting in harmony with the Public Service Commissioner, to systematise as far as possible the methods of administration. There is no general system obtaining in administration in the smaller things throughout the Government departments. One man could not go into the Lands and the Mines Departments and say that the small things in them had been systematised right through. We find, and I expect that other Ministers have found, that there is a lack of co-ordination and co-operation, and, in many instances, rather a rivalry in expenditure than a rivalry in economy in our departments. We find that if one department has some special convenience, irrespective of the fact that another department has not a great deal of use for that convenience, it will still have it. If this is to be stopped, and the whole system of Government expenditure put on a systematised basis, it will require time, but once done will remain effective for good. What I want to see done away with is this: every time a new Minister comes into office changes are made in respect to small details, and such trifling things ought to be removed entirely from the responsibility of Ministers. With regard to economy in administration, let me place one or two matters before the House and the country. There are two phases of the question which I desire to impress upon hon. members and upon the people of the State generally. One is that we are not going to reap the full benefit of many of the economies effected during the current year or during a portion of next year, for the simple reason that there are many instances in which, if we retire officers, the retiring allowance provided for under the Public Service Act amounts to a

larger sum total than the saving effected for the year. We have always that to think of when we are trying to get rid of a man. We have to ask ourselves, "How much is it going to cost us either for pension or for retiring allowance?" And that becomes a very grave question. Again, I warn the people that there is not going to be a great amount of relief in our financial position from this source. I will tell the people why. If as the result of careful inquiry we can effect savings amounting to £50,000 over and above those already effected during the current year, it is going to be as much as we can do and still get effective service. We as a Government are in exactly the same position as many of our mercantile houses find themselves in to-day. The staff that we must keep are probably in many instances capable of doing nearly twice the work they are doing to-day. But it stands to reason that our overhead charges, as they are recognised in commercial life, must still continue even if the volume of work at the present juncture might suggest dispensing with a number of officers, whose services, however, would be immediately required if the future suddenly brightened. We know there must be in many cases insufficient volume of work to keep the full staff going; but we must keep our heads, and probably our seconds. This position is recognised in mercantile houses to-day, and we as a Government have to some extent also to recognise it.

Unforeseen Expenditure.

Again, whatever savings may be effected in this direction are almost sure to be eaten up by unforeseen expenditure.

Mr. O'Loughlin: That is cheerful.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: In this State of ours, which is a State of magnificent distances, the unexpected is constantly happening. For example, the floods that we had towards the latter end of last year cost this State in repairs of railway lines, roads, bridges, wharves, and so forth, roughly in the vicinity of £50,000. That was an act of God. And to-day the Government are faced with a disaster at Collie—we do not know how far it is going to affect us. Then we have floods in the Murehison and other districts, again washing away our railway lines. So, from a purely financial standpoint, we have to realise that the economies effected in administration will be swallowed by unforeseen expenditure, and cannot materially affect the deficit at the end of the financial year.

Domestic Expenditure.

I ask hon. members again to refer to return No. 2. The domestic expenditure for the year was £814,077, the total cost of administration being £1,369,000. So that practically, if the policy ultimately decided upon by this Parliament is that suggested by the Government, and we are going to continue all these domestic institutions up to their full demands, we cannot look for economy in that quarter. Instead, there will be additional expenditure. If we deduct that amount of

£514,077 from the £1,369,000, it merely leaves, outside of the general administration of business and railways, £550,000 in which Ministers can effect solid economies. There is little opportunity, so far as my colleague the Colonial Secretary is concerned, to reduce this expenditure materially in those items which I have classified as domestic expenditure, as the demand for their expansion is a constantly increasing one, and as everything that they are consuming is increasing in price. If Ministers had no other duty to do but to go into the cost of administration, the probabilities are that we could show better results than the present. The curse under which Ministers labour is the curse of files. A Minister is indeed lucky if, starting the day, as most Ministers do, a little after nine o'clock in the morning, he gets his table clear of files by lunch time. And then they are coming in all day. Indeed, it seems to me that the whole of the government of this State is resolving itself into a question of files. When I walked into a Minister's room in the Eastern States, I saw no files. If one walks into a Minister's room in Western Australia, one has to cyanide him out of them.

Parliamentary Economies.

There are some economies which the Government think ought to be brought into force, but these can be effected only with the consent of members of this Committee, as the projected economies affect them personally. Now I can make myself very unpopular. The Government think that the whole cost of Parliament, including members' and Ministers' salaries, should, at least during the currency of the war, be reduced by 10 per cent. I think the Seaddan Government took off something like eight or nine per cent.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are you going to do all that the Seaddan Government did?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes; and more, in some directions. Other small economies could be effected here, including the closing of the Parliament House dining-room while Parliament is not in session.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What would you save by that?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Between £600 and £700 a year. I have not seen the return which, I understand, has been prepared on that subject. Then, "Hansard" ought to be abolished or considerably curtailed.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Curtailed it already is.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: These suggestions, if carried out, will result in a saving of, roughly, from £7,000 to £9,000 per annum. But these, of course, are matters which can only be done with the full consent of members, since their salaries, and also Ministers' salaries, are fixed under the Constitution Act and do not come under the heading of General Estimates.

Mr. Lambert: Why not differentiate between country members' and town members' salaries?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Hon. members can do as they like. I am willing to let

them have all my salary, and to do my work for nothing. When departmental Estimates are under consideration, the questions of transference of the Observatory and curtailment of the Geological Survey Department will be discussed. That is the position, as it stands; and we have to see if it can be remedied.

Direct Taxation.

The real rectification of the present position plainly must be by direct taxation. There is no disguising the fact that we in Western Australia are the lightest taxed community in Australasia. I honestly believe that the State of Western Australia gives more for nothing to its people than any other Australian State does. I think I may state what is a truism, at least so far as the City is concerned, and that is, that whilst our people are not all to-day in well-to-do circumstances, they are at least fairly comfortably off, considering all the surrounding conditions. And if I can, I want the people to realise that this is a time which calls for sacrifice, if it can be proved that this sacrifice is going to lead to soundness in public finance, which will be reflected in increased prosperity for the people when the turning events come. The taxation measures which I intend to introduce are income tax, increase in totalisator tax, and tax on bookmakers. These last two taxes will suggest to the Committee that I am a tax-gatherer and not a moralist. Further taxation measures will be increased tax on dividends, and increased stamp duties on business propositions, which have hitherto been much more lightly taxed here than in the Eastern States. Further, during the recess it is the Government's intention to go into the question of unimproved land taxation, adjustment of the license fees for hotels, and the amusement tax. I will just foreshadow the taxation measures which are being introduced. I have yet to put the finishing touches on them, and so I will merely outline them briefly, in order that the Committee may have some idea of the Government's intentions. When we come to direct taxation, we are faced with some difficult problems, the principal one of which is the poorness of this community as a taxable proposition. The estimate made by the Taxation Officer of people who could be taxed in Western Australia, assuming that they could be taxed at £54, by direct taxation, is 76,000. Of these 62,000 earn from £52 to £200 per annum, and 8,500 from £200 to £300 per annum. This accounts for 69,500 out of the 76,000. The balance of them, who earn from £300 to £10,000 per annum, consequently amounts to 6,500. But, to come nearer home, the Commissioner of Taxation estimates that, so far as new taxation proposals are concerned, there will be 50,000 people who can be taxed: 23,800 receiving from £100 to £156 per annum; 11,000 receiving from £156 to £208; 8,500 receiving from £208 to £312; 4,000 receiving from £312 to £520; 1,000 receiving from £520 to £728; 800 receiving from £728 to £1,040; 520 receiving from £1,040 to £1,560; 300 receiving from £1,560 to £4,160; and 50 receiving from £4,160 up to probably £20,000 or £30,000 per annum. It will be seen that of the 50,000 taxable people 34,800 range between

£100 and £208 per annum; that 43,300 of the 50,000 earn between £100 and £312 per annum; that 47,300 of the 50,000 earn between £100 and £520 per annum; so that I can only tax 2,700 people on incomes ranging from £520 up to £10,000, and one or two beyond that.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Those are the fellows you want to get at.

Super-tax.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I say here quite freely, but without wishing to cast any reflection on the action of another Chamber, that in view of to-day's position it is a thousand pities that the Super-tax Bill introduced by the Scaddan Government, and passed by this House, was not made law. Had this been done, it would have obviated any necessity at the present juncture for introducing an Income Tax Bill. I do not expect to get any more from my super-tax than the Scaddan Government would have got from theirs. Had the Scaddan Government's super-tax been carried, the State from that date up to now would probably have been raising £150,000 per annum from the people. When I left for the Eastern States, I thought I had everything satisfactorily arranged so that the proposed taxation measures could have taken effect as from the 1st January of this year; but only yesterday I found that, in addition to legal difficulties, there would be other grave difficulties in introducing a Bill to do that, seeing that so much time has elapsed, and in view of the fact that the difficulty of fixing a date, other than at half-years, is almost insurmountable. So that our new taxation measures will take effect from the 1st July of this year. They will not come into operation before the 1st July of this year. Taxation is always calculated one year behind. In order to make our taxation fit in with our financial year, we based the assessment on the old rates for the half-year ended the 30th June, 1917. Consequently the people will only be taxed on the old system, and with the old exemptions, up to that time. Previously, taxation years had run from December to December; consequently I have still six months upon which I can levy taxation under the old conditions. I purpose, therefore, for that six months adding a super-tax, the amount of which has not been decided, seeing that I knew of it only yesterday, and as the figures are not quite ready for me.

Hon. P. Collier: What six months do you refer to?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: From June to December.

Hon. P. Collier: The first six months of the next financial year?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No. That is the new start. Income tax is based, not on this year's profits, but on last year's. The new rates which we intend to bring in will start at 2d. in the pound and go up to 2s. 6d. in the pound. As a result of this complication and delay, I expect to receive only about £63,000 extra from taxation measures this year. That is after providing for a super-tax on the remaining six months. It is always extremely difficult in considering taxation measures, to arrive at an equitable basis; and

the present suggestion is much on the lines of the super-tax which was suggested here as the outcome of at least four or five attempts to try and do this as nearly as possible. I think that when I introduce the measure, the House will be satisfied that we are trying to do what is fair.

Other Increases in Taxation.

The other increases in taxation measures will increase the dividend duty tax from 1s. to 1s. 3d. in the pound; and there will be further increases in the amounts to be paid by insurance and shipping companies. There will be a totalisator tax, giving the racing clubs the right to deduct 12½ per cent., of which six per cent. comes to the State. We are not taking fractions, or anything like that. The book-makers will be taxed by a stamp on their tickets at the rate of 2d. per ticket for the enclosures and ½d. a ticket outside. The other taxation measure will be an increase in the stamp duty in regard to receipts, cheques, and promissory notes as well as several additional alterations in minor matters. I anticipate having all these Bills ready for presentation to the House almost immediately. We anticipate next year, when we will receive the full benefit of these taxation measures, that they will total a net increase over our present taxation of roughly £225,000. So that, if it had not been for the action with regard to the suspension of the sinking fund, it would have got me over next year somewhere in the vicinity of getting even. When we come to taxation we cannot lose sight of the fact that, in a majority of instances, where we are imposing taxation, it is practically adding a super-tax to that already levied by the Commonwealth. All avenues excepting the very small ones, which will cause only irritation in the collection, have been closed to us.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Commonwealth have gone into most of the small things, too.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes, we are realising that it is the same people who have to be taxed, but unfortunately, so far as the State is concerned, the Commonwealth have the first chance.

Hon. P. Collier: The Commonwealth have been encouraged to invade those domains of taxation because of the reluctance of the State to do so.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Will your colleagues support the super-tax, seeing that they opposed it before?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We come now to the question of loan expenditure.

Loan Expenditure.

We anticipated that the total loan expenditure for the current year would have been, roughly, £800,000. For the seven months ended 31st January the total loan expenditure was £342,000. We could, of course, easily have expended more loan money, but the desire of the Government is to see with how little they can legitimately do, rather than how much they can spend, bearing in mind the financial outlook, the cost of money, and the alarming rate at which our interest bill is increasing. So far as funds are con-

veried, by the most careful conservation of our financial position, I anticipate that, after allowing for the £700,000 which we are to receive from the Commonwealth, I can finance through till June, 1919, without any further borrowing, and in this provision I am allowing for a loan expenditure for the next financial year of between £500,000 and £600,000. This, of course, does not take into consideration the amount which we anticipate receiving from the insurance companies. As before stated, when this money is raised it will be put into a separate fund, having for its distinct object the subsidising of secondary and other industries on a basis of pound for pound. I have not mixed this up with any of our other transactions for this simple reason. It will thus be seen, notwithstanding the gravity of our financial outlook, that the Government have taken every care to, as far as possible, avoid being forced on a borrowing market at a high rate of interest.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is it proposed to borrow locally?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Very little. Of course there is always a fair amount which comes in and goes out over the counter.

Business undertakings.

With regard to business undertakings when asking for supplies I dealt fairly fully with these, but my colleague, the Minister for Works, will lay the whole of the position fairly before hon. members when introducing his Estimates. In the business undertakings there is a loss of £32,500 on North-West cattle, which cannot be said to assist the Treasurer. I have laid on the Table of the House, in addition to those already mentioned, returns showing various results. Return No. 3 deals with business undertakings, receipts, and payments, debit and credit balances. Return No. 4 deals with the variations in the estimates of revenue compared with previous years. This return shows clearly where the increases and the shortages are. Return No. 5 shows the net indebtedness of the State, and here we see that whilst the public debt per head of the population in 1912 was £77 5s. 11d., in 1917 it was £116 5s. 5d. Return No. 6 deals with the loan expenditure for 1916-17 and compares it with that of previous years. It shows that in 1912-13 loan expenditure was £10 17s. 6d. per head, while last year it was only £2 15s. 1d. Return No. 7 deals with the gross public debt of the State, which now amounts to £40,914,826. The net public debt is £35,873,666. The next return shows how the money is being spent, the position of the public debt and sinking funds. This shows the accumulation and rate of interest and when the bonds mature. The last return deals with trade, production, and population for the years 1910 to 1916-17. In putting these returns before hon. members I am giving them much of the information which has hitherto loomed large in the delivery of a financial statement; consequently there is no necessity for me to deal with them in detail.

Conclusion.

I have endeavoured to deal with the present financial position of the State and with all the disabilities in financing, in a plain and straightforward manner. I do not want the House to think there is anything panicky in what I have suggested, but a calm perusal of the position by any unprejudiced mind can lead to but one conclusion, and that is that every care, every thought, and every energy of the Government and this House must be employed to try and meet the position during the present stress, which is caused by a number of circumstances over which we have no control. I hope the House realises this, that if we can successfully weather the financial position under our present circumstances, that we shall lay the foundation of a sound financial future for the State when normal times come back to us. With regard to the financial outlook, one dread is ever with us and that is, in realising our financial difficulties, we may hesitate to spend money on works which the present necessity or future opportunity may prove to be quite justifiable. In this respect the Government must adopt as a motto, "Neither rashly nor timidly." I want the people, as well as Parliament, to try and realise that part and parcel of their obligation, enjoyed as a result of the sacrifice of others, is to make some sacrifice to try and help the State, if for no other reason than that of gratitude for the conditions under which they are to-day making their livelihoods, when contrasted with those of other nations. This in itself is an appeal which should meet with a hearty response.

Mr. Lambert: Particularly from the rich class.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is not my intention to weary the Committee with any review of the general position of the State. Every member of this Committee knows that Western Australia of all the States is paying the highest sacrifice for her loyalty. The State has been depleted of 30,000 of her man power, and having no manufactures we are not situated in the same favourable position as the other States. Being unable to make up this shortage of production by employing women—a large proportion of our men having previously produced from the soil, either in the mining, agricultural or timber industries, many of our industries are practically at a standstill, or producing far less than our general average. Our crops, unfortunately, this year will not be up to the standard average. Almost every avenue of revenue, with the exception of direct taxation, is considerably less. Under these circumstances, and whilst recognising these difficulties, we feel that if courage is shown we will reap a full advantage of the sacrifices when normal times return, and our very financial hardship will probably come to us as a blessing in disguise, in helping us to be more careful and thoughtful in our public financing in the near future. I am satisfied to-day that there is no State in the whole of the Commonwealth, when normal times return, which has such a fine outlook as Western

ESTIMATED REVENUE.										£	£
TAXATION—											
Land, Income, and Dividend Duty and other Taxes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	353,000	
Probate Duty	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	40,000	
Licenses	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	41,000	
											434,000
TERRITORIAL—											
Land Revenue	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	278,000	
Mining Revenue	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	20,570	
Timber Revenue	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	27,600	
											326,170
LAW COURT FEES—	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	21,500
COMMONWEALTH REVENUE										558,122	
INTEREST ON TRANSFERRED PROPERTIES										24,485	
											582,607
DEPARTMENTAL RE-IMBURSEMENTS—											
Sundry Revenue	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	184,394	
Printing, Commonwealth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11,000	
											195,394
DEPARTMENTAL RE-IMBURSEMENTS—											
Agricultural Bank, Interest and Sinking Fund	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	127,000	
I. A. Board, Interest	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	40,000	
Workers' Homes Board, Interest and Sinking Fund	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	23,947	
Savings Bank Profit	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11,528	
											202,475
Cash Surplus from Sundry Business Concerns, and recoups of Interest and other charges of Trading Concerns (Return No. 3)										...	148,533
Estimated Cash Profit from Trading Concerns										...	44,177
Cash Surplus from Railways, Tramways, Water Supply, etc. (Return No. 3)										...	472,664
Total, Estimated Revenue										...	£2,427,520

[Return No. 2.]

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE.

SPECIAL ACTS—										£	£	£
Interest ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,577,872		
Sinking Fund ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	301,518		
											1,879,390	
His Excellency the Governor, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		11,400	
Parliamentary Allowances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		25,400	
Pensions and Retiring Allowances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		22,000	
Lands Improvements Loan Fund	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		15,000	
University of Western Australia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		13,500	
Tramways Purchase Act	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		3,900	
Aborigines	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		10,000	
Sundry Items (Judges, etc.)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		13,800	
												1,994,390
ADMINISTRATION—												
Premier's Office	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		11,526	
Colonial Treasurer	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		108,059	
Colonial Secretary	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		507,065	
Minister for Mines	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		62,882	
Minister for Lands and Agriculture	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		95,917	
Attorney General	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		77,864	
Minister for Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		360,048	
Minister for Works	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		120,019	
Minister for Industries, Woods and Forests	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		12,432	
His Excellency the Governor	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		1,573	
Expenses of Parliament	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		12,056	
												1,369,441
Total												£3,363,831
DOMESTIC EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR 1917-18 (included in above) —										£	£	
Aborigines	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		19,049	
Gaols	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		19,795	
Lunacy and Inebriates	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		64,246	
Medical and Public Health	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		163,478	
State Children's Department	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		54,164	
Police	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		133,307	
Education	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		360,048	
												814,077

[Return No. 3.]

BUSINESS UNDERTAKINGS.

Items.	Estimated 1917-18.		Balance.	
	Receipts.	Payments.	Dr.	Cr.
	£	£	£	£
Avondale and Harvey Estates ...	4,030	3,910	...	120
Bunbury Harbour Board ...	5,000	...	...	5,000
Fremantle Harbour Trust ...	82,864	...	...	82,864
Royal Mint ...	26,400	22,500	...	3,900
State Batteries ...	77,230	85,270	8,040	...
Albany Cold Stores ...	1,785	1,232	...	553
Aborigines Cattle Station ...	9,500	4,857	...	4,643
Dairy Farm (Claremont) ...	3,000	3,176	176	...
Government Refrigerating Works ...	3,600	3,466	...	134
Kalgoorlie Abattoirs ...	4,800	3,288	...	1,512
Metropolitan Abattoirs, etc. ...	16,000	11,810	...	4,190
Perth City Markets ...	1,700	733	...	967
Yandanooka Estate ...	15,500	12,800	...	2,700
Bacon and Butter Factories ...	12,610	1,1670	...	940
Recoups of Departmental Expenses, Interest, etc.	50,000	...	...	50,000
Tourist Resorts, Caves House, etc. ...	6,000	6,774	774	...
	£320,019	171,486	8,990	157,523
Net Surplus ...	...	...	...	£148,533
Railways ...	1,707,000	1,425,561	...	281,439
Tramways ...	130,000	98,305	...	31,695
Water Supply and Sewerage ...	385,030	236,719	...	148,311
Electric Power Works ...	30,465	19,246	...	11,219
	£2,252,495	1,779,831	...	472,664

[Return No. 4.]

CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND.

ESTIMATES FOR 1916-17 AND 1917-18.

Comparative Statement.

	1916-17.	1917-18.	Difference.
	Difference.	Estimated.	
Expenditure	£ 5,276,764	£ 5,337,043	£ 60,279 Increase
Revenue	4,577,007	4,400,732	176,275 Decrease
Deficit (Actual)	699,757	...	...
Do. (Estimated) ... ..	...	936,311	236,554 Increase

Variations in Estimated Revenue compared with Receipts of previous Years.

REVENUE—	£
For year 1916-17, actual	4,577,007
For year 1917-18, estimated	4,400,732
Shortage	176,275
SHORTAGE DUE TO DECLINE IN—	£
Railway Receipts	171,400
Land and Timber Receipts	4,000
Water Supply	19,700
Yandanooka Estate	7,000
Sundries (Net)	6,439
Commonwealth	12,000
	220,539
LESS INCREASES FROM—	
Taxation Items	31,664
Bacon and Butter Factories (New Item)	12,600
	44,264
Deficiency	£176,275

Variations in Estimated Expenditure compared with the Expenditure of the previous Year.

INCREASES—	£	£
Statutory and Special Items :		
Interest and Sinking Fund	143,551	
Education	26,000	
General Election	9,000	
Increases in Wages of Police	9,000	
Damage by Floods, Roads and Bridges	10,000	
Repairs due to damage by Floods to Wharves, Jetties, etc.	27,000	
Repairs S.S. "Penguin"	3,400	
Statutory Increases	10,000	
		237,951
Less—		
Loss in operation of Royal Commission, Control of Trade	45,000	
Decrease in Compassionate Allowances	5,000	
Sinking Fund under Treasury Bonds, Deficiency Act suspended	30,000	
Business Undertakings (Net)	£36,845	
Sundries	£41,202	
	78,047	
		158,047
		79,904
LESS EXPENDITURE REBATED—Agricultural Bank and Workers' Homes Board		19,625
Total Decrease		£60,279

[Return No. 5.]

LOAN AUTHORISATIONS AND FLOTATIONS.

						£	£
Authorisations to 30th June, 1916	...	...	...	...	...	41,253,173	
Do. for 1916-17	...	...	...	...	...	3,037,000	
Total Authorisations	...	...	...	...	...		44,290,173
Flotations—							
General Loans	...	...	...	...	...	27,078,253	
Local Debentures	...	...	...	...	...	362,810	
Local Inscribed Stock	...	...	...	...	...	7,641,298	
Treasury Bills	...	...	...	...	...	4,861,340	
Commonwealth Advances	...	...	...	...	...	1,719,000	
							41,662,701
Balance available for Flotation	...	...	...	...	...		2,627,472
Actual Loan Indebtedness—							
Gross Debt on 30th June, 1916	...	...	...	...	...	39,139,676	
Flotation during year—							
London Issues (Treasury Bills)	...	...	...	...	...	52,500	
Local Treasury Bills	...	...	...	...	...	154,265	
Local Stock	...	...	...	...	...	18,325	
Local Debentures	...	...	...	...	...	116,710	
Commonwealth Advances	...	...	...	...	...	1,719,000	
							41,200,476
Less Redemptions—							
Bonds Loans, 1878, 1881-4	...	...	...	...	...	7,600	
Treasury Bills	...	...	...	...	...	28,050	
Local Stock	...	...	...	...	...	250,000	
							285,650
							40,914,826
Less—							
Sinking Fund (as on 31st March)	...	...	...	...	...		5,041,160
Net Indebtedness, 30th June, 1917	...	...	...	...	...		35,873,666
Net Public Debt per head of population on 30th June, 1917	...	...	...	...	...	£ s. d.	
Do. do. do. do. 1916	...	...	...	...	...	116 5 5	
Do. do. do. do. 1915	...	...	...	...	...	109 19 9	
Do. do. do. do. 1914	...	...	...	...	...	101 12 10	
Do. do. do. do. 1913	...	...	...	...	...	94 4 11	
Do. do. do. do. 1912	...	...	...	...	...	85 17 2	
Do. do. do. do. 1912	...	...	...	...	...	77 5 11	

[Return No. 6.]

LOAN EXPENDITURE FOR 1916-17, COMPARED WITH PREVIOUS YEARS.

Undertakings.	1916-17.	1915-16.	1914-15.	1913-14.	1912-13.	1911-12.
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Railways, including Land Resumption	246,994	250,855	520,344	1,080,910	1,406,602	1,320,309
Tramways—Perth Electric	29,445	33,528	22,909	16,026	497,389	...
Electric Power Station	61,033	63,170	149,865	69,648	...	...
Fremantle Harbour Works	49,004	53,704	106,055	66,142	77,379	35,813
Fremantle Dock and Ship	...	14	1,291	1,868	11,330	80,842
Harbours and Rivers generally	72,854	55,610	53,014	21,860	61,790	69,109
Sewerage—Perth and Fremantle	11,059	47,268	120,473	140,582	160,931	93,572
Water Supply	65,426	118,275	127,669	191,528	234,184	31,417
Development of Goldfields	19,829	19,142	47,263	50,659	78,143	92,345
State Smelter, Ravensthorpe	...	78,967	60,000	...	...	...
Development of Agriculture	169,483	165,727	79,271	156,752	155,432	362,406
Assistance to Settlers	...	199,890	602,110	...	...	...
Immigration	2,352	4,640	16,665	56,218	63,447	96,805
Steamships	409	141,065	...	5,907	100,000	...
Workers' Homes—Working Capital	...	...	97,500	278,000	150,000	...
Saw Mills	214	511	29,069	126,416	43,691	...
State Hotels	589	10,000	6,546	17,091	17,580	...
Agricultural Bank—Working Capital	93,165	172,335	271,612	506,638	259,808	...
Agricultural Implement Works	1,292	4,627	18,436	43,070	...	...
Brickyards	...	547	11,507	13,710	1,121	...
Ferries	...	...	5,974	2,000	4,993	...
State Fish Supply	131	3,031	...	...	...	...
Public Buildings	23,350	40,661	81,004	44,166	38,690	91,707
Roads and Bridges	2,557	6,152	5,026	6,167	37,818	23,106
Perth-Fremantle Road Re-instatement	839	7,663	21,198	...	...	...
Purchase of Plant and Stock (Suspense Account)	...	...	55,000	...	...	...
Fremantle Road and Railway Bridge	2,482	4,622	1,582	...	...	...
Sundries	2,676	2,738	5,225	17,652	8,881	12,121
Totals	855,183	1,584,642	2,521,608	2,913,010	3,409,218	2,309,552
Loan Expenditure per head of mean population	£2 15 1	£4 19 3	£7 15 8	£9 1 8	£10 17 6	£7 16 11

[Return No. 7.]

LOAN FLOTATIONS, DEBT, AND EXPENDITURE ON 30TH JUNE, 1917.

Works and Services.	Flotations.	Actual Indebtness on Works.	Actual Cash spent.
	£	£	£
Railways and Tramways (including Electric Power Station)	19,378,023	19,009,176	17,972,112
Harbours and Rivers	3,874,851	3,817,808	3,556,463
Goldfields Water Scheme	2,903,078	2,901,828	2,689,824
Water Supply Generally	1,534,179	1,533,647	1,040,962
Sewerage	1,270,604	1,270,604	1,086,195
Erection of State Batteries	304,550	304,550	274,099
Development of Goldfields	1,537,901	1,520,275	1,443,818
Development of Agriculture	3,664,765	3,662,002	3,457,527
Telegraphs	276,721	231,075	269,308
Roads and Bridges	488,766	465,424	358,983
Public Buildings	860,423	853,280	779,526
Immigration	63,314	62,752	56,392
Worker's Homes—Working Capital	553,244	553,244	525,500
State Hotels	57,842	57,842	51,806
State Steamships	253,888	253,888	247,381
State Saw Mills	203,436	203,436	199,900
Agricultural Bank	1,547,761	1,547,761	1,303,558
State Implement Works	82,285	82,285	80,069
South Perth Ferries	13,375	13,375	12,967
State Milk Supply	4,590	4,590	4,496
State Brickyards	26,501	26,501	26,886
State Quarries	4,217	4,217	4,171
State Fish Supply	3,126	3,126	3,162
Crawley and Dalkeith Estates, Aborigines Stations, Savoy House, and purchase of Land at Nedlands	98,559	98,559	97,859
Stores and Stock Suspense Accounts	114,469	114,469	55,000
Miscellaneous	63,312	63,312	63,352
	39,183,780	38,658,826	35,661,316
Redemptions .. .. .	..	524,954	..
Cost of Raising .. .. .	..	..	1,501,508
Unexpended Balance .. .. .	..	..	2,020,956
	39,183,780	39,183,780	39,183,780

a An additional Amount of £335,946 was expended upon Agricultural Immigration from Development of Agriculture.

RECONCILIATION WITH PUBLIC DEBT (RETURN No. 5.)

	£
Indebtedness as above	38,658,826
Local Inscribed Stock, issued under Agricultural Bank Act, for conversion of Mortgage Bonds	1,566,000
Issues under Treasury Bonds Deficiency Act	690,000
Gross Public Debt	£40,914,826

[Return No. 8.]

PUBLIC DEBT AND SINKING FUNDS.

Loan.			Sinking Fund.		Remarks.
Year.	Amount.	Maturity.	Rate per cent.	Accumulation.	
LOANS CARRYING SINKING FUNDS.					
Inscribed Stock.					
	£			£ s. d.	
1899-1915...	998,353	1934	1	500,146 15 0	
1896 ...	1,500,000	1935	1	389,560 18 10	
1897-1900...	3,500,000	1935	1	786,814 3 3	
1897 ...	1,100,000	1936	1½	513,094 12 5	G.S.R. Purchase.
1896 ...	2,500,000	1927	3	1,589,247 0 9	Coolgardie Water Scheme.
1900-1902...	680,000	1935	1	109,369 5 9	
1902-1905...	2,600,000	1935	1	378,222 17 5	
1907-1908...	2,000,000	1947	1	143,650 11 7	
1909 ...	1,445,000	1955	½	28,847 0 5	
1910 ...	1,342,000	1955	½	18,993 5 6	
1911 ...	1,650,000	1955	½	69,297 10 9	Issued for redemption of £1,876,000 stock: balance taken from Sinking Fund.
1912 ...	1,000,000	1960	½	5,243 10 0	
1913 ...	1,000,000	1962	½	205 9 7	
1916 ...	140,000	1936	3½	5,197 10 0	Sinking Fund represents premiums paid on Assurance Policy for redemption of principal.
Local Inscribed Stock.					
1903 ...	556,550	1923	1½	103,779 4 10	
1904 ...	322,470	1924	1½	59,833 12 10	
1911 ...	1,922,305	1926	½	247,403 16 5	
1912 ...	1,380,540	1932	½	3,848 14 3	
1914 ...	144,735	1934	½	20,106 11 10	
1915 ...	78,185	1935	1½	6,112 10 2	
Debentures.					
1872-1888...	105,600	...	1	5,708 3 0	Redeemable by Annual Drawings.
1917 ...	250,000	1921	½	28,657 14 8	
1904 ...	246,100	1924	1	27,819 17 4	
	£26,461,838				
Various ...	BALANCE OF DEBT. 14,452,988	Various	...	...	Consisting of Inscribed Stock for which the Sinking Funds have not commenced, Treasury Bills which carry no Sinking Fund, and Commonwealth Advances.
Total Debt	£40,914,826	Accrued Sinking Fund		£5,041,160 16 7	

[Return No. 9.]

TRADE, PRODUCTION, POPULATION, Etc.

	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.	1912-13.	1913-14.	1914-15.	1915-16.	1916-17.
Railway Revenue	£1,649,397	£1,858,914	£1,896,579	£2,047,823	£2,382,022	£2,163,790	£2,217,250	£2,004,148
Railway Mileage	2,145	2,376	2,598	2,854	2,967	3,332	3,332	3,424
Wool produced (exported)	£969,904	£1,047,456	£1,008,858	£964,938	£907,363	£817,630	£1,273,183	£1,420,291
*Wheat produced (bushels)	5,602,368	5,897,540	4,358,904	9,168,594	13,331,350	2,624,190	18,236,355	16,103,216
*Hay produced (tons)	195,182	178,891	299,095	255,751	278,585	156,932	395,172	236,989
Gold produced	£6,553,314	£6,003,789	£5,634,004	£5,493,072	£5,478,932	£5,195,732	£4,803,206	£4,361,698
Timber produced (exported)	£907,702	£932,800	£1,001,593	£965,308	£1,142,280	£808,392	£442,014	£310,803
Coal produced	£114,487	£104,016	£121,109	£150,184	£163,374	£137,575	£140,338	£182,852
Other Minerals (exported)	£328,471	£155,277	£150,400	£195,764	£215,819	£169,094	£155,213	<i>b</i>
†Number of Sheep	4,731,737	5,158,516	5,411,542	4,596,958	4,421,375	4,456,186	4,803,850	5,529,960
†Number of Cattle	793,217	825,040	843,638	806,294	834,265	863,835	821,048	863,930
†Number of Horses	135,315	134,114	140,277	147,629	156,636	161,625	163,006	169,730
Area of land selected (acres)	1,904,780	1,922,112	1,973,565	1,408,108	998,851	502,551	308,590	235,640
Area of land leased (acres)	10,330,373	9,314,310	11,595,445	21,170,037	8,622,488	7,855,984	8,175,594	9,845,516
†Area of land for cultivation	4,685,607	5,309,832	5,650,628	6,717,226	7,320,533	7,548,768	8,056,374	8,022,489
*Area of land under crop (acres)	722,086	855,024	1,072,653	1,199,991	1,537,923	1,867,747	2,189,656	2,004,884
Tonnage Shipping, Inwards	2,279,852	2,408,803	2,597,156	2,767,270	3,381,304	2,360,855	2,491,537	<i>a</i> 2,544,720
Tonnage Shipping, Outwards	2,271,879	2,419,078	2,615,952	2,755,500	3,375,282	2,794,822	2,492,875	<i>a</i> 2,559,510
Exports, including Gold	£8,576,659	£8,177,272	£10,443,570	£8,846,039	£10,415,095	£5,352,140	£8,040,484	<i>d</i>
Exports, excluding Gold	£3,530,560	£3,752,783	£3,300,473	£4,549,126	£5,429,954	£3,062,276	£4,795,057	<i>a</i> £5,443,661
Imports	£6,932,731	£8,450,855	£9,283,722	£9,589,745	£9,727,473	£8,301,280	£8,983,000	<i>a</i> £9,383,566
Savings Bank's Deposits	£2,400,099	£3,170,345	£3,504,626	£3,716,184	£4,551,872	£3,743,135	£3,640,874	£3,523,852
Savings Bank's withdrawals	£2,070,776	£2,667,377	£3,316,113	£3,684,046	£4,600,884	£3,878,854	£3,828,187	£3,471,959
Excess of Arrivals over Departures	3,487	11,632	9,418	5,852	3,851	<i>c</i> 7,752	<i>c</i> 13,280	<i>c</i> 11,469
§ Population	271,162	287,826	302,341	313,940	323,952	322,526	314,687	308,530

* Season ended 28th February. † Year ended 31st December. ‡ Area cropped, cleared, fallowed, ringbarked, etc.
 § As on 30th June. ¶ Including Perth Tramways. a Preliminary figures, liable to revision. b. Information withdrawn from publication at the request of the Customs Department. c. Excess of departures over arrivals. d. The value of gold exported is not at present available for publication, and is not included in the Exports.