

Hon. J. CORNELL: Trade union advocates can hold their own pretty well. I cannot admit that any reputable firm of solicitors will drag out a case merely for the sake of getting their fees. There are some lawyers, of course, who have battened on the Labour movement for all they were worth and who, when their costs were taxed, have had their bills cut down by half. If there are harpies in the legal profession on the employers' side they are also to be found on the Labour side. Mr. Dwyer, who represents Labour cases in the Arbitration Court, does not string out a case because of the fees, and the same thing may be said of Mr. H. B. Jackson. People should be enabled to employ a solicitor if they so desire.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is not a question of harpies on one side or the other. The Arbitration Court was designed as a simple tribunal where industrialists could have their difficulties settled. I see no reason for legal gentlemen being employed there. Wherever counsel has been employed in these matters costs have gone up without any advantage accruing to either party. The cases may also be prolonged because of the legal argument that is constantly brought forward.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	6
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	8
				—

AYES.

Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. T. Moore
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 4th November, 1925.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Workers' Compensation Act Amendment.
- 2, Goldfields Water Supply Act Amendment.
- 3, Water Boards Act Amendment.
- 4, Permanent Reserve A4566.
- 5, Forests Act Amendment.
- 6, Municipality of Fremantle.
- 7, Narrogin Soldiers' Memorial Institute

QUESTION—VERMIN DESTRUCTION.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture: Seeing that the Walgoolan-Westonia settlers desire to form a vermin board to fence 120 holdings against dingoes, will he insert an amendment to Clause 59 of the Vermin Act, No. 2 of 1919, to permit this district and others similarly placed to rate themselves at a higher rate than the Act provides, to enable them to pay off any advances for fencing in 20 yearly instalments?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: I cannot say here and now whether I shall be able to make the amendment desired. However, I will see what can be done.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Richardson, leave of absence for one week granted to Mr. Maley (Irwin) on the ground of urgent private business.

MOTION—ABATTOIRS ACT.*To Disallow Regulations.*

Order of the Day read for the resumption from 21st October of the debate on the following motion by Mr. Mann—

That the regulations of the State Abattoirs and Saleyards (Metropolitan District), published in the "Government Gazette" of 7th August, 1925, and laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday, 8th September, 1925, be disallowed.

On motion by Sir James Mitchell, Order discharged.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.*In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 10—Insertion of new section after Section 100:

The CHAIRMAN: When progress was reported, Subclause (3) was under consideration. The Minister had moved the following amendment—

That after "payment of" in line 5, the words "such uniform" be inserted.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Minister inserts these words he will have to pay the same uniform bonus on all pests.

The Minister for Agriculture: No.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But the clause will then read, "the payment of such uniform bonus for the destruction of wild dogs and foxes and such other vermin as may be required." Surely it means that the Minister will pay the same uniform bonus over the whole of the State for the destruction of all vermin.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member mentioned this point last night. This morning I consulted the Crown Law Department, and they advised me that the amendment conveys the proper intention. The bonus for wild dogs will be uniform throughout the State. That is all it means.

Mr. Angelo: It would make it clearer if the Minister were to add after "bonus" the words "or bonuses."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, it is all right as it is.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: In my interpretation the amendment will make uniform the payment for the destruction of wild dogs all over the State. That is very desirable.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. TEESDALE: I move an amendment—

That the words in line 6, "such other vermin as may be prescribed," be struck out and "eagle-hawks" be inserted in lieu.

I fear that pressure may be brought on the advisory board to include other vermin that at present are not considered. The Bill was introduced to deal specially with dingoes, foxes and eagle-hawks. I ask the Minister to agree to the amendment because we are fearful of the Bill being extended to vermin of lesser importance.

The Minister for Agriculture: It would be better to insert "eagle-hawks" to begin with.

Mr. TEESDALE: Very well. I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. TEESDALE: I now move an amendment—

That after "and" in line 6, "eagle-hawks" be inserted.

Mr. ANGELO: I see a difficulty about the second proviso, which says that if a holding is fenced by a proper vermin-proof fence, the holder will be exempt. What fence is necessary to keep out an eagle-hawk?

The CHAIRMAN: I am not competent to answer that question.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. TEESDALE: I move a further amendment—

That the words "and such other vermin as may be prescribed" be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I should like to meet the hon. member, but it would be undesirable to do so. Some other pest may have to be brought under the Act. The board that will assist the Minister in the administration of the fund would not agree to bring in under it any other vermin unless that vermin was causing destruction.

Mr. Teesdale: We want a dingo, fox and eagle-hawk Bill.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member has all he wants in this Bill.

Mr. Teesdale: I have more than I want with these words in.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I support the amendment. There is already provision for dealing with most kinds of vermin, and this Bill should deal specifically with the three kinds

of vermin mentioned therein. The idea is held that if the board accumulates funds to an extent more than is necessary for the destruction of dingoes, foxes and eagles, it may be anxious to deal with some other class of vermin. Could the board bring in other vermin?

The Minister for Agriculture: Not any other vermin, because they are provided for.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I should be satisfied if it was intended to deal only with some new kind of vermin that might make its appearance in the State, but my fear is that the accumulated fund might be used for some class of vermin to the neglect of dingoes, foxes, and eagle-hawks.

Mr. LAMOND: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. The euro is just as big a pest in the North as the dingo and the fox, and may have to be brought within the scope of this measure.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister can bring under this Bill any vermin that he pleases, without regulations being framed. That is a weakness in the measure. There are such things as kangaroo rats in the South-West that do a tremendous amount of damage. If people have to pay they will want to be protected. I should be content if the Minister by regulation added to the list of pests.

Mr. TEESDALE: I am disappointed in the Minister. The Bill is a good one, but its value will be discounted by the addition of these few words. It was brought down for a special purpose and should be confined to that purpose.

Mr. ANGELO: I support the amendment. The menace caused by dogs and foxes is so urgent that we should focus all our energies upon those pests.

Mr. Teesdale: Euros do not "pinch" lambs.

Mr. ANGELO: I hope the efficiency of the measure will not be impaired by its scope being enlarged.

Amendment put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:
I move an amendment—

That a new subclause be added as follows: "The Minister shall appoint an honorary advisory board, consisting of three persons, to assist the Minister in the administration of this section. One member of the board shall be a representative of the pastoral industry, and one shall be a representative of the agricultural industry, and the third member, who

shall be chairman, shall be an officer of the Department of Agriculture."

The advisory board would sit with the Minister, and advise him concerning the operation of this particular part of the Act.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is usual to express such a subclause in another way such as "the Minister acting on the advice of such and such a board." The proposal is that the board may assist the Minister. I do not know whether members of it will sit with the Minister on even terms.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Minister will be guided entirely by the board. He will not have time to bother about the business.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have never heard of Parliament being asked to appoint a board to assist the Minister. The influence of the board will be only such as the Minister cares to make it. The amendment really means nothing, but I object to its wording. The Bill allows the Minister to impose taxation and set up a fund apart altogether from the Treasury; he will be able to do with that fund practically as he pleases. If there should be £30,000 or £40,000 to the credit of the fund, the Treasurer will get the use of the money free of interest.

The Minister for Agriculture: The association have asked for this amendment.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The proper people to make requests to the Minister are we who sit in this Chamber, and not somebody of whom we have never heard and whose name we do not know. The amendment should not be carried in its present form.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:
I move an amendment—

That the following be added to stand as Subclause 5: "This section shall not apply to any holding which does not exceed 160 acres in extent."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The exemption will not cover all the group settlers. However, the Minister said he would rate everybody.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, I did not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Is the Minister obliging someone else this time?

Mr. Lindsay: He has not obliged the members of this Chamber so far.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The fear in the Minister's mind is that the fox may

be a trouble to the small settler. Nevertheless, small holdings should not be taxed as proposed by the Bill. I am glad of the exemption, but it should be sufficient to cover all small holdings in the South-West. If the man with 160 acres is exempt, the man with 200 acres will feel sore at being taxed. Some of the group settlers have up to 200 acres.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

I move an amendment—

That the following be added to stand as Subclause 6: "If any holding is not assessed or assessable by the Commissioner of Taxation, the rate to be payable as aforesaid shall be assessed on the valuation of the holding as assessed under the Road Districts Act, 1919, or, in the case of timber leases or concessions, or land held under sawmill or other permit under the Land Act Amendment Act, 1904, or the Forests Act, 1918, on the value at which, under paragraph (ii) of the second proviso to Subsection 1 of Section 214 of the Road Districts Act, 1919, land held or used under lease, license or concession for cutting and removing timber is assessable."

Some blocks may not be assessed, and having in view those blocks and timber leases, I propose this amendment. As regards a timber permit of 10,000 acres, the tax would be levied on a valuation of £2,500, on the basis of 5s. per acre.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is extraordinary that the Minister should desire this amendment. I fail to understand why the holder of a sawmill permit should be required to pay under this measure, seeing that he merely has the right to cut and remove timber, and no right to use the land in any other way. He should not be taxed to destroy vermin. It might as well be proposed to tax a man who removes gravel. Gold mining leases have been exempted from the operation of this measure. On the goldfields there are leases for other than mining purposes. I hope the Committee will not agree to the taxing under this Bill of any land other than that taxable under the Land and Income Tax Act. I shall vote against the amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	..	15
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	5
				—

AYES.

Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Mr. Millington
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Munro
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Panton
Mr. Heron	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Troy
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Withers
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. North
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Brown	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Davy	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Lindsey	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Mann	Mr. Richardson
Sir James Mitchell	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 11—Penalty for obtaining bonus by fraud:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The penalty of £50 is too light. The clause sets out that any person who, by the production of scalps obtained elsewhere than within the State, obtains or attempts to obtain, payment of a bonus for the destruction of vermin, shall be guilty of an offence for which the penalty I have mentioned is provided. It would be straight out thieving if a man killed dogs in South Australia, where a small amount is paid for the scalps, and brought them here to obtain the higher bonus. I move an amendment—

That in line 7 after "pounds" the words "or three months' imprisonment" be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think the penalty provided is adequate.

Mr. Teesdale: What if the offender has not a shilling?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If he has not the money to pay the fine, the man will go to gaol.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is not so under the clause.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I should imagine that if a man were fined £50 and could not pay it, he would have to go to prison.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then, under your proposal if the offender is a rich man, he can pay the fine and escape imprisonment, but if he is a poor man and cannot pay the fine, he will have to go to gaol.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think there will be much trafficking.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have it already. You cannot check it.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, we can. We checked it only recently.

Mr. TEESDALE: Why has the Minister so much sympathy with the scoundrels who have been swindling the vermin boards?

The Minister for Agriculture: I have no sympathy with them, but I regard the penalty as sufficient.

Mr. TEESDALE: There is nothing wrong in asking for the alternative of imprisonment.

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

Clauses 12 and 13—agreed to.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister promised to look into the point I raised as to whether the power to impose a fine of five per cent. on rates unpaid, would apply to the new Section 100a.

The Minister for Agriculture: I have not done so yet, but I will do so before the third reading of the Bill.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1925-26.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 29th October, Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

Department of Agriculture (Hon. M. F. Troy, Minister.)

Vote—Agriculture, £74,991:

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [5.26]: Hon. members will note that there is an increase in the agricultural vote of £17,707. I can truthfully say that that is evidence of the progress of the department and of the aid being given to agricultural development by the department and the officials concerned. Some of the increase is due to the establishment of the College of Agriculture at Muresk, which accounts for a sum of £5,951. In discussing the progress of the State, it is pleasant to change from a debate on the mining industry, which is not as prosperous as I should like it to be,

to one on agricultural development. I can say with every degree of accuracy that the agricultural industry in Western Australia is in a prosperous condition and its development is very satisfactory. Last year there was a record harvest of 23,887,000 bushels. The greater proportion of the wheat was sold at a price that returned the producers satisfactory recompense for their labours. The estimated area under wheat this year is 2,379,105 acres. That shows an increase on the area under crop last season of 269,275 acres. Although the season this year cannot be compared in some parts with that of last year, still I am hopeful that with the additional acreage under crop, combined with the large proportion of fallow land that is under crop, the harvest this year will be 22,000,000 bushels if not more. I am inclined to think that while the price we will obtain for our wheat will not be as good as that received last year, still it will be better than we anticipated a few months ago. If we can harvest 22,000,000 bushels this year we will have every reason for congratulation. The acreage of fallowed land under crop this season is 1,152,631 acres. That means that half the acreage under crop is on fallowed land. That is the largest acreage of fallow that has ever been cropped in Western Australia. The system of fallowing is becoming widespread. It is being more and more adopted by the producers throughout the country, and it is generally realised by the farmers that it is the safe method of farming. They recognise that it is the only method that should be adopted if we are to farm successfully. There are still a few farmers in Western Australia who do not fallow their land, but they are very few. The great majority recognise the value of fallowing, and the yields obtained indicate that this method has advantages over any other. The estimated area under oats is 508,161 acres, and under barley 17,258 acres. The number of wheat growers in the State is 8,031, an increase of 291 over the total of last year. Owing to the increased activity, it has been found necessary to add to the staff of the Department of Agriculture. The fruit branch has been strengthened; two additional agricultural advisers have been appointed to the dairy branch; an assistant for the irrigation branch; two stock inspectors for the stock branch; and an additional veterinary surgeon. These appointments entail a good deal of expenditure for travelling, as these

officers, together with the great majority of the staff of the department, are purely technical, their duties necessitating their being continually in the field. The two stock inspectors have been appointed temporarily to clean up the flocks affected with tick and lice. These pests have increased to such an alarming extent that the department have had to take extreme measures. Already prosecutions have been instituted in one or two cases, and threatened in other cases, and we shall prosecute the people concerned if the flocks are permitted to continue in their present condition and infest the flocks of neighbouring settlers, as I am led to believe they are doing. I am hopeful that as a result of the efforts of the department during the summer months, better conditions will be brought about. A veterinary pathologist was recently appointed whose duties are to investigate diseases affecting stock. At present he is actively engaged investigating diseases in the Avon Valley. I believe the people at Beverley have cause to complain about this disease being localised. It cannot be localised; it is found throughout the Avon Valley. I hope the investigation now being made will have successful results. An up-to-date laboratory has been provided by the department at a cost of £1,000 so that the pathologist may be able to make his investigations on the spot. Branch laboratories will be established in country districts where he is working. At present there is one in the Beverley district. The expenditure on experimental farms is one of the reasons for the increase in the Estimates of the department. The increase over the expenditure of last year is £3,559, and is largely due to the operations at the Wongan Hills light land farm. The establishment of this farm was decided upon by the previous Government, and I think it was a very creditable decision. In this State there are 9,000,000 acres of light land adjacent to the railways, and before these areas can be successfully worked, some experimenting must be undertaken. The experiments at the Wongan Hills farm this year are very encouraging. The area under crop is 1,000 acres. A field day was held there last month, and I was pleased with the results. The crops on the Wongan Hills light land farm are as good as, if not better than, many of the crops I have seen on the better land in the wheat belt.

Mr. Lindsay: You can say that that applies everywhere this season.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I admit that the conditions this season has been favourable to the light land. No one would claim that the capacity of this light land has been proved. In my opinion, the experiments will have to be conducted for a number of years before we shall be able to determine precisely what the light lands are capable of producing. However, it is a good thing to know that experiments are being made. I think the hay will yield a ton to the acre this year, but I cannot say what the wheat yield will be. There may be operating with regard to the wheat, conditions of which I am not aware.

Mr. Lindsay: Do not be afraid about that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If I were to judge the prospects of the crop at Wongan Hills, I should say there would be a yield of 14 to 15 bushels per acre. If that yield is obtained, it will be a very fine result from what might be said to be almost pure sandplain. It will be an indication that, though in the heavy rainfall seasons the highest results may not be achieved, it is possible that people will be able to utilise the light land to very great advantage. This year the oat crops have suffered through the dry season, but this indicates that if the season were a wet one, it would be favourable for the oat crops, though the wheat yield might not be so good. If oats can be grown successfully in a wet season, it will demonstrate that the whole of these light lands can be utilised for that purpose and for the carrying of stock, which will build up the land.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is what you want.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I would not ask any man to take up a holding exclusively of light land such as we have in large areas in this State. The best plan would be to enable a man to take up an area of light land together with some good land, and then I think he would be able to bring the light land into profitable occupation. Our light lands undoubtedly have a future for the carrying of stock.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This applies where water can be obtained underground. On the sandplain areas, of course, the water will not run, so it is impossible to conserve water in dams. If water can be obtained by sinking, the sandplain country will carry a lot of stock and provide good holdings for many people. If a set-

He had 400 or 500 acres of first-class land and 2,000 acres of sandplain, he would be able to make a very good farm.

Mr. Lindsay: Provided it was the right class of sand plain.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. If such a settler carried stock, he would be able to make a pretty good living. Worked in this way, there is a good future before our sandplain country. The crops at the Chapman State farm this season are exceptionally good. I should say they would yield 24 to 30 bushels to the acre. The crops at the Merredin State farm are not so good as they were last year, owing to the dry conditions. The Chapman farm had a greater rainfall during the growing season, and the quality of the land is better suited for light rainfall than is the land at Merredin. Both farms will return a yield, but the Chapman farm can be expected to give a higher return than the Merredin farm. When we consider that the Merredin experimental farm had a rainfall of only 565 points during the growing period of this year, the results are remarkable. It shows what can be done in this country provided good farming methods are adopted. I should like to pay a tribute to the silent and effective work being done on those farms in the way of breeding cereal and other plants for the wheat belt. People generally pay but scant attention to the great work being done on those farms. In my opinion it is a most valuable work—the breeding of wheats that will resist the ravages of disease and that will return profitable yields. These farms are breeding wheats designed to give a profitable yield in the drier areas yet to be opened up. It is valuable work that receives little notice in the Press or from the public, but those who know of it, appreciate it. The breeding of Nabawa wheat alone has resulted in adding millions of bushels to the wheat yield of this State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Merredin variety of wheat is also very valuable, and there has also been produced at the Merredin experimental farm the Corabbin wheat which has the highest milling qualities of any milling wheat in the State. It is higher than the Comeback and that is one of the highest in Australia. This is some of the work being carried on by the Department of Agriculture and it is the essential work in building up the prosperity of the State. There are now under the control of

the department the following farms:—Merredin, Chapman, Wongan Hills, Avondale, Muresk and Denmark. The total area sown with wheat and oats is 2,400 acres. The Avondale farm at present is not serving the purpose of an experimental farm, because it is being utilised for the holding of stock for the group settlements. The Group Settlement Department required a farm for the holding of stock, and Avondale was made available to them. When it has served that purpose, it may be used as an experimental farm. The quantity of wool produced last year was 39,536,000 lbs., valued at £4,217,000. During the year the following prices were realised—greasy, 45½d.; scoured, 65d.; lambs, 36d.; comeback 38½d. The high prices of last year were not maintained, but although they fell to some extent, I am glad to say that the prices realised at the recent sales were very profitable for the wool producer. The market prices recently have been very satisfactory. It could not be expected that the very high prices would be maintained over a long period, but I am inclined to think that the prices now ruling will be more permanent and that wool growers will enjoy reasonably good returns for some years to come. On these Estimates the rabbit vote shows a considerable increase. Members are aware that the depredations caused by rabbits have been much greater during the past season, the consequence being that it has been necessary to provide an additional amount of £1,455 for the purchase of poison. Poison is purchased by the department and distributed through the vermin boards, for the use of settlers, the department paying 2s. per tin for the poison and disposing of it to the boards at 6d. per tin. This policy is adopted with the object of encouraging settlers to endeavour to eradicate the pest. The cost of administering the department, including the maintenance of the rabbit-proof fence, is about £25,000 a year. The department carries on all the work that is necessary in dealing with vermin. Provision has also been made for an additional amount for the payment of bonuses on wild dog scalps. With regard to dairying, although we have still a very long way to go before we overtake the State's requirements in connection with butter, it is pleasing to note that a great deal of work is being carried out which will do much towards attaining this desirable end. For instance, during the past year an

additional 20,000 acres have been sown with permanent pasture suitable for dairying. The value of silage is being realised, and, in consequence, an additional 45 overhead and pit silos have been constructed during the year. There is no doubt that it is essential in some districts for silage to be conserved in order that stock may be adequately fed during the dry months of the year. Many group settlers have now reached the producing stage and have been supplied with dairy stock. Up to the present time 2,500 head of milk cows and heifers have been distributed to group settlers, and arrangements have been made for the purchase of 2,000 head of young dairy stock from New South Wales. Some of the latter have already arrived in the State. In addition, 126 pure tested dairy sires have been secured with the object of distributing them to dairy farmers. There is no doubt, as previously mentioned, that these factors will have a material influence on our butter output. Some exception has been taken to the purchase of heifers in the Eastern States, and it has been alleged that the department overlooked the claims of the producers in Western Australia. That is not so. A thousand head have already been purchased in Western Australia and we are still making purchases. I consider it is a wise policy to purchase from the Eastern States because we can afford in this country to introduce the best blood from the Eastern States. We are buying cattle from producers who have been culling stock for up to 50 years. Therefore it can be said that we are reaping the advantage. In my opinion it was the proper thing to go to the Eastern States for the dairy stock we require in Western Australia. If our settlers will look after that stock, they will make a commencement with a milking strain which will be of a standard equal to that of their competitors in the Eastern States.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You cannot expect to get stud cows at the price you have been paying.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, but we have been able to get a good average dairy cow that has been built up by culling for 50 years. The cows that we have bought all came from established dairying districts in the Eastern States.

Mr. Lindsay: Where?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The north-east coast of New South Wales

chiefly. That is one of the best dairying parts of Australia. Every care has been taken in the selection of the stock. If the cows on arrival did not look as well as was expected, it was due to the fact that they had been compelled to undergo quarantine for a couple of months, on top of which there was the long journey to Western Australia.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You will be immortalised by these cows if you are not careful.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, the hon. member has that distinction. With regard to stock for the Agricultural College, we have purchased a number of high-class Guernseys from New South Wales and in them we shall have stock from the best strain in Australia. The more of this kind of stock we introduce the better will it be for the country. With regard to butter factories, I regret that they are not as prosperous as we would wish them to be. Indeed, quite a number of them have been a great disappointment to the Government. One factory, however, has made great progress. I refer to the Bunbury Butter Factory. The butter produced is of a very high standard and I trust that the company controlling the concern will extend their operations and will eventually build up a great system of factories on co-operative principles, such as exist in New South Wales.

Mr. Sampson: It is particularly well equipped and well managed.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no doubt about that. The average price received by farmers for butter fat was 1s. 5½d. per lb. The potato yield was a record one of 19,891 tons obtained from 5,122 acres. This yield was 2,000 tons greater than the previous record, and the average was 3.9 tons per acre. During the year it was represented to me that the Eastern States market was fully supplied, and that therefore there would be no outlet there for our surplus potatoes. It was essential to make provision for holding over the quantity above our requirements. This quantity could not be held except under cold storage conditions owing to the possibility of the potatoes being destroyed through the ravages of potato moth. Arrangements were therefore made for cold storage accommodation at the West Australian Meat Export Co.'s works, the Government agreeing to advance the freight

and storage charges. The growers stated that 2,000 tons would be available for storage, but as a matter of fact only 150 tons were placed in cold store. Regarding the fruit industry, our orchardists are also in a flourishing condition, and during the year ended 30th June last they exported 147,342 cases of apples, or about 100,000 cases more than were shipped during the previous year. The total quantity of fruit exported during the period mentioned was 103,283 cases. The prices obtained in England for our apples were very satisfactory, and it is gratifying to know that we topped the market in competition with the Eastern States and New Zealand growers. The prices ranged from 14s. to 20s. per case, several consignments averaging 17s. 6d. to 18s. per case. In the early part of the year when I was in Tasmania Western Australian apples were bringing the highest price of any apples in Australia.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They have been doing that for years.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Recently legislation amending the Plant Diseases Act received the sanction of Parliament, the object being to keep in check fruit-fly which caused a lot of damage in areas adjacent to the metropolitan districts. A great many orchardists did not bother about taking the necessary steps to eradicate the fly because there was no power to compel them to do so. There were orchardists, however, who did their utmost to get rid of the pest, but their efforts were of little avail because of the neglect of their neighbours. The amendment to the Act compels all orchardists to give attention to the matter and the legislation is appreciated by all concerned. I regret to say that the dried fruit industry is not as flourishing as we would wish it to be. This is due principally to the fact that the quantity of fruit grown locally is more than is needed for local requirements. Last year a quantity was exported to the Eastern States. The producers have asked for power to control the marketing of their products and the Primary Products Marketing Bill gives the facilities desired. As I previously mentioned provision has been made for the expenditure of £5,951 for salaries, equipment and incidental expenses in connection with the Agricultural College. It is proposed that operations shall commence there early next year. At the present time farming operations are being carried

on, and the necessary arrangements are in hand for the erection of buildings for the accommodation and teaching of students. The Chief Architect visited the agricultural colleges in the Eastern States a little while back, and the information he gathered will be of value to us in Western Australia. I again express my pleasure that the agricultural industry is making good progress, and, as the result of the development now taking place, the prospects of the industry are very bright. The Government propose to make provision on the Loan Estimates for the establishment of a number of experimental farms for the purpose of determining the limit for profitable wheat farming in the areas east of existing settlement. There may be a tendency to go out too far. There is a limit somewhere. With advanced scientific knowledge and better conditions we might farm many miles further east. Under present conditions, however, we know that wheat requires a certain rainfall and it is not wise to go too far out, even with Government assistance, and then have to abandon the whole thing. The farmer loses his all and the State may waste thousands of pounds. In some localities in the Eastern States the settlers have gone out too far and have had to bear the loss, and agricultural development has received a great check. We do not want that sort of thing in Western Australia. We propose to establish an experimental farm in the Esperance district. That will be necessary for the breeding of cereals suitable to the peculiar conditions of the locality. Even at Kalgoorlie this year we have carried out some experiments and, despite the low rainfall, some wheat has been produced. Of course that is not to say we can farm at Kalgoorlie, but it seems pretty certain that with improved methods we may yet farm a lot of country at present considered impossible.

Mr. Griffiths: A good deal of the country between here and the goldfields could be brought under cultivation as a mixed proposition, wheat and grazing.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But we have a better proposition than that for the lighter rainfalls. Grazing is now proceeding in a rainfall only as good as that at Westonia, and where fresh water is abundant without reliance on the natural rainfall. The whole of the country up there is now carrying stock, and the land is suited to agriculture. In my own electorate a record of the rainfall during the growing period

has been kept for some years past, and the record shows that the rainfall is sufficient to produce profitable crops of wheat. That country, of course, will carry stock from the beginning. So, as I say, there is every hope for the agricultural industry in Western Australia.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [6.4]: I am delighted to know that agriculture is progressing so satisfactorily in Western Australia. There can be no question about our wheat yield, nor about the price of our wheat, for I understand we are getting a little more than is paid for wheat from any other State in the Commonwealth. If we had more wheat land it would be eagerly taken up. We could sell it at good prices. Therefore we should not hesitate to proceed with its development, for by the development of agriculture this country now lives. Unfortunately, the gold-fields decreased last year to the lowest point of production for very many years past. Wealth has to be produced from the soil somehow, and so agriculture has to do more and more to replace the wealth formerly won through the mining industry. It is satisfactory to hear that the wheat export this year will be just as great as it was last year. Personally I think it will be even greater. But there are some other things to export besides wheat. I do not refer to wool, for that is in a satisfactory position. The figures show a considerable aggregate cheque received for wool last year, and I hope the price of wool will be maintained. Only the other day I read of the price of 10s. 4d. per lb. for wool from Australia. That was in the early days of New South Wales, and I suppose it was washed wool. For the wheatgrower and the woolgrower the outlook is fairly bright, but the fruit-grower is in a parlous position. Not only in respect of dried fruit is there trouble, but in respect of wine also. It is curious that we should see in all our wine shops wines from the Eastern States but very little Western Australian wine. I do not know whether we could amend the Licensing Act to make it compulsory for all the wine shops to stock Western Australian wines as well as wines from the Eastern States. At all events, it would be worth considering.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Do not ask us to do it this session, or we shall be here till after Christmas.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It would be very much more useful to the country than some of the legislation we are spending time on at present.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That is, in your opinion.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and I am a very good judge. The growers of wine are in an unfortunate position. Very good wine is made in this State, but for some reason or other our habit is to drink only light wines. In the Old Country, I understand, heavier wines are coming into more general use. If we can do anything to ensure that Western Australian wine must be sold in our local wine shops, we ought to do it. I do not quite understand why it is not more generally sold in our wine shops and hotels. Even in the refreshment bar at Parliament House there is an absence of Western Australian wines. There was once the shelf one bottle for a long time, but that has now gone, and I do not see another on the shelf. It is time we got another.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: If you had asked for Western Australian wine they might have stocked it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Unfortunately I do not drink wine. Apart from dried fruits and wine, there will be trouble in marketing our stocks of fresh fruit. In addition we have just now a tremendous crop of potatoes growing. Unless they can be shipped to Sydney, I do not see what is going to save the growers. At this time of the year the Eastern States are short of potatoes. This crop of ours was grown for export. We cannot use it, for it is too big and potatoes grown at this time of the year do not keep very well. If this tying up of interstate vessels at Fremantle is to continue I do not know what our potato growers are to do.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: How about having word with the shipping companies to recommit the steamers?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am afraid that influence is wanted somewhere else, and that I should not have very much influence with the power that is actually causing the trouble and holding up the ships.

Mr. Hughes: You mean Lord Incheape?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, do not think he has anything to do with it. It is the interstate shipping to which I am referring. The Navigation Act, of course, prevents the carriage of goods from one

Australian port to another except by the interstate vessels. If we can get these potatoes away to the Eastern States we shall have thousands of pounds brought into this State for potatoes instead of, as usual, paying thousands of pounds to the East for them. It may be that the potatoes can be sent by train. I do not know whether the price in the East would justify the paying of railway freight. I ask the Minister for Railways to look into the possibilities. Of course we could only give special rate of freight as far as Kalgoorlie, but the Minister might look into the matter and see what can be done.

Mr. Sleeman: What is to prevent the potatoes going by water?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Only the shipping troubles, of course.

Mr. Sleeman: But the crew of the "Karooola" are waiting to go on board.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It does not matter very much to the potato grower what is the cause of the stoppage; what he wants is a steamer to take his potatoes.

The CHAIRMAN: We had better leave out the merits of the shipping strike.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not discussing them. I am merely dealing with the shortage of shipping to take away our potatoes, and suggesting that if we cannot get ships we might send them by railway if possible.

Mr. Teesdale: Do not mention ships, whatever you do.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the Minister for Railways will look into that question. I was glad to hear the Minister for Agriculture say that the light land experiments have turned out satisfactorily. My idea is that whatever feed is grown on the farm should be put into stock. If we can turn the light lands to use it will be largely sheep that will be grown. I am anxious to see if sheep cannot be carried satisfactorily on those lands. The best wool grown is grown on light land, not on rich land. A great deal can be done by an experimental farm to prove that stock can be successfully carried in addition to the growing of fair crops. I have no wish to detain the Committee. I should not have risen at all, but that there are two or three lines of produce very difficult to market and I wished to ask the Government to do what they can to assist the producers in getting those lines to market. I am glad to see that experts have been appointed to assist the department.

Mr. Sutton has done wonderful work. But for his specially-bred wheat, we might have been in rather a bad way this year. He deserves every credit for having produced such a wheat. Altogether the department has done much useful work.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) (7.30): This is the eighth time that I have addressed myself to the agricultural vote. When going through the country I can see the wonderful development that has taken place since I first spoke on this question. The Minister has given us a very encouraging report of the progress of agriculture, and I can endorse all that he has said regarding the wonderful development that has taken place. Recently, the Minister, with other members and myself visited the Merredin State Farm. If ever the Merredin State Farm can justify its existence, it can do so this year. Last year the crops were more spectacular, more pleasing to the eye, and made a better picture than they do this year, but this year the farm has demonstrated what can be done there as well as in the neighbourhood around and has induced farmers in the locality, where there has been a meagre rainfall during the growing period, to follow its example. It has now been demonstrated that a very much wider extent of country can be used for wheat growing than was thought to be possible, because the rainfall is equally good up to Westonia and beyond. I recently came across a record of what had been done on the light rain all of this year at a farm 20 miles north of Merredin. The total rainfall was 804 points, and for the growing period it was 676 points, which fell during the winter months. The rain gauge is situated between the crops. These crops competed at the Royal Show and were awarded seventh place. At the district show, however, the farmer secured first place with his crops. The official results from this farm were, as judged by Mr. Rudall, of the Agricultural Department, from 335 acres, 21 bushels 21lbs. per acre. There were 190 acres fallowed, and 145 acres partly of new land and partly of land that had been cropped the second time. The owner (Mr. Dumsday) cultivates on the three years' rotation system and carries about 100 head of cattle. He tried sheep some years ago but the dogs were too bad. The whole of the property is fenced with rabbit-proof netting, with

three barbs on top, but the dogs jumped over it. The fallowing was completed in August, 1923, and the land was cultivated in September. It was harrowed in December after 166 points of rain had fallen, and again in March after there had been 71 points of rain. The fallowed land was disc ploughed about 2 inches deep, after the first rains, and then drilled. Off that land the average yield was 25 bushels to the acre with a rainfall during the growing period of 676 points. From the unfallowed land the average was 16 bushels. Thus for each inch of rain that fell during the growing period the fallowed land produced $3\frac{1}{2}$ bushels to the acre. This farm is on the proposed Ben-cubbin-Merredin railway extension, and shows what can be done, and the comparison given with Longerengong, Nhili and our Merredin State Farm should encourage settlers to aim for similar results. On Talgonine Downs Farm—Mr. Lawrence Dumsday, last year, for every inch of rainfall during the growing season on fallow, secured an average of over 3.50 bushels. Merredin Experiment Farm: On fallow the average yield of wheat for each inch of rain during the growing period was 2.85 bushels. Longerengong Agricultural College Farm: On an average winter rainfall of 11.1 inches, the average yield for five years has been very remarkable, $39\frac{1}{2}$ bushels to the acre, or 3.51 bushels for each inch of winter rain. Nhili Crop Competitions: Mr. Blackwood, on a winter rainfall of 11.39 ins., obtained 39.6 bushels, an average of 3.41 bushels for each inch of rain. Mr. Dahlenburg, on lighter rainfall country, averaged 31 bushels on 8.5 inches of winter rain, a return of 3.6 bushels for each inch of winter rain. The last three records cover a five years' series, as against our one year only, but they are useful as a comparison. These records show that some of our farmers in the eastern wheat belt can get good results from a meagre rainfall during the growing period, equal to those that have been obtained at Longerengong in the Wimmera, and in the Nhili district where the crop competitions are run. The country 20 miles north of Merredin is being rapidly brought under cultivation, and I think that results such as I have indicated can be obtained there too. I have visited this particular farm, which is owned by an old settler. I went to it on the occasion of the ex-Premier's business trip into the wheat areas. The present Premier was also there. The farmer in question said

at the time that he was blundering along. He has done this work by following the advice of those who know, and by visiting the Merredin State Farm. He speaks very highly of that institution. He has learned a very great deal from it, and has applied his knowledge with good results. The Minister has indicated that he has his eye upon this particular stretch of country from the wheat producing point of view. Naturally there is a limit to the distance he will be able to go in settling people on the land. He intends to institute experimental farms in what are presumed to be the lighter rainfall portions of the country, that is to say inside the safe line of rainfall. Many newcomers are going into that area. Amongst them are two young fellows who have taken up land alongside the rabbit-proof fence. In a space of two years they have cleared 1,150 acres of forest country, and that land is under crop to-day. The results are truly remarkable, so much so that I had them published in the paper. First of all I made quite sure that the figures were correct, and had been verified by the inspector for the district. That inspector sent me a letter which reads—

Re Thos. Jenks and Geo. Williams. I reply to yours of the 19th August, passed on to me by Inspector Mann, I am now in receipt of a report from Inspector Burdon, who has had the oversight of these two men since the commencement of their operations. The inspector confirms the figures and dates quoted by Mr. Jenks. Continuing, the inspector states that both men are great workers, and, in Mr. Jenks, her husband has a staunch and willing helper, who performs much of the lighter duties of the farm, that would otherwise take a man's time. Concluding, the inspector remarks that these two men are an example to the district. They appreciate the liberal help afforded by the Government, and are prepared to do their part to the utmost. Fortunately, both men are powerful (Jenks I know), and the result achieved is due to solid and intelligent effort. The inspector has a great admiration for both Mr. and Mrs. Jenks and Mr. Williams.

These are new chums who came here with a little capital. The moral is that if we get settlers of the right type, with a little capital, there is nothing to stop them from going ahead, or others from following the example. The first 510 acres belonging to these men was cleared without any outside help. They then had 400 acres cleared by contract. As a sort of side line they cleared $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles of roads, they sunk 2,000 yard dam, cut 1,200 posts in the

spare time, and in addition put in 1,150 acres of crop this year.

Mr. Lindsay: Not on a 44-hour week.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No.

Mr. Marshall: Where did they go for their holiday?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: They did not have one. They were trying to make good, and they are doing so.

Hon. G. Taylor: Those are the men we want.

Mr. Marshall: Some have to do the work; we do not.

Hon. G. Taylor: No one would ever accuse you of that.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The record is so remarkable that I felt I must draw attention to it. It is a fine record, compared with what is done in the other States. I told the member for Toodyay about it, and he suggested I should read the record to the House. He said he would not be game to do so as it was impossible. I have proved that the figures are right, and that the thing was not impossible, for these two men have done it.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: They must have been super men.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It was heavy forest country.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Get out!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I know what I am talking about. The record is absolutely correct. The work has been accomplished in a space of two years ended last March. This shows what can be done by men who are prepared to work. I heard with a great deal of satisfaction the statement of the Minister that it was his intention to investigate the country out east, and have experiments made with the idea of seeing how far cereal growing could be extended in the safe rainfall area. When I was member for York the country east of Bruce Rock was frequently talked of as being brought into use for wheat growing. To-day that is not being run as a mixed farming proposition, but, by way of a start, for wheat growing. Previously it was considered that beyond Bruce Rock wheat farming was "done"; but to-day, right alongside the fence, a long way beyond Bruce Rock and Bodalin, there are settlers. The Surveyor General's plans show areas still further north-east suitable for settlement. The rainfall at Bullfinch is only 14 points less than that of Cowell, in South Australia; though there is a question whether the Bullfinch soil is as retentive as that of

Cowell. As the Government have to pay the piper, they should call the tune; and they are entitled to say what methods of farming shall be adopted in this area. Under such conditions success can be attained. The Minister has said that the crops vary, and no doubt they do. Round about Merredin and to the eastward some of the crops look mouldy, as the settlers say; but where there has been fallowing the crops will be at all events payable. Even last year I saw at Lake Brown crop after crop which were partial failures, and standing out among them two crops that were pictures to look at. These two crops were on land that had been worked for a series of years. Fallowing is a thing we can hardly advocate too much. I hope that as time goes on the ratio of fallowing will increase. Recently I introduced to the Premier a deputation from the new wheat area in question. Even in this new district there is much fallowing. However, when a man first goes on to his holding he is not in a position to fallow, but must crop as best he can. Often he is driven to do things which his better knowledge tells him are not correct. In this district there are 35,949 acres under crop, 17,314 acres under fallow, 58,210 acres cleared, and 9,630 acres in process of clearing. As regards light lands, it is pleasing to learn from the Minister that the Wongan Hills district is turning out a success. Recently I came in contact with an agricultural authority who told me there was no reason why the light lands right through to Dowerin should not prove successful. In the Kwolyin area there is land which has averaged just a few points under 12 bushels to the acre, notwithstanding a year of drought and two years of rust, and this is inferior country to Wongan. It is gratifying to know that the Tammin sand plain country, which has been lying idle for years, a menace to the surrounding farmers, is now in use. I pointed out to the farmers there that they must get every possible acre under cultivation. Mr. Sutton said to me years ago that as the heavy forest lands came under cultivation, the light lands, at all events within reasonable distance of the railway, would also be cleared and brought into use. It has turned out as Mr. Sutton prophesied. A heavy oat suitable for these lands has also been evolved. It is appalling to see on the Surveyor General's plans, even those of my electorate, large patches unmarked, which means country unoccupied, light or saltpan country. If the

lithographs were brought up to date, it would be found that a great deal of that country is coming under the plough. The only notable exceptions are two large estates. Soon all that land, instead of loafing, as one might say, on the railways, will be contributing its quota to their traffic. It is indeed gratifying to know that something tangible has been done with regard to the agricultural college. Numbers of farmers have spoken to me in regard to having their sons educated there. Other countries are paying great attention to the technical side of agriculture. Certainly we here are not attempting to do anything like what has been done in Denmark. It may be thought that I quote Denmark too frequently. However, an officer of this House has furnished me with an article on Denmark which I shall probably use on the Education Vote, because it gives matter for serious thought. Recently I mentioned wire netting in this Chamber. Netting will be a big factor in the development of Western Australia. The effect of what I said is contained in a paragraph published by the "Daily News" on the 26th August last—

Mr. H. Griffiths, M.L.A., is in receipt of a letter from Mr. H. Gregory, M.H.R., in which the latter states he has received a memo. from the Premier's Department with a copy of a message from the Prime Minister in response to inquiries made at his suggestion to Mr. Collier, in which Mr. Bruce states:—"Your telegram of August 4 has been received, and the matter brought to the notice of the Australian Commonwealth Line of Steamers in Sydney, and the following reply has been received:—"We have already arranged to carry wire netting by the s.s. Ferndale, leaving Sydney August 8. Phosphorus being a dangerous cargo, cannot be carried on a passenger steamer, but subject to stowage and quantity being suitable will carry this in the Ferndale as requested." Mr. Gregory says he is making an effort to induce the Prime Minister to make a portion of the loan for wire netting available for Western Australia immediately, although it will undoubtedly be too late now to be of any value this season. Mr. Gregory's letter was in reply to one sent by Mr. Griffiths regarding the rabbit menace.

I got myself rather into hot water with certain people because I told them what was self-evident, that they had rabbits in their district. Land agents who were interested thought that my statement would depreciate the value of the land. However, the farmers rather complimented me on the stand I took, saying that they did not want to sell their lands. Everybody concerned

knew the rabbits were there. In using those figures, I was endeavouring to get Mr. Gregory to do something. When I stated here the action I had taken, I was told that no wire netting had ever come. Indeed, I was contradicted point-blank by the Minister for Lands. However, I have proved that I was right and that he was wrong. I listened with pleasure to the account of the progress of the agricultural industry which was given by the Minister for Agriculture. That industry is a great stand-by for Western Australia. Unless more mines are discovered, we shall have to depend solely on agriculture in 20 years' time. I hope that such will not be the case, but that we shall have the industries of mining and farming side by side. I trust the Agricultural Department will secure the best scientific advice on the problems of agriculture here, and that by the opening of the Agricultural College and by the operations of our agricultural farms, and also by paying close attention to what is being done by more up-to-date and more scientific nations, we shall get that increase of which the lands of Western Australia are capable. The results we are obtaining at present do not represent more than a fraction of what our lands are capable of producing.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [7.58]: It is gratifying to hear the account given by the Minister for Agriculture of the progress of the industry in Western Australia. Wheat growing has progressed well during the last few years, but sheep raising has not altogether kept pace with that development. Our wheat yield of last year approached 24,000,000 bushels, and the price was rather good, representing something over six millions sterling to the State. I have always regarded the assistance given by the Agricultural Department to the wheat growers as rather limited. Our agricultural lands have, generally speaking, been settled by men without knowledge of the industry, men who had to learn as they went along. In order to get the production which Western Australia needs, education in agriculture is essential. We cannot wait to educate the rising generation, but must by direct action educate the men who are on the land. The yield of wheat here is low, although last year it was the highest since 1890—12.8 bushels to the acre. The cause of that high yield was an improvement

in the methods of farming. I have said here before that as regards the wheat belt we have not yet even begun to farm, except in isolated instances. Money spent in connection with the work of experts employed in the wheat section of the Agricultural Department, enabling men with knowledge to lecture throughout the country areas and give practical demonstrations to show how wheat should be grown, will be of advantage not only to the farmers themselves, but to the State. One must recognise that agriculture is one of the great primary industries that we can develop and at the same time enrich the heritage of future generations. It is different from the mining industry or the timber industry, for the more we develop agriculture the better it will be for those who follow us. Even with the huge extent of territory that we have to-day, there are many millions of acres in Western Australia where wheat will be grown in the future. In my own electorate, practically a quarter of the wheat produced in Western Australia was grown last year. Despite the fact that it is a great wheat-growing portion of the State, the yield did not exceed a bushel to the acre for the whole of the land. The statistics made available by the Statistical Department for the Wyalcatchem sub-division, disclose that although there are 1,800,000 acres of land there, only 171,000 acres were under crop. That shows what a huge area we have to further improve and develop. One reason why we have not developed as fast as could be desired is that many farmers have too much land, whilst many are land poor. Although we have been settling our light lands for the past 19 or 20 years, it is only during the past 12 months that the Government have done anything to show what those lands will produce. When we look back over what has been done we realise that at least 70 per cent. of the country is what may be described as light land. Further, we find that railways have been running through those areas for many years. It is surprising, therefore, that past Governments have not attempted before now to demonstrate what those areas will produce. One reason why attention has not been particularly devoted to this aspect is that during the early years of land settlement, from 1911 to 1914, it was noticed that the light lands were producing crops when the forest country was not doing so satisfactorily. This was owing to the light rainfall. In consequence, the Agricultural

Bank and, I believe, the officers of the Agricultural Department, advised farmers to clear holdings in the light land country. The result was that farmers cleared the light lands, and, as we do our heavier forest country, they scratched the land. Thus it was that from 1915 to 1919, the bad methods of farming did not procure the results that were anticipated. They were wet years and in consequence of the results obtained, the Industries Assistance Board refused to make available sufficient money to enable the settlers to secure manure and farm their properties properly. The want of finance was also a big factor. However, the yields were very low. Then the Agricultural Department and the Agricultural Bank wholly condemned the light lands and refused to make advances to the settlers. It is true that there were a number of failures, and practically the whole of the failures experienced by the Agricultural Bank were confined to those who were settled on light lands. Since then we have devoted attention to the development of those areas and we have proved during the last four years that our light lands will produce payable crops. I believe I am correct in saying that the light lands during the past four years have produced bigger yields than the forest country. Notwithstanding that fact, we find that the Government departments to-day evidently consider the light lands worthless and are practically condemning them. The Agricultural Department has done something to develop the light lands, and I commend the officers for their endeavours. Experimental plots have been established throughout the wheat belt and the results are available to the various Government departments as well as to others who are interested. One particularly informative undertaking is that at Benecubbin where experiments are being carried out on what is regarded as second or third class country. It is land respecting which the Agricultural Bank will not advance a penny unless the holdings of farmers, which contain such areas, also embrace 600 acres of first class land. We know that the experiments that have been conducted there under field condition have produced an average of 23 bushels to the acre, and this year the average will be about the same. There are other places where small experimental plots are being conducted by the Agricultural Department. Notwithstanding the fact that good results have been shown, other Government departments do not seem to wake up to the

fact that our light lands have been proved. Then there is the Wongan Hills farm. Hundreds of thousands of acres of similar land are to be found and thousands of acres of the same class of country are under cultivation. I know many thousands of acres of that type of land where returns of over 20 bushels to the acre have been secured. It has to be realised that we have not merely one type of light land but several types. While we will gain a lot of information from the work that is being carried out at the Wongan Hills farm, there are many other places where different types of light lands are available for experimental purposes. Those areas should be tested as well. I believe the Minister should endeavour to multiply the number of experimental plots so as to test out all classes of light lands. My experience tells me that there are millions of acres of light land in the wheat belt that could be brought under profitable cultivation provided, of course, that good seasons continue and that the prices remain satisfactory. If those conditions should obtain, those areas should be developed rapidly in the course of a few years. Recently the department classified 1,500,000 acres in the eastern portion of my electorate. That land is in a very dry spot and we have not yet solved the problem as to how far we can safely go with our farming operations, bearing in mind the rainfall conditions. The member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) gave particulars regarding the crops in light rainfall areas. It is essential in those parts that the settlers shall farm the land properly. I understand the Minister is contemplating the establishment of small farms in this dry area in order to test the country regarding wheat production and the necessary rainfall to secure returns. If he does so, it will be a fine thing for the State and for the agricultural industry. I believe it will result in bringing under crop huge areas that are not utilised to-day. If the Government are to assist the farmers financially in those dry areas, it is essential that the officers of the Agricultural Department shall know exactly how that country is to be farmed, and only those settlers who are prepared to farm their holdings in accordance with the knowledge acquired by the department should be financed by the Government. In the original settlement of the wheat belt, sometimes crops were secured with the scratching of the land, but sometimes they were not. The methods that we adopted

in the wet areas of the wheat belt were also used in the dry portions with the result that we did not get the results that should have been obtained. That was because dry farming methods were not utilised. I believe there are only two field officers dealing with the wheat work. I understand there is the superintendent of the State farms and another field officer and those are the only two of whom I am aware.

The Minister for Agriculture: There are more.

Mr. LINDSAY: I have not heard of any others in connection with wheat.

The Minister for Agriculture: Apart from those I refer to we have about a dozen cadets coming on.

Mr. LINDSAY: But they are not available yet. I have lived in my electorate in the midst of wheat growers for many years and I do not know of any departmental officer who has come to the district for many years past in order to give us lectures and practical demonstrations.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is part of Mr. Sutton's work.

Mr. LINDSAY: In Western Australia we have many millions of pounds involved in the agricultural industry and any success gained by individual farmers will benefit the State. It is essential, therefore, to have officers capable of teaching the farmers either by way of lectures or by practical demonstration. I can illustrate my point when I say that I have been on farms where the settlers have asked me what was wrong with their work. I found that what they lacked was merely elementary knowledge. I saw a man putting in his crop and he told me how deep he was able to turn up the ground before putting in his seed. If an officer had been available who knew his work he would have stopped the man at once, as I did. His methods of farming meant all the difference between failure and success. Thus it is that expert advice made available to the farmers will be of benefit not only to the individual but to the State. The State should make use of direct action and see that these men are taught proper farming methods.

Mr. A. Wansbrongh: There are some men who cannot be taught.

Mr. LINDSAY: I have ascertained that since I have been in this House. I refer to the average man and I think he can be taught. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) dealt with the application of

science to the mining industry and referred to what was being done in America. Certainly millions of dollars have been spent in the furtherance of agriculture in the United States whereas we cannot afford to do anything of the sort. When we realise what has been done in Western Australia and what the results in America have been, despite the application of science and the expenditure of much money in encouraging wheat growing, we realise that our position is indeed satisfactory. We can also realise what there is ahead of us. In America from 1890 to 1921 the average wheat yield in four wheat-producing States was 13.8 bushels to the acre. In the spring-wheat States of North Dakota and South Dakota the average in the former State from 1890 to 1921 was 9.2 bushels per acre, and in South Dakota over the same period, 11.9 bushels per acre. Although we have not yet started farming properly in Western Australia our average is quite equal to that. I agree with the member for Coolgardie when he referred to the millions spent in connection with experimental farming; yet notwithstanding that, we have not started to farm yet. When we do, our results will be much better than have been obtained in America. Mr. Sutton is striving for a 15-bushel average. I believe we will get more than a 15-bushel average when we start to farm properly. Seeing that we get much more than the American spring wheat average, it will give hon. members some idea of the possibilities ahead of this State. In many of the older settled areas the farmers are getting down to proper methods. I have yet to learn much regarding what the soils in my district will produce.

The Minister for Agriculture: You have to leave something for the other fellow who comes afterwards.

Mr. LINDSAY: I wish to see as much as possible done in my own time. Agriculture is very different from all other primary industries, in that we can develop it to the utmost without disinheriting future generations. It is our duty to do as much as we can in our own time for our own benefit and for the benefit of those who follow us. I am not at all satisfied with the amount provided on the Estimates for the wool and sheep expert. My district, in the near future, particularly when we get the water scheme, will carry probably hundreds of thousands of sheep.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Then you will not grow any wheat.

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes, we shall. Being new to the job of handling sheep, we shall require expert advice, but there is only one sheep and wool expert for the whole of Western Australia, and how would it be possible for him to advise everyone? Again, there are many millions of pounds invested in the sheep and wool industry and in future there will be still more, and yet we find that the wool and sheep expert is receiving about two-thirds of the salary of the poultry expert or some other expert. One wonders what the salary is based on. The same applies to the wheat experts, of whom there are two, apart from the cadets who, I understand, belong to the fruit branch. Some thousands of pounds are provided for fruit experts, but I cannot find anything for other experts apart from what I have mentioned. The very fact that the men engaged in agriculture have been taken from other avocations shows the need for providing experts to disseminate information amongst them. It is recognised that, in order to be successful, we must bring science to our aid. We must know what to do and we must know why we do it. The lectures formerly given should be revived. We cannot learn too much about the industry which is doing more than anything else to bring prosperity to the State. I am only sorry that the Estimates do not provide larger sums for the education of the men who at present are engaged in the industry.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [S.18]: I am sure that every member is watching with a very jealous eye to see that no increases are given that are not thoroughly warranted. We are told by the Minister that there is an increase of £17,717 for the department, but when we deduct the amount for the College of Agriculture, which is a totally new departure, and compare the remainder with the vote of last year, we find that the increase is only £5,602. I think every member is satisfied that this is the one department with which we must not be niggardly. It is the most important department in the service of the State. It is really the key department of the various Government activities. We have the Lands Department to do the foundation work of placing men on the land; then come the Public Works and Railway Departments who provide the facilities for housing the producers on the land they have taken up and

transporting their produce to market, but it is due entirely to the wise administration of the Department of Agriculture and the advice disseminated by the experts whether the producers are to be successful. The future of the soldier settlement scheme, the group settlement scheme, and other forms of land settlement by the department is in a great measure dependent upon the advice given by the department. The future financial prosperity of the State is largely dependent upon the wise administration of this department. Therefore it is most necessary that the work should be carried out in a way that will be truly beneficial to the State, and this can be done only by having the best experts obtainable to advise the producers. Think of the ramifications of the department! They have to control the cattle industry, the sheep industry, the pig industry, wheat growing and the growing of all other cereals, the fruit and dairying industries, and even wine growing—

Mr. Teesdale: Do not forget the cotton.

Mr. ANGELO: That is one to be added to the list. With the exception of timber and mining, the whole of the primary production of the State is under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture. For that reason I am glad that the members for Toodyay and Avon have stressed the necessity for having the very best experts procurable, even though it be necessary to double the vote of the department. When we realise what excellent results are following the dissemination of expert advice in other countries, surely it is not too much to ask that similar work be undertaken here. When we review the salaries paid to the various experts, it is a matter for wonder. If they are really such clever men—and I do not say they are not—they could make four or five times as much if they started business on their own. If they are such good men, they should certainly be paid more than they are receiving to-day, and if they are not good men, their services should be dispensed with and men who are experts should be engaged.

The Minister for Agriculture: Does it ever occur to you that, if they were on their own, they might prove to be very bad business men?

Mr. ANGELO: There may be an exception that proves the rule, but none of the salaries is anything like in keeping with what a good farmer or a good wool or fruit-grower would make by working on his own account. We are very fortunate in having

as head of the department a Minister who himself is a farmer. He has proved a very approachable man. When the producers have wanted any measure, he has listened to their request, and has assisted them to attain their desires. We had an illustration of that last night when the Minister piloted through the House the very important Bill to deal with the destruction of vermin. The appointment of a Director of Agriculture, made some four years ago, was a wise step because it ensures a continuity of policy for agriculture in this State. Previously we had Ministers entering and leaving office, and we did not have the continuity of policy that we enjoy to-day. From what I have read in the newspapers, I judge that the experts are giving the Minister and the Director that loyal support which is essential to success. They seem to be imbued with energy and enthusiasm. I welcome the establishment of the Agricultural College. Because of the lack of such an institution in the past, I fear this State has lost a lot of its best brains. I know quite a number of lads who have made good in our secondary schools, and have taken their degrees in engineering at the University, and then left the State because we could not absorb them. If we could persuade that type of lad, who hitherto has been lost to the State, to take an active interest in agriculture, instead of entering other professions which in this State are over-manned, we should be doing good, because we could absorb all the students that pass through the Agricultural College. I was glad the other day to visit the Merredin State Farm in company with the Minister, and to see the hundreds of farmers who attended the field day there and took advantage of the lectures ably delivered by the director and his staff.

Mr. Griffiths: They took a very intelligent interest in everything.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes, but could not further use be made of the State farms? The men to whom the director and his staff were talking are already settled on the land. Certainly the advice they received must assist them to get more out of the land than they have got in the past, but would it not be possible to make the State farms even more serviceable and beneficial? I suggest that on the occasion of field days, or the day after, the public schools of the metropolitan area should be invited to send parties of lads, say to the number of 200 or 300 altogether, for a visit to one of these farms. We

should choose lads who are just beginning to think of their future and the line of life on which they will strike out. Give them a day or two on a State farm; get them interested in farming, and let them see what the life really means. If they could meet the men who are doing well and could see how happy and prosperous they are, many of them able to drive motor cars, we might induce some of them to make up their minds that their future is on the land.

Mr. Griffiths: It should not cost much, either.

Mr. ANGELO: No. They could take their rugs and tin cups, plates, knives and forks and have a jolly good picnic, and they would acquire some knowledge of farming and probably a taste for the life.

Mr. Griffiths: It is a good suggestion.

Mr. ANGELO: I was going to suggest to the Minister how agriculture could be successfully and profitably extended to the North-West, but we have heard to-day that the member for Pilbara (Mr. Lamond) intends to move for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the best methods of developing the North. I hope the motion will be carried and that the Royal Commission will be appointed. Consequently I shall reserve any remarks as to methods for developing the North-West until the commission is appointed. I find on the Estimates an item for a tropical adviser. The tropical adviser has been very much absent for many months past. A sum of over £300 was voted last year towards his salary. That has been saved. I suggest to the Minister that he might expend that money on getting the loan of the services of an engineer from India or somewhere else where they are accustomed to irrigation works, especially in dry rivers such as we have in the North. If we could obtain the services of such a man promptly, he could report whether the dry rivers of the North would lend themselves to damming and water conservation, and his evidence would be of material assistance to the proposed commission. Last night the Minister successfully piloted the Vermin Bill through the House, but every member who represents the producers will agree with me that there is a menace that is just as serious as the dingo, and that is the rabbit. The rabbit is becoming more numerous every day. Recently I was driving through the Upper Swan and ran over a rabbit on the road. That shows how close to the coastal areas the pest has reached. Going through

the wheat areas, where at one time the rabbit could be seen only occasionally, they are now to be found in their hundreds, and members from those parts will bear me out when I say that the rabbits are levying a heavy toll on the crops this year. Regarding wire netting, I hope the Minister is giving the question of supplying it to farmers, very serious consideration. It should be supplied on long terms. Whether we are going to continue to import it or make it locally is a matter that we can discuss later, but the fact remains that tens of thousands of tons of it are needed urgently for the producers. I hope that when members are dealing with the vote this year and in future years, they will recognise the necessity for giving the Minister and his officers every encouragement, because the future prosperity of the State depends in a great measure upon the successful administration of the Agricultural Department.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [8.35]: I am glad to know that the Government realise that the backbone of the State is agriculture.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It is about time that you realised also that the Government now in power have done more for it than any other Government in the past.

Mr. BROWN: Land in the farming districts is increasing in value by leaps and bounds. In the Great Southern areas we find now that the soil is exhausted, and that it will not produce the amount of grain that it yielded in past years when it was new. The holders of the land, however, are adopting other methods and are making a good deal of money by engaging in mixed farming. Sheep now are to a great extent taking the place of wheat growing. I regret very much that dairying has not got the hold that we expected of it, but the reason is apparent. Owners of areas now find that it is possible to make an easier living by running sheep and consequently they will not go in for the heavier work which would keep them occupied almost throughout the 24 hours. In the older settled districts there is no more land available that can be thrown open for settlement, except what may be regarded as second and third class. Respecting this class of country it is only the holders of adjoining properties that will take it up, because they are in a position to utilise and improve the inferior land. A newcomer cannot do that. It will also be necessary for the Government to go further afield in throwing open land

for settlement. The Government will be obliged to extend the Eastern wheat belt, and they will also have to provide facilities in the way of railway transport and water supply. I am glad to know that the Government are realising the need for this. It would be money well spent if they could raise capital for the extension of the eastern wheat belt. This work should be done rapidly because returns will come quickly.

Hon. G. Taylor: Over-borrowing is a good way to settle any person.

Mr. BROWN: Yes, if the money is spent in a direction that is bound to prove reproductive. Nothing can be more reproductive than putting money into good agricultural land, and I think we still have large areas of it. Let me give an idea of the manner in which property has enhanced in value. The unimproved value of land at Bruce Rock a few years back was £279,020. To-day the figures are £818,433.

The CHAIRMAN: I think this discussion had better take place when the Lands Estimates are under consideration.

Mr. BROWN: We are discussing agriculture, and my remarks apply to agriculture generally. I am pleased to notice that the Government have appointed a veterinary pathologist. I do not know whether he has yet discovered anything that is likely to prove of value to Western Australia. In any case I sincerely hope that the Government will not stint his laboratory in regard to appliances. The laboratory of such an officer should be up to date. He should have every opportunity to discover the cause of Beverley disease, which is destroying so many sheep along the Great Southern district, and which is now spreading to the northern parts of the State. I also notice that there is a botanist in the department. These two officers should work in conjunction, because in my opinion the cause of the disease is some herbage that is growing on cleared lands as the result of the introduction of superphosphate. It is clear that the officers that are investigating the disease have been baffled up to date, and that is all the more reason why they should work in conjunction. If they should be fortunate enough to discover the cause of the disease and then be able to prevent its spread, an immense benefit will be conferred on the sheep growers. The economic loss resulting from the death of so many sheep from the disease can well be imagined. I notice, too, that there is a

dairy and pig expert. I do not remember ever having run across either, but I regard it as important that we should have such experts, because if the State is to thrive we must depend to a great extent on dairying and pig-raising. A few days ago I asked a question about the importation of dairy cows. My reason was that in my electorate no less than 100 cows could have been purchased with advantage to the department. One man who had cows for sale said he would guarantee to make eight to ten pounds of butter per week from each cow. He could have disposed of these to the Government, but he sent them to Perth and sold them for anything they would fetch. The prices they realised were from £6 to £10. There is no reason why the expert of the department should not have visited this district to see whether cows were available for sale. In the district I represent people have so much land and are running so many sheep that they are now disposing of the cattle. In fact they are too prosperous just there and that is why they have no desire to continue to keep cows. I had the opportunity the other day of visiting Rockingham, and while there I ran into a mob of cattle that had just been landed from a steamer. When I saw them first I thought that I was looking at a mob of steers, but I soon discovered that they were all cows or heifers. I admit that they had just been taken off the steamer, and consequently were in poor condition. About 90 per cent. were short-horns and the others were of no particular breed at all. All were dry heifers, and there was no likelihood of their being in profit for 12 months. If the dairy expert had gone into my district he would have been able to get cattle that were in profit and all could have been sent to the group settlements straight away. I do not suppose he would have been able to get all the cattle that he wanted, but at any rate the cattle there were acclimatised, and could have been sent direct to the settlers. The cows that have been imported will require to become acclimatised, and when they are sent to the southern districts will probably get rickets by eating the zamia palm, which grows there. Probably, therefore, losses will be sustained. The member for Gascoyne has told us that he would like to see students sent to experimental farms to learn a little about farming. I should like to see something done in respect of our

girls who are just leaving school. How many of them can milk a cow? I should like to see those girls taken to a large dairy and taught to milk. I know a farmer who got married, only to find that his wife could not milk a cow. Most of our young women think it degrading to milk a cow. I do not agree with that. If I were a young man again and looking for a wife I should certainly take one that could milk a cow. I remember being at a ball at which a lot of city people were present. I commented on the attractive appearance of a certain young lady, but the city lady to whom I made the remark said, "Why, she comes from the country, and you can smell the cowdung on her." I do not like that sort of thing. If Western Australia is to thrive, it is necessary that our young women should be able to milk a cow. There is always a demand for butter, and if the South-West is really to prosper it will only be through the settlers there having wives who can help them and do their share of the work by milking the cow. I want to praise the sheep and wool expert. He is doing a vast amount of good to the industry in Western Australia. As the result of his advice, farmers in my district are growing some of the finest sheep to be found in Australia. He is only too eager to give lectures and point out to the farmers how important it is to grow a good sheep rather than a bad one. I am pleased to note that the Government have established an agricultural college. Such a college must inevitably result in very great benefit to the State. To-day we have varieties of wheat that a few years ago were quite unknown. No doubt the work of hybridising wheats with a view to producing special varieties for special localities will be considerably advanced in the agricultural college. Moreover, the establishment of such a college will mean a good advertisement to the State. I hope that whenever the Government are met with a request for improved facilities for some small body of settlers, they will do their best to grant it. I have no doubt the agricultural industry is going to thrive in Western Australia. We have thousands of our own young men only too eager to take up land if the land could be made available for them. We know we have that land, for to-day we can go as far as the Esperance district and still find excellent wheat land. Having regard to the condition of agriculture generally, and

particularly to wheat growing, I make no doubt that before long Western Australia will be producing a 50 million bushel wheat harvest.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [S.51]: The present session will be counted remarkable for the introduction of a measure one of whose objects is the control of the marketing of fruit. There is great need for this measure, for at present we have an impending glut of stone fruit. Within the next four or five weeks we shall begin to harvest the apricot crop. Unfortunately, no progress has been made with the organising of markets, and so I am afraid that we shall have this year a repetition of the disastrous glut of 1920-21.

Mr. Davy: What would they do with stone fruit if they had those powers?

Mr. SAMPSON: The work of the organising committee would be to discover and open up new markets for the fruit.

The **CHAIRMAN**: I draw attention to No. 127 of the Rules of Debate, which prescribes that no member shall allude to a debate in the other House of Parliament or to any measure impending therein. The Primary Products Marketing Bill is before the Upper House now.

Mr. SAMPSON: I shall endeavour to refrain from referring to that Bill. I am merely pointing out what would be done by the advisory board for the marketing of fruit.

The **CHAIRMAN**: But the hon. member is referring to the subject matter of the Bill before another place.

Mr. SAMPSON: The committee of direction under the Act in Queensland has to see that there is a market for the fruit as it is produced. The success of their efforts has been strikingly demonstrated in respect of the pineapple crop.

Mr. Davy: Where would you get markets for apricots if there was a glut?

Mr. SAMPSON: In every town through the wheat belt. Also a committee of direction in this State could take a quantity of fresh fruit off the market and have it evaporated, dehydrated, dried or processed. Another method of relieving the market would be by the establishment of a pulping plant for apricots.

Mr. Davy: Is there any law to prevent that being done now?

Mr. SAMPSON: No, except that at present it is nobody's business to do it and con-

sequently it is not done. The result is that the production of fruit gives very poor returns.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: The pulping of tomatoes last year meant £900 to the growers.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes; unfortunately the dehydrating of fruit from other areas is scarcely practicable, since the only plant in Western Australia is at Kendenup.

Mr. Thomson: Products have been brought from Victoria to be dehydrated at Kendenup.

Mr. SAMPSON: Only by way of experiment. In Victoria a good advance has been made in popularising the "Eat more fruit" slogan. The Commissioner of Railways has given special attention to that campaign with a view to increasing the traffic on the railways. The greatest success has been in regard to dried fruits. "Eat more currants," "Eat more citrus," and "Eat more dried fruits," are well-known slogans in Victoria, and the Government practise the gospel preached by the Commissioner. Wherever one goes on the railway system of Victoria, and wherever there are refreshment rooms, it is possible to buy raisin bread and raisins, and there is available a supply of choice fruit. In regard to the export of oranges, growers have faced great difficulties. I do not claim to understand the diseases that affect fruit that is packed. It is a fact that oranges that were packed for shipment overseas the year before last were attacked in many cases by some fungus diseases. It would be a good thing if a fruit pathologist were appointed; or, if there is insufficient work for a whole-time fruit pathologist, which I doubt, possibly an arrangement might be made whereby the professors or students of the University might give the necessary assistance. I am advised that in Queensland the committee of direction has had assistance from the Brisbane University in this matter. Unquestionably there is need for research work in respect to the diseases with which both fruit-trees and fruit are affected. With respect to the refrigeration system on steamers, something too ought to be done. At present, as I understand the position, it is impossible for those who send fruit away to know that a uniform temperature has been maintained in the refrigerator during the course of the voyage. When fruit is held in a temperature that varies to a considerable degree, the fruit cells, instead of being held in suspense, break down and great loss follows. I know of growers in the hills district, who, in the

season before last suffered not only loss of fruit, but were faced with a heavy bill to pay. For this to happen after a year's work is very discouraging. The work of the committee of direction includes that of organising new markets. Mr. Ranger, the manager of the committee in Brisbane, gives this matter special attention. I believe Western Australia has been or will shortly be exploited in regard to the supply of bananas and pineapples. I do not know that we want any more fruit here, but we must applaud the efforts of the committee that is doing its work so well, and is endeavouring to find a market for the rapidly increasing production of Queensland orchards. On a previous occasion I referred to the area under orchards in Western Australia. The fact that this area is decreasing is an unanswerable argument in favour of the industry being organised. In 1915-16, according to the Commonwealth Year Book, the area under orchards in Western Australia was 21,805 acres. The latest figures are contained in the Year Book for 1924, and they refer to the period 1922-23, when the area under fruit trees was 19,405 acres. That is 2,400 acres less than the area in 1915-16. I challenge anyone in the House to produce figures in connection with any industry, primary or secondary, where there has been such a retrograde movement.

[Mr. Pantton took the Chair.]

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Most of that land is used for grazing.

Mr. SAMPSON: The area has been put to a more profitable use.

Mr. Thomson: Why do you suggest that fruitgrowing is unpopular?

Mr. SAMPSON: That is due to the lack of organisation. Although the fruit is produced, no market exists for it. It is no one's business to see that a market is provided.

Mr. Davy: Whose business is it to see that the wool or the wheat finds a market?

Mr. SAMPSON: There is a world-wide demand for wool, which is not a quickly perishable product, as fruit is.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Government had to assist in the early stages of wool and wheat marketing.

Mr. Davy: Never in the history of this State.

Mr. SAMPSON: If we read the history of agriculture in Australia we find that bounties have been given in practically every

avenue, but I have yet to learn that we have had any bounty for the fruit industry in Western Australia.

Mr. Davy: Has there been a bounty on wool in this State?

Mr. SAMPSON: There has been no bounty for our fruit. We have as yet been unable to take part in the export of processed fruit. The Federal bounty was not received by us in this State. I have here figures relating to the area of orchards which are commercially conducted. The Year Book shows that the area of such orchards for 1922-23 was 14,722 acres. Whichever figure we take we find a heavy decrease. The last figures I have quoted show the position to be worse than in the case of the first figures. Let us consider cases where there have been heavy increases in production. In the matter of raisins, the production increased from 2,163 cwt. in 1918-19 to 6,748 cwt. in 1922-23. Although the position is reversed there, there having been an increase of more than 300 per cent. within the period, the growers of raisins nevertheless find themselves in an almost hopeless position. The member for Guildford, who represents portion of the dried fruit district, would be able to tell members of some of the disabilities under which these growers suffer. It is commonly reported that many of the returned men are considering the question of walking off their holdings.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The matter will be dealt with on the Lands Estimates.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is no control in regard to dried fruit. In this matter our position is peculiar. In the neighbouring States of Victoria and South Australia there are Acts which control the industry. Our products, so we are informed, invade these markets, and possibly are doing something to break down the control which the growers in those States have established. That is much to be regretted. What we require is control whereby we shall be able to take our stand in the same way that the growers of those States are able to do. The increase with regard to currants is even more striking than in the case of raisins. In 1918-19 the quantity of currants produced weighed 2,157 cwt., but in 1922-23 the quantity had increased to 9,250 cwt. All those who are acquainted with the difficulties faced by dried fruit producers will admit that no set of people is worse off than these are. There are later figures in respect to secondary industries, and for the purpose of com-

parison I will quote them. The number of factory employees during the five years increased by over 47 per cent. In 1918-19 the number was 12,917, and 1922-23 it was 19,097. The value of plant and machinery increased from £2,742,386 to £4,218,550. If an Act to control produce were brought in, it would mean that it would give some assistance to our egg producers as well. There is a fair number of primary producers engaged in egg production, and if something were done to assist them it would be appreciated.

Mr. Davy: To give them a chance of forcing the price up against the consumer?

Mr. SAMPSON: To give them a chance of seeing that the market is supplied, and that provision is made for regularity of supplies. At present there is usually either a glut or a famine in connection with the supply of eggs.

Hon. G. Taylor: Especially at election time.

Mr. SAMPSON: The bringing in of a measure of control will stabilise the market. I regret that the Estimates do not provide anything for the protection of those who lose cattle because of tuberculosis. Milch cows and other cattle found to be suffering from tuberculosis are ordered by the inspector to be destroyed, and quite properly so. The reason for their destruction is, of course, that the public may be protected. Such being the case, I submit it is only right that the Consolidated Revenue should provide funds whereby the dairyman may be compensated for the loss of his cattle. I believe it to be a scientific fact that a large percentage of all living animals are at one time or other of their lives affected by the ravages of tuberculosis to a greater or less degree. When, as sometimes happens, the effect of tuberculosis in a dairy herd becomes serious and the inspector orders the herd, or portion of it, to be destroyed, the dairyman has to stand the loss. If a fund were provided out of which any loss or expense suffered by the dairyman in this way would be made good, then the dairyman would more readily convey information of sickness in his cattle to the inspectors. At all events, the present method means that the dairyman has to face a very difficult position. His work is by no means easy, and if, when he has built up his herd, he finds himself the victim of a tubercular outbreak among his cattle, his lot is indeed sad. I was one of a deputation which some time ago waited on the Minister in this con-

nection, and I hope that although provision has not yet been made, perhaps something may be done at a later stage to assist the producers. I was glad to note the Minister's remarks regarding the equipment, management and general control and business of the South-West Dairy Products Co., Ltd., formerly known as the Bunbury Butter Factory. The company have made a wonderful advance, showing how a good manager can not only effect economies but secure substantial profits. I look forward to receiving the annual report of the Agricultural Department and regret that it did not reach members prior to the discussion of this vote.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [9.19]: First I wish to congratulate the Minister for Agriculture on the increased funds provided for his department on these Estimates. Having regard to the importance of the part agriculture plays in the finances and general well-being of Western Australia, I consider that the Agricultural Department in the past has been starved. I also congratulate the department on the splendid exhibit of cereals shown at Katanning under the able direction and management of Mr. Odell, one of the departmental officers. During the show at Katanning numerous farmers viewed the exhibit and gathered useful information. I believe the department were able to sell considerable quantities of seed wheat in the district as a result. An increase in the staff of the Agricultural Department is long overdue. I am glad to know that the Government intend to establish experimental farms in the dry areas. That course should have been followed in the past. Probably against the wishes of the Agricultural Department, many settlers ventured into dry areas and, more by good luck than by good management, and certainly not thanks to Government assistance, proved them to be admirably suited for farming. On the other hand, unfortunately, there are districts against which the Lands Department advised settlers, where farming has proved an absolute failure. For that reason I am the more pleased that the Minister intends to establish experimental farms in the dry areas. In my opinion more use should be made by the Agricultural Department of what are termed farmers' field trials. It should be made more generally known that in this connection excellent work is being done. The field trials should be more largely availed of than they have been in the past. No

doubt the department are alive to the position. Some members on the Government side of the Chamber, members who unfortunately are not now present, have said that the farmers have been spoonfed by the Government and that the Railway Department is in many respects running in their interests and carries numerous commodities at a loss for the benefit to the farmers.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Surely you do not take those statements seriously?

Mr. THOMSON: Unfortunately, those statements are made, and it is only on an occasion like this that one is able to draw public attention to their incorrectness. In the city considerable ignorance exists with regard to the farming community. Metropolitan residents get into a set groove and never see the country. Consequently they do not know the difficulties and hardships of early pioneers. It is easy to repeat the parrot cry that the farmer is spoonfed. However, it is just as well that metropolitan residents should realise, from figures prepared by the Government Statist, the importance of the part agriculture plays in wealth production in Western Australia. According to the latest figures available, those up to 30th June, 1923, the total of the wealth produced in Western Australia during the preceding 12 months was £24,689,259; and of that amount agriculture represented £7,537,964, pastoral £6,241,422, and dairy, poultry and bee farming £1,241,422. Thus the primary industries represented an aggregate of some 15 millions sterling. The total of the manufactures of Western Australia for the same 12 months was £4,720,636. Those manufactures included bricks, timber which was sawn or hewn, wheat which was ground, beer, stout, spirits, aerated waters, cigarettes, boots, electric light, and electric power. The wheat which was ground produced 107,990 tons of flour, which, calculated on to-day's export value of £13 10s. per ton, represents an additional £1,457,860. Out of a total wealth production of 24 millions sterling, the primary industries thus yielded approximately 16 millions sterling, showing their importance to Western Australia. According to the latest report of the Commissioner of Taxation, pastoral districts and country towns pay by way of land tax 55.8 per cent. of the total amount collected. Further, pastoral and agricultural holdings out of £391,492 collected last year, contributed between them £175,901. I know that figures are somewhat wearying and that occasionally

they do not convey much to the average person; but it is essential to bring home to the people of Western Australia the important fact that it is our primary industries which carry the burden of taxation and carry the population of this State. The members for Toodyay and Gaseoyne and also I believe the member for Pingelly, dealt with the value of wool production. Turning to these Estimates, one finds that out of the total expenditure provided for agriculture, £74,999, the magnificent sum of £408 is set down for a sheep and wool inspector. That seems to be out of all proportion to the value of the wool industry. This particular officer, Mr. McCallum, is keen and zealous in his work. His services have been eagerly sought by settlers in my electorate and elsewhere. His lectures and practical demonstrations have been attended by large numbers of farmers with great advantage to themselves. It seems to me that this officer should have received a little more consideration. The fact that he is not provided with a motor car to enable him to travel over the vast expanse of country he has to cover, seems to me to be unwise economy.

The Minister for Works: Is he anxious to have one? He had an accident some time ago.

Mr. THOMSON: But he was not responsible for that. I have not discussed this matter with Mr. McCallum, but in view of the fact that we provide motor transport for officers whose positions are not so valuable to the State, the Minister might consider the advisability of placing a car at Mr. McCallum's disposal.

The Minister for Agriculture: Probably he does not want it.

Mr. THOMSON: At any rate I hope the Minister will inquire into that phase. I am sure that too much time is wasted by Mr. McCallum in travelling by train, and the provision of a motor car would be beneficial to the officer and to the State. In many directions I have heard the opinion expressed that he has not received a fair deal from the department.

Hon. G. Taylor: Mr. McCallum is a good man, who knows his business. I have not heard of any such complaints from him.

Mr. THOMSON: I compliment the Minister upon sending Mr. McCallum to the Eastern States to attend the Sydney sheep sales. I know it was at the request of many people interested in sheep raising that that course

was followed. Unfortunately the previous Government would not agree to this request, and I am glad that the present Minister did so. It is beneficial to the State to have the officers sent to other parts of the Commonwealth to ascertain what is being done there.

Mr. Teesdale: Mr. McCallum did good work in Sydney. I happened to be there at the time, and I know what he did.

Mr. THOMSON: I commend to the Minister the necessity for providing more assistance for the sheep and wool inspector. I notice that dairy and pig expert receives £528 a year. We recognise that that officer too, is playing an important part in the development of the State. His advice is sound and beneficial. At the same time the benefit that the farmers derive from the knowledge and advice Mr. McCallum is able to impart to them is also a valuable means of increasing the wealth of the State.

Mr. Teesdale: Could you spare him for a trip up north sometimes?

Mr. THOMSON: I notice on the Estimates an item indicating a decrease of £216 in the vote for the fruit advisory board. I hope that does not mean that the Minister intends to cut the board out, because, from reports submitted to me, I understand they have done excellent work.

The Minister for Agriculture: Has the board submitted reports to you?

Mr. THOMSON: No.

The Minister for Agriculture: I have never received any report from them, and I do not know what the board has been doing.

Mr. THOMSON: I understand that the fruit advisory board has proved very beneficial to the State, and I believe we should be represented in the Eastern States. The expenditure of the small amount involved is justified. Of course if the board has not been submitting reports to the department there is something wrong. I hope the Minister will inquire as to why reports have not been submitted.

The Minister for Agriculture: The members of the fruit advisory board were not my officers. They merely met and discussed their problems, and that was the end of it.

Mr. THOMSON: I know the board was not under the control of the Minister, but as the Government have been contributing funds for the board, information should have been received regarding the work accomplished. Reverting to the pig and dairy expert, I presume he is the officer who pur-

chased cattle in the Eastern States. I can assure the Minister that there is a considerable amount of dissatisfaction regarding that question.

The Minister for Agriculture: There always is.

Mr. THOMSON: The dissatisfaction is genuine. In my electorate and in other parts people have dairy stock in full profit and had intimated to the department that their stock was suitable for group settlement purposes. They have only just received an acknowledgment of their communications, and that was all. I contend that people who have bred up stock with a view to establishing herds suitable for group settlement purposes, should be encouraged by the purchase of their stock.

Hon. G. Taylor: Who says they are suitable?

Mr. THOMSON: The people I refer to, and when they say they are suitable I will back their opinions against that of the dairy expert.

Mr. Teesdale: That is pretty rough on the dairy expert.

Mr. THOMSON: But the dairy expert has never examined the cattle; he simply said that he did not want them. He prefers to go East and have a trip. I do not cast any reflection upon this officer, but our money should not be sent to the Eastern States in such circumstances. The group settlements were established for, among other purposes, the development of the South-West and the provision of sufficient dairy products to prevent the annual outflow of money to the Eastern States.

Mr. Teesdale: You will admit that the officer purchased cheap cows?

Mr. THOMSON: It is a question whether they are cheap.

Mr. Teesdale: But they are all pedigreed cattle. I tried to push my barrow for the North but I was blotted out completely by the price.

Mr. THOMSON: The great bulk of the cattle imported are not in full profit. They are dry and a fair proportion are heifers. The great bulk of the cattle that could have been purchased locally are in full profit and could have been sent direct to the groups enabling a return to be secured immediately. The cattle from the East cost £11 17s. 7d. to land at Fremantle, whereas the cattle purchased locally cost £12 7s. 2d. per head. In view of the fact that the local cows were in full profit, although there is

an apparent saving of about 7s. or 8s. per head on the purchases made, there is in reality a distinct loss. I heard that one reason why the expert turned down the local stock was that in his opinion they were not suitable for the South-West, as they were not acclimatised.

Hon. G. Taylor: Had the expert seen the cattle?

Mr. THOMSON: No.

Hon. G. Taylor: Then he must have gone on their pedigrees.

Mr. THOMSON: The men who bred the stock, purchased pedigreed animals and built up dairy herds as an industry, intending to sell the progeny to the group settlers for dairying purposes. We have been told that we should foster that industry in order to keep in Western Australia the money that goes annually to the Eastern States. Yet in the purchase of the cattle that principle is departed from!

Hon. G. Taylor: There must be some reason for it.

Mr. THOMSON: The reason was that in the opinion of the departmental officer it was better to bring in cattle from the Eastern States.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: There were too many duds bought.

Mr. THOMSON: That is a reflection upon those whom the officer chose to purchase the cattle. We have no guarantee that we may not have as many duds from the Eastern States as were purchased locally.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Many of those purchased locally were absolutely useless.

Mr. THOMSON: That is the fault of the departmental officers responsible for their purchase. I wish to show how the Agricultural Bank might be utilised as a training ground for many of our young men who, after passing through the Agricultural College, might enter various departments, acquire practical knowledge and ultimately be able to fill positions as bank inspectors. In saying this, I do not cast any reflection upon the gentlemen who are now inspectors for the Agricultural Bank. They have played an important part in the opening up and development of the State. They play a very important part in dealing with the finances of the bank. When the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) was Minister for Lands, he inaugurated a conference of inspectors in the city at which lectures were delivered by experts of

the Department of Agriculture. I commend that idea to the Government. The officials in the head office were able to appreciate the calibre of the men administering affairs in the country, and the experts of the department were able to give them useful knowledge to pass on to the farmers. Last year a select committee discussed the question of metropolitan markets. I moved an amendment to the motion and it was carried, urging the Government to establish markets in the metropolitan area.

[*Mr. Lutey took the Chair.*]

The CHAIRMAN: There is no item on the Estimates for metropolitan markets. There is a measure dealing with marketing before another place and the hon. member is not in order in referring to marketing.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not wish to deal with the Primary Products Marketing Bill. I merely wish to refer to a motion carried last session.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no item on the Estimates for markets.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister should have provided a sum for the establishment of markets. It should be part and parcel of the Government policy, while giving assistance through the Agricultural Bank and affording expert advice through the Department of Agriculture, to provide suitable marketing facilities for settlers, so that they might be able to get into touch with the consumer and as far as possible cut out the middleman. I hope the Government will bring down a measure to provide for metropolitan markets. Land at West Perth was purchased and reserved for the purpose during the time the member for Guildford was in office, and it is time something was done.

The CHAIRMAN: I again point out to the hon. member that there is no item on these estimates for markets. The hon. member might have an opportunity later on.

Mr. THOMSON: I regret if I have transgressed the rules of debate. The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that the potato crop was maturing and that it was essential to find a market. He viewed the outlook with concern, and so do I. I hope that the unfortunate shipping trouble will soon be overcome and that we shall be able to get our products to the Eastern States and particularly to Sydney. Failing that, the department should get into touch with the

Minister for Railways and the Commonwealth railway authorities and ascertain whether it would be possible to get our potatoes to the Eastern States by rail.

The Minister for Works: There is no interference with the coastal shipping.

Mr. THOMSON: That is why the "Karoola" is held up in Fremantle.

Mr. Sleeman: There is no reason why she should be held up. The men are there waiting to work.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not enter into the merits of the shipping dispute.

Mr. THOMSON: I have no desire to do that.

The Minister for Works: The coastal boats are running.

Mr. THOMSON: One coastal boat is not running.

The Minister for Works: And no wonder either.

Mr. THOMSON: We know that, in consequence of the Navigation Act, we cannot send our products to the East by overseas steamers that might call, although they are present are passing our port. However, we do not wish to raise any controversy. I merely wish to impress upon the Minister the need for seeing that the potatoes are sent to the markets in the East so that we may get a little of our wealth back from the Eastern States.

Mr. George: Other products are held up too.

Mr. THOMSON: I am merely referring to potatoes which are a perishable product. I do not wish to touch upon timber and other things. The matter is of sufficient importance to warrant an arrangement being made for special trucks or a special train to take the potatoes to the Eastern States.

Mr. Sleeman: Special trains are not necessary. The potatoes can be sent by boat.

Mr. THOMSON: No one knows better than does the hon. member that that statement is not correct.

The Minister for Works: I challenge you to say that the coastal steamships are not running.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am not going to permit that matter to be discussed.

The Minister for Works: Then why does he make that statement?

The CHAIRMAN: It is out of order for the hon. member to enter upon reasons why produce cannot be got to the Eastern States.

Mr. THOMSON: It is the member for Fremantle who is entering upon reasons. I want it made clear that we are producing large quantities of potatoes, and if we cannot get them away, there will be a glut in the market and our producers will be involved in serious loss. Special arrangements must be made with the railway authorities to assist our producers to market their potatoes in the East.

Mr. Sleeman interjected.

Mr. THOMSON: The Chairman will not permit me to reply and it is grossly unfair for the member for Fremantle to make statements to which I am not permitted to reply.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Fremantle must keep order.

Hon. G. Taylor interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: And the member for Mt. Margaret also must keep order.

Mr. THOMSON: I congratulate the Minister on the increased vote provided for the department. As Leader of the Country Party I am gratified that the Agricultural College is at last in sight. It is long overdue. We have been spending considerable sums of money on our secondary schools and university, providing facilities for young men and women to acquire higher education, and when they have passed their examinations, there has been no opening for them. It has been mortifying to have to tell our young people to go out of the State because there was no opportunity for them here. When students pass through our Agricultural College they will at least be able to find means to earn a livelihood within our own borders, because there is no State that offers better opportunities for land settlement than does Western Australia. In conclusion, I wish again to express my appreciation of the Minister and his departmental officers, and would once more impress upon the Minister my opinion that next year's Estimates should provide a little more money for the wool industry than is allocated to it this year.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet—in reply) [10.3]: The member for Toodyay and the Leader of the Country Party complained about the dearth of experts in the Department of Agriculture, but no one looking down the vote for that department, and comparing it with the votes for other departments, can consider that agriculture has much cause for complaint.

Mr. Thomson: I have not complained.

Mr. Lindsay: I complained with regard to wool and wheat.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I wish to point out to the member for Toodyay that among the expert officers of the Agricultural Department are Mr. Thomas, Mr. Rudall, Mr. Cullity, Mr. Cass Smith, who is just resigning, Mr. Baron Hay, Mr. Teakle, who is on leave, and Mr. Adams. In addition there are no fewer than 12 cadets who, in the course of a year or two, will become agricultural advisers.

Mr. Lindsay: Where are they all? We never see them except Mr. Rudall and Mr. Thomas.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They are out in the country. I know comparison is invidious, but the cadets, having technical training as well as practical training, are likely to prove more useful than some of the senior officers. The cadets are young men who will take over the service in the course of a year or two.

Mr. Thomson: Where are they now?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They are now in the office, attending the University, and attending experimental farms to get practical experience. A good deal of money is being spent in that way, and the indications are that every year the number of cadets will increase. I do not think there is any cause for complaint regarding agricultural advisers. The member for Gascoyne said something about schoolboys attending experimental farms on demonstration days. I do not think there can be any objection to that, but it is sometimes premature to conclude that because a boy is enthusiastic on a farm he will become a farmer. He may be merely enjoying the holiday. A boy goes to a farm and is well fed there and sees things, and so he says, "This is the sort of life for me." But when he gets to the practical work, there is a different tale.

Hon. G. Taylor: When you shake him out at 5 o'clock in the morning the trouble starts.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is quite possible that arrangements may be made for boys to visit the experimental farms occasionally. It will be a good thing for their education, anyhow, if for nothing else. No doubt many of them will take up farming, if they have the natural instinct for the pursuit. The member for Gascoyne spoke about the desirableness of having a fixed line of policy in the department, and

said the appointment of a director was a proper thing from that standpoint. I am inclined to agree that the Director of Agriculture would be better out in the country addressing and instructing farmers. Sometimes I think a professional man is not the man for the position of departmental head at all. The most valuable work of the Director of Agriculture is done out in the country, because there he does the work for which he is peculiarly adapted. I believe in putting technical men at the particular class of work for which they are trained.

Mr. Davy: You want the permanent head to have no particular job?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I want the permanent head to be the business head, the administrator of the department.

Hon. G. Taylor: I am open for appointment.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I suppose the day will come when the North-West will be used for agricultural purposes. That will be when the southern part of the State is fully settled, and Western Australia is wealthy enough to start schemes of irrigation. Then the development of the North-West will come all right. An irrigation scheme, however, must have a local market in order to succeed; and for a local market a big population is necessary. The member for Pingelly gave some paternal advice with regard to dairying. It reminded me of a story I heard just recently about a farmer who bought cows and came home enthusiastic with regard to dairying as against wheat growing or sheep raising. His wife asked him was he quite sure about it, and he said he was. She thereupon inquired, "Who is going to milk the cows?" The reply was, "You and the girl." As a rule the man will not milk cows. Sometimes when listening to the talk about the large importations of dairy produce, I think that if we can grow other products and so can afford to buy dairy products, it is all right.

Mr. Davy: Of course.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If I could grow 50 sheep and make a greater profit out of them than I could from dairy produce, I would grow sheep and buy dairy produce.

Mr. Davy: Let every ounce of energy be directed in the most profitable channel.

The Minister for Works: But if a man can do both?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A man cannot do both.

The Minister for Works: But the State can.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope the jeremiads of the member for Pingelly regarding the cows imported will not be fulfilled. The chief fear I have about the cows is that they may not become acclimatised. Another question is whether conditions at the group settlements, and the feed there, are sufficiently advanced and sufficient in quantity to maintain the cows. Another fear is that the group settlers themselves may injure the cows because of want of knowledge of how to milk. However, group settlement is an experiment, and as an experiment we have to take it.

Mr. Thomson: And see it through.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Undoubtedly some of the cows will be spoiled or injured, but that is not my responsibility. It is a responsibility which the State has accepted. Having accepted the system, we must expect weaknesses in the system. It is not the part of this House to attach any blame to the Government in that respect.

Hon. G. Taylor: If the cows fail as milkers, they will be all right for beef.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Regarding the wool expert, I should be sorry to think that that officer was inspiring the remarks made here regarding his salary and position.

Mr. Thomson: He has never discussed either with me.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have a great opinion of Mr. McCallum, and since I went to the department I have done my best to assist and encourage him in his activities. I know that he is a good officer and does good work. However, he is under the Public Service Commissioner, and his salary is fixed by the Public Service Commissioner, and not by the Minister. I will see that Mr. McCallum gets every opportunity to give the best service he can to the country in the particular capacity to which he has been appointed. I would not like to think that Mr. McCallum was inspiring agitations for his own benefit.

Hon. G. Taylor: I have spoken with him repeatedly, and he has never mentioned that matter to me.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I regard Mr. McCallum as an enthusiastic officer who is doing excellent work, but at

present his salary is not within my functions. As regards furnishing him with a motor car, the Government cannot buy cars for every officer to travel around the country. I will admit that a motor car might be an advantage to this officer. The Minister controlling the vote for motor cars cannot, however, allow the vote to be exceeded without special reason. Mr. McCallum has got round the country very well. All the experts want motor cars.

Hon. G. Taylor: When the expert lands in a district the farmers convey him from one place to another.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Moreover, the experts have the use of the train service. I do not see that the Government should provide motor cars in addition to railway transport.

Mr. Thomson: The Government can get more service by providing the officer with a motor car.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, if the Treasury will agree. As regards the Fruit Advisory Board, the history of that body is that Mr. H. K. Maley appointed it, and placed an amount on the Estimates in order to assist its activities, but only on the understanding, as well as my memory serves me, that the Commonwealth Government should refund the amount advanced. It was part of the Federal Advisory Board appointed by Mr. Rodgers, a former Minister for Customs, and the Federal Government proposed to pay their fees.

Mr. Sampson: The Federal Fruit Advisory Board as well?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Mr. Thomson: And this refers to our representatives on that board.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: When the State Government advanced the money it was on condition that it was to be returned by the Commonwealth. Mr. Maley promised to finance them to a certain extent until he gave them power to tax the people who elected them. The Federal Government refunded the money, but the Fruit Advisory Board asked me for the money because they had not been able to pay their secretary his salary. In those circumstances the money was made available to the board.

Mr. Sampson: Are you not still paying the expenses of the board?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I put £100 on the Estimates last year, and

I have fulfilled the promise made by Mr. Maley. In the Marketing Bill I have provided power for the people who elected the board to be taxed. This board is not under the control of the department, and there is no reason why I should finance the board any more than the wheat pool. There is another phase of the question. The board has nothing to do with the department or our officers, except one who has acted as secretary. I have found that my officer, Mr. Wickens, who has acted as secretary of the board, has been placed in the position of having to send recommendations to me from the board, instructing me what should be done. Mr. Wickens is the officer to whom I have to refer such communications for confidential information. Of course, the position was impossible, and I do not see why it should continue any longer. I thank hon. members for the kindly references they have made to the Agricultural Department, and I am sure that as the State progresses more money will be found to further our agricultural activities. When the Treasurer saw that there was an increase of £17,717 in the Estimates, he took me to task. When he realised the object of the increase, he had no hesitation in agreeing to it.

Item, Tropical Adviser, £432:

Mr. ANGELO: The Estimates for last year provided for an expenditure of £432, but only £99 was spent. The Estimates this year again provide for £432. What is the intention of the Government regarding this work?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is really no practical work to be undertaken in connection with tropical agriculture. Mr. Wise reported fully on the question and at the present time there is no work for an adviser at all. I have provided the necessary money because of the possibility of doing something during the year.

Mr. Angelo: You have no one in mind?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Item, Botanist and Plant Pathologist, £432:

Mr. SAMPSON: Does this officer give any attention to fruit matters?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I believe he does; I have not been told to the contrary.

Mr. SAMPSON: I believe there is need for research work regarding the way fruit is packed for export. I hope something will be done in that direction.

Item, Rabbit and other vermin eradication and upkeep of rabbit-proof fence, including wages, £24,622:

Mr. THOMSON: Will the Minister give the Committee some information regarding the eradication of rabbits and the upkeep of the rabbit-proof fence? It has been stated on numerous occasions that the rabbit-proof fence should be taken up, as it is of no value. What is the departmental view on that question?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have not consulted the departmental officials, but my view is that it would be a great mistake, and the removal of the rabbit-proof fence would serve no purpose whatever. On the contrary, the fence serves as a check against the inroads of rabbits and other vermin from the East.

Hon. G. Taylor: It would not pay you to take it up.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so. While I am in my present position, the fence will not be interfered with. The increase in the vote, £2,794, is due to the fact that owing to the large number of rabbits in the wheat belt the department bought £1,455 worth of poison this year. We pay 2s. a tin for the poison and we are charging the farmers only 6d. per tin!

Mr. Davy: What! You are buying for 2s. and selling the poison to the farmers for 6d.?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Mr. Thomson: I suppose that is some of the spoon-feeding we hear you talk about.

Item, Maintenance of yards and dips, including wages, £630:

Mr. THOMSON: Will the Minister explain what this item refers to?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We have dips in the North-West for the purpose of dipping cattle before they are brought south. There is also another at Midland Junction where sheep to be sold in the market and sent out as stores, are also dipped because they are sometimes infested with tick and lice.

Item, Noxious weeds, £400:

Mr. THOMSON: Last year's vote was £1,000, but the expenditure was only £49. This year the Minister provides for £400. Will the Minister give the Committee some information regarding the money spent by boards to secure the eradication of noxious weeds?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have not got that information, but instructions have been issued to the boards to notify the department regarding noxious weeds in their respective localities. If a noxious weed is found in a district and can be eradicated, the board has to deal with it; if the weed is present in the district to such an extent that it is impossible, we do not insist upon the board doing the work. For instance, the double-gee infests the Geraldton district and it would be impossible for the board to deal with it there, but should the double-gee make its appearance in another district we would insist upon its eradication there. The Bathurst burr has been found on the goldfields and we have made arrangements with the Kalgoorlie and Boulder municipal councils to eradicate it, the Government paying the cost.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is very wise, for it is a terrible pest.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Provision is also made for the eradication of the star thistle.

Item, Potato inspection, including wages, £520:

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: Does this item refer to the inspection of imported potatoes or of local potatoes?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It includes provision for the inspection of both imported and local potatoes. The inspectors' salaries are provided for in another item.

Item, Assistance to poultry industry £300:

Mr. SAMPSON: In what direction is assistance rendered to the poultry industry?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We employed an additional inspector to assist in the eradication of the stickfast flea. We purchased a considerable quantity of the mixture known as Dumore, in order to demonstrate to people what could be done with that preparation. We propose to do

the same thing this year. In the country districts where the stickfast flea made its appearance early in the year, I have made inquiries and have ascertained that the pest has not been seen so far. I am inclined to think that there is hope that the stickfast flea will disappear in the metropolitan area if we compel people to take the necessary precautions.

Item, Experimental plot, including North-West, £520:

Mr. ANGELO: Last year's vote was £1,400 and £277 was expended. Will the Minister inform the Committee as to how much of that colossal sum was spent in the North-West last year.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot say. Probably the largest proportion was spent in the South-West. If there is an opportunity to do anything in the North-West, the money will be available for that purpose.

Mr. Angelo: But £520 will not go very far.

Item, Agricultural Exhibits, Royal Show and Overseas, £250:

Mr. THOMSON: I am interested in the portion of this item devoted to overseas exhibits. I regard Savoy House, London, as our show window. It is in a prominent part of the Strand, but the amount of money being expended for exhibits is totally out of keeping with the importance of the department. To send samples of our products to London is money well spent. The New Zealand and South African show windows are very attractive, and we should endeavour to make our window as attractive as possible. Compared with the splendid show put up by Canada and Rhodesia, ours is not attractive.

Mr. Teesdale: Queensland's was the best window in the Strand when I was there.

Mr. THOMSON: As one who has inspected the windows, I maintain that more money should be devoted to these exhibits. We are doing our utmost to secure migrants, and an attractive display in London might prove the deciding factor with men of capital who are thinking of migrating. In the past we have not obtained as many people with capital as we might have done. How much of the £250 will be spent in London?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I doubt whether very much of this money

is spent in London. Most of it expended on exhibits at the Royal Show and in country districts. Occasionally, however, produce such as fruit is sent to the Agent General for display. If we undertook a big exhibition of products in London, a considerably larger vote would be required.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—College of Agriculture, £5,951—agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED FROM COUNCIL.

1, Land Act Amendment.

2, Newcastle Suburban Lot S8.

With amendments.

House adjourned at 10.38 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 5th November, 1925.

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

QUESTION—METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY.

Expenditure at Churchman's Brook.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Chief Secretary: How much has been expended to date in respect of the Churchman's Brook water scheme?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: (a) Dam, £88,205; 16in. main from dam to junction of Canning River and Churchman's Brook, £10,291; land resumption,