

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is their opinion to-day. They are coming round to the views of the Bolshies!

Hon. G. W. Miles: But you are not a Bolshy!

Hon. J. CORNELL: They are forced into that opinion. The unearned increment in connection with town lands is a great difficulty. If we tax the land, those who own it will be forced to use it as it should be used. In the circumstances, I will not support expediency in the shape of the Bill in dealing with this problem.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILL—PEARLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it disagreed with the amendment made by the Council for reasons set forth.

BILLS (2), FIRST READING.

- 1, Supply (No. 3), £1,040,000.
- 2, Western Australian Bank Act Amendment (Private).

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Amendment.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Bill with an amendment.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th November, 1922.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—MABLE CASE.

Mr. RICHARDSON asked the Premier: 1, Have the Government received a report on the investigation of the case of Thomas Mable? 2, If so, what is considered to be the amount of his losses? 3, Will the matter be given immediate attention, with a view to effecting a settlement?

The PREMIER replied: 1, 2, and 3, Yes; the matter is receiving attention, and will be finalised in a day or two.

SELECT COMMITTEE—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BOARD.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin, the time for bringing up the report of the select committee was extended till Wednesday, 6th December.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 3), £1,040,000.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The PREMIER and TREASURER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [2.34]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from Committees of Supply and Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day.
Question put and passed.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

Committee of Supply.

The House having resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. Stubbs in the Chair,

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell) [2.37]: I move—

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the service of the year ending 30th June, 1923, a sum not exceeding £1,040,000.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

Committee of Ways and Means.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell) [2.39]: I move—

That towards making good the supply granted to His Majesty on account of the service of the year ending 30th June, 1923, there be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund a sum of £712,000, from the General Loan Fund £306,000, from moneys to the credit of the Government Property Sales Fund £15,000, and from moneys to the credit of the Land Improvement Loan Fund £7,000.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [2.40]: Does not the Premier intend to give any information as to what this amount of money is to be spent on? Some explanation should be vouchsafed for the expenditure of this enormous sum.

The Minister for Mines: Have you not the Estimates in front of you?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have no information.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell) [2.41]: The hon. member has had the fullest possible information; in fact he has never had so much information in his life. Ninety per cent. of the Estimates have been passed.

Hon. P. Collier: You have given us so much information that the hon. member is suffering from mental indigestion.

The PREMIER: I am asking for authority to expend a large amount of money under the Estimates, to which hon. members have for the most part agreed.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

Bill introduced, etc.

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, Supply Bill introduced, passed through all its stages and transmitted to the Council.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1922-23.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read transmitting the Loan Estimates for the year 1922-23, and recommending appropriation.

In Committee of Supply.

The House resolved itself into Committee of Supply for the purpose of considering the Loan Estimates; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental, £81,624:

The PREMIER and COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [2.47]: When introducing Loan Bills during the last three years I have told members that we needed money for development purposes. I propose to show that money has been satisfactorily spent in that direction. We are by the consent of every section of this House embarking upon a policy of migration. It is to give effect to that policy that I am asking for this authorisation under the Loan Estimates. Hon. members may ask what has happened during the last few years. I will tell them. Last year there was an increase in the acreage under crop of 400,000 acres as compared with 1921. This year the increase should be even greater. Our wheat production can and should be doubled in three years. The development of the wet lands of the State is now in hand. Thousands of men are being placed upon the land. The development of the pastoral industry is satisfactory. In the North cotton growing has been undertaken and should become a great industry. The goldmining outlook is much brighter. We have considerably reduced our imports and increased our exports. Members naturally want to know what the money spent upon the State will do, and what the result is likely to be after the money is spent. The local demand for much that will be produced by the expenditure that is being undertaken can be overcome. The foodstuffs that are now imported can be produced locally, such as fish, meat, bacon, butter, grain, jams and preserves. The average annual imports of these things is £1,461,000 worth. Last year over £2,000,000 worth of foodstuffs were imported into the State. If we had a large population we should be a rich State. The payment for all these imports is a serious matter, and our own people should be able to buy locally all the foodstuffs they require without having to send outside the State for them.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Why do not the railways use our own jam?

The PREMIER: Why does not the hon. member use it?

Mr. MacCallum Smith: I do.

The PREMIER: He uses Scotch marmalade. It is no use crying over spilt milk; we must endeavour to prevent all this cash being sent away. It means idle lands here while similar lands are being used in Eastern Australia. Their land is no better than ours and can do no more than ours can. The census figures for 1911 to 1921 show an increase in the population of Western Australia of 50,000 persons. Our population is increasing. We have to meet not only the requirements of the present population, but make ready for an increasing number of people.

Hon. P. Collier: What proportion of that 50,000 increase is in the city and what is in the country?

The PREMIER: I am afraid too great a proportion has come into the city. I told the House the other day that the number of voters in Perth had increased by 13,000 as against 3,000 in the country. These are all consumers, for whom we shall require a considerable amount of production. We ought to blot out our imports of foodstuffs. These impose a heavy burden upon the taxpayer. It means a loss of production and of wealth from which taxation can come. It means a loss to the taxpayers themselves. We have working for Western Australia, largely in the Eastern States, a population of at least 60,000, and these people are paying taxes to the State in which they live. The advantage we ought to be deriving from other industries has been enormously decreased. I refer to our mining, manufacturing, and other industries. If we are to reap the benefit of our activities in the direction I have mentioned, we must make a determined effort to produce all the food we require. The import figures show that we have spent rather too freely. In drapery and clothing alone during the last three years we have spent nearly twice as much as we spent in any one of the three previous years. It may be said that stocks were low and had run down, but we do import far too much in that way. The average exports for the three years 1917 to 1920 amounted to £10,933,000. The average gold exports for the three years was £3,579,000, whilst all other exports totalled £7,354,000. For the two years 1921 and 1922 we exported goods to the value of £12,943,000. Our average gold export was £2,366,000, and all other exports amounted to £10,577,000, or £3,200,000 more than the average for the three previous years. The tale so far as imports is concerned is not such pleasant reading. The average for the three years 1917 to 1920 was £9,347,000. This means that the average exports for those three years exceeded the imports by £1,586,000 per annum. For the two years ended the 30th June, 1921 and 1922, the average imports were £13,438,000. The average exports were less than the imports by £495,000 per annum. That is a very serious matter. The increase in exports has been splendid, but the imports have grown a great deal. That is due to some extent to importations for development purposes, such as rails and fastenings, machinery, etc. I have said that there is a brighter outlook for our mining industry. Our base metals are being worked and oil is being prospected for in the North and I hope successful results will be obtained. It is interesting to note that every day someone comes along expressing the hope that he is on a good thing, and has found a gold mine in some part of the State or another. People are looking for new mines, and if they look long enough are bound to find something. The developments we hear of in the Golden

Mile make one feel hopeful about the future in that mining centre. It is hoped that the new process for the treatment of base metals will result in greater production for this State. We hope that our lead, copper and tin mines will become big producers. We may yet work our manganese and asbestos deposits, and could work our iron deposits if we had the population and the money. We should be able to manufacture a good many more things than we do. For some years past Governments have encouraged manufactures to the fullest extent. We ought to prepare our soil products for our own use as well as for export. To this end industries have been established and others are contemplated. I hope that woollen mills will be established in Western Australia. If so we shall be able to utilise some of our own wool for the manufacture of the clothing we wear. This would be an excellent thing for the country. It may be said that the present position is not unsatisfactory, although it is not as satisfactory as we would like, because other countries are feeding and clothing us to too great an extent. A review of the possibilities open to us shows that they are so enormous as to make the future look bright. It is no use talking about progress; we must strive to achieve it. I have said enough to show clearly our proposals and our methods for the development of the country. We now have before us clear cut proposals and easily understood methods. The possibilities lying before us are enormous. I am glad to be able to say that all members of the House have taken a keen interest in what is going on, and in the proposals that have been placed before the people. There never was a time when members were so whole-heartedly united in their desire to see the country progress. I am asking the House to approve the expenditure of a very considerable sum of money. If we are to have development, we must have expenditure. The amount I am asking the House to authorise is £3,793,289, and reversion to Loan Suspense account £214,191. This expenditure may be divided under several heads, firstly, advances on which interest is to be paid by borrowers, totalling £2,235,000, and including land development advances £2,205,600, assistance to industries £25,000, and loans to local authorities £5,000; secondly, transport facilities for which the users should pay in freight and charges, £613,525 in respect of railways, £143,515 in respect of tramways and electricity supply, and £171,000 in respect of harbours; making a total under these heads of £928,040; thirdly, water supplies and sewerage, etc., for which the users should pay, £262,080; fourthly, trading and other concerns which should return interest, £41,205; fifthly, permanent conveniences for which the public pay by taxation, £326,364; a grand total of £3,793,289. Last year Parliament voted (exclusive of Loan Suspense) £3,468,196, and the expenditure last year was £2,454,925. The expenditure from Loan Suspense account was £214,191. The bulk of this expenditure was under Development of

Agriculture. Under advances are included the Agricultural Bank, the Industries Assistance Board, the Soldier Settlement Scheme, group settlement, land purchased for re-sale, and assistance to industries. These form the basis of increased production. The borrowers pay and benefit, and the general public benefit without paying. This expenditure, and the consequent increased production, benefit everybody. From this source comes the wealth that provides for employment, and for the payment of all taxation. Every new man established on the land is responsible for the keeping of a good number of people—I think we may say 10—in the State. No other industry does so much. Our system of production is not followed in every part of the world. In many countries the system is for men to have very small holdings, and to produce only what they require for themselves and their families. This is not the case here. We encourage men to do the best with their land, and we provide facilities so that that may be done. All activity, of course, radiates from those engaged in primary production, mineral, agricultural, pastoral, and otherwise. It is often said that we have too many people in the cities and towns. We have, but, after all, this metropolitan area of ours is quite a natural growth. It has never been forced. The growth of centres like Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Bunbury and Albany has been absolutely natural. The settlements have sprung up because there is the trade. I do not quite know how it is that the few people engaged away from the centres manage to keep up such a demand as to bring about the establishment of these towns and cities. However, we do maintain these trading centres. In them we have manufactures and banks and the other facilities which are so necessary to everybody. Then, too, we provide harbour facilities and build railways. We have done everything we possibly can to assist the people in the country to go on with the work of development. We want all our lands brought into use—privately owned lands as well as Crown lands. I should like to deal a little with the settlement of the South-West. We ought to bring into use the land adjacent to existing railways, and partly settled country. I hope the Closer Settlement Bill will pass another place. A good deal more is being done than, I believe, the general public understand. Thousands of acres of land adjacent to the railways are being brought under the plough; the owners are doing their best. As regards the land between here and Bunbury, it is of course a wonderfully good stretch of country, and only wants to be brought under the plough. A good many people have been settled there during the last year or two, and they are doing considerable work. I should like to see the land fronting the South-Western railway drained. It wants a comprehensive scheme, in order that the land may be well drained and carry a large number of people. To-day we look upon the Fremantle freezing works as beyond the needs of the State. If a few hundred thousand acres of this land were brought under clover, as is

done in New Zealand, our freezing works would be all too small to supply the requirements of the South-West alone. The country only wants to be developed in order to produce untold wealth. The Peel estate, Bateman's, and the Paterson-Richardson are worked together. They represent a total of 81,355 acres, and the total of the purchase prices is £42,588. In the Peel Estate we are draining, making roads, erecting cottages, fencing, clearing, and laying down permanent pastures. A number of members have seen what is being done there, and know how quickly the State is being developed, and what orderly development of this kind means. We shall have a large number of settlers there later on. Of course this development work costs a considerable amount of money. Including the purchase price, we have spent on the Peel Estate £190,096, which amount, less £43,000 for plant, represents £147,096. To complete the development is estimated to cost another £150,000, making a total of £297,096. From this amount may be deducted the profit we expect to make on firewood, £30,000, leaving £267,096 net. We estimate that amount of profit on firewood because there is a tremendous quantity of firewood on the estate. About 18,000 acres of swamp land will be drained on the Peel Estate—in which I include the other estates mentioned—and 50,000 acres will be brought under the plough. We can be pretty certain that when the estate has been developed it will easily be worth a million of money, and probably more. If we did not make a penny out of the firewood, the development work would still pay us, because it enables the Government to lay down temporary tram lines, which are used to make roads, and to deliver material for fencing, erecting houses, and so forth. There are now 140 blocks ready to be settled, and I hope that before the end of the summer we shall have an additional 100 settled. I saw the general manager of this development work to-day, and he expects to put up 300 houses during the next summer. Drainage is, of course, the thing most needed for the settlement of the South-West. Along the coast from Moore River to Albany drainage will have to be undertaken. It is not expensive drainage like—

Mr. Underwood: Herdsman's Lake.

The PREMIER: It is simple drainage, but it must be done before the land is brought into use. I want the Committee to understand that we hope to get the whole of the lands adjacent to the railways used. When it comes to drainage and road making and settlement, it is very much better to purchase the land than to make the improvements from taxation, because when we do the work we can control the development of the land. We have bought up to date machinery for drain making, and that is coming forward. I have already dealt with the land which is to be served by the Jarnadup-Denmark railway. By the way, I am sorry the member for Forrest is not here. The General Manager of the Agricultural Bank and the General Manager of the Soldier Settlement Scheme have just re-

turned from Denmark, and whilst they agree with the member for Forrest that a number of people there are not doing well, they say that there are probably no better pastures to be found in the State than have been grown at Denmark by people who have worked consistently since they went on to their properties. The member for Forrest was quite wrong I think, in saying that the estate is not doing well. The land is doing well enough, and the settlers there will now be encouraged to do a bit more than they have done in the past. Of course they are isolated, and the Agricultural Bank has not done enough for them to enable them to effect improvements. There is no doubt about that. Mr. McLarty says he was wrong there, and so I hope that in future enough will be advanced to enable the Denmark settlers to do their work. The proposed expenditure on railway construction is required to meet the cost of railways authorised long ago, railways which have not been built because of the war. During the four years of war they could not be constructed at all, and during the years which have elapsed since the war the cost of material ruled so high that we could not possibly undertake the building of railways. Rails which not so many months ago were quoted at £20 per ton are now down to £11 per ton, and I hope they will become much cheaper before long. We are engaged in building the line we have heard so much about, the line in the Esperance district. My friend the member for Kanowna, when he goes down to his constituency again, will find that he has a number of additional electors.

Hon. T. Walker: I am very pleased to hear it.

The PREMIER: I hope that by the middle of March the Minister for Works will have the line ready to carry traffic for at least 30 miles, possibly 40 miles. It will be a sad disappointment, not to the member for Kanowna—because he has always honestly urged the building of the Esperance railway—but to some people when this line is built. The line has been very useful to the people in question. They have been able to talk Esperance railway to the electors at every election.

Hon. P. Collier: "The anti-goldfields Government."

The PREMIER: Yes; we have been called that. The building of the line will be a serious loss to some people. When the line is completed, they will not be able to damn the present Government, as they damned previous Governments for years past. With those people it has not been prohibition, but always the Esperance railway, at election time. Then we are constructing the Busselton-Margaret River line, the Nyabing-Pingrup line, and the short extension of the Wyalatchem-Mt. Marshall railway. The Dwarda-Narrogin line is not being constructed at the moment. We cannot undertake at one time more railways than we now have in hand. We have not the staff, and we have not the money to put into them. The three lines named will soon be completed, and then we shall be able

to proceed with the other lines authorised. We must, of course, carry out the long-standing undertakings of Parliament. There are other railways to be considered. In every case the development of the land adjacent to the railways must be guaranteed. It is proposed to expend on additions to existing railways, £100,000; on rails and fastenings, £40,000; and on rolling stock, £60,000. In connection with our tramways a sum of £91,515 is provided including £30,000 required for the Como line, which was commenced last year. Towards the expenditure to give effect to the Royal Commission's recommendations and to provide the necessary rolling stock, £42,500 has been set aside. The total estimated cost of the Commission's recommendations will involve an expenditure of about £144,560. If we continue to control the tramway system, we will be forced to provide facilities for the increased population. We cannot refuse to extend these facilities to places where they are required owing to the increased population. Having extended the tramway to Nedlands, when some other centre is opened up and populated, that, too, must be provided with tramway facilities. So long as we control the tramway system, we must meet the requirements of our growing population. The amount provided in connection with the Government electricity supply is £52,000. The bulk of that money is required for works authorised last year. When the State embarks upon such undertakings as the supply of electricity, tramway facilities, harbours or anything else, it must be recognised that one thing leads to another. We must keep up-to-date and we must meet the demands upon those facilities. In this particular instance, the demand is for more current and while the expenditure is increased, the revenue too will be augmented. We are providing £171,000 for harbour works. We require the services of a first-class harbour engineer in this State. We have a harbour at Geraldton that needs improvement and we must extend the harbour facilities at Bunbury and elsewhere. It would be a good thing if the States of Australia, jointly, could employ an officer specially skilled in harbour engineering. A single State cannot afford to undertake that burden.

Hon. P. Collier: In an advisory capacity?

The PREMIER: Yes. One man could do all the work necessary in Australia. When it comes to the development of the Northern parts of our own State, we shall have to spend a considerable sum of money, as the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) knows.

Mr. Underwood: I know you are wasting it.

Hon. P. Collier: But the Government mean well.

The PREMIER: I hope it is not being wasted.

Mr. Underwood: At any rate, the intentions are good.

The PREMIER: I understand that the road to a certain place is paved with good intentions. In our case, however, the intentions are not only good but the work is good.

Hon. P. Collier: The execution is indifferent.

The PREMIER: Not at all. The work done is good.

Mr. Underwood: The spirit is good, but the execution bad.

The PREMIER: It must be recognised that it is difficult to provide facilities for handling goods in the North. At every port, stock has to be shipped. It would be a simple thing if we only had to meet the requirements of people, but when we have to cope with the export of huge quantities of livestock and wool it means that jetties have to be constructed and a lot of money expended.

Mr. Underwood: You get a return.

The PREMIER: Of course, we do get some return, but I am merely telling the Committee that these facilities have to be provided and it would be a good thing if the Australian States could employ an engineer of the standing I refer to. In connection with water supplies, we are asking for £273,200. Of that amount £75,000 is provided for improvements to the metropolitan water supply and £57,000 for sewerage, a large portion of which is for new works. The balance of the vote, £141,200, is for water supplies and drainage in the country. For abattoirs, cold storage and so on, £21,483 has been provided. A small amount of £5,000 is provided as the first instalment towards the erection of cold stores at the Fremantle wharf. Those facilities are required if our fruit and meat are to be properly handled. I saw hundreds of cases of fruit in London last year which had arrived in a dreadful condition. Growers in Western Australia complained that they did not get a fair price for their fruit. That which I saw in London would not have brought much here. No doubt the fruit was good when it left our shores, but it was in a shocking condition when it arrived in London. The probable explanation of the wretched condition of the fruit is that it went into the shed hot and there is not proper means of ventilating the chambers in the ships. The result was that the fruit developed brown heart and other diseases, which rendered the consignments useless. Cleopatra apples carried satisfactorily but other varieties represented so much rubbish when they reached London. The money lost to the growers of this State must have represented between £50,000 and £60,000, while the loss for the growers of Australia generally must have run into hundreds of thousands of pounds. Fruit for export should go into cool stores. We have to recognise that these lines are shipped from Western Australia in the hottest part of the year and have to be hauled over long distances to the port. I do not know that I need say much about group settlement

because members are acquainted with the system. Doubtless the administration of the scheme will come in for some criticism, but when we remember that the scheme was started so recently and that so many men have been placed on the groups in so short a period, the wonder is that we have not had more criticism. We cannot expect work of this description to operate smoothly from the jump. It is quite a new system and we are very fortunate in having a capable staff, comprised of men who want to help sympathetically, all concerned. The allowance to a thousand men on the group settlements comes to about £150,000 a year.

Hon. M. P. Troy: How much do you allow? Is it £1,000 for each holding?

The PREMIER: There is no fixed allowance because the requirements vary. The cost of 1,000 men is about £150,000 a year, which is not a very considerable sum. The holdings are prepared over a period of about two years, during which the land is prepared, houses erected, fencing put up, and other requirements attended to. That money represents sustenance allowances. Already we have about 800 men on the groups, and other groups are ready.

Mr. Munsie: Are you including the Peel Estate?

The PREMIER: No. The groups there are only just starting. The figures I have referred to are apart from that form of settlement. I cannot understand why it is that there are so few empty houses to be seen when one remembers that during the past few months we have taken so many men away to the country. Of the 800 men who are on group settlements at present, about 700 are married men. Yet every house in the country seems to be occupied. Quite apart from this scheme and from the settlement of soldiers on repurchased farms, we placed 1,340 men on Crown lands. The member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) said that the conditions were not understood by those taking blocks under the group settlement scheme. It is essential that every man should understand the conditions and nothing is left to chance from that standpoint. Every man does know the conditions. Something was said about balloting for blocks. These are balloted for as soon as the blocks are settled. There is hardly a man on a group settlement who has not a good garden already. They take an interest in their work and grow vegetables for themselves already, despite the fact that they have been there for only a few months. Some of the gardens are really wonderful. From one end of the group settlement area to the other, the men are concerned about their future and are doing their utmost to provide for their requirements. We have settled a number of men in the Busselton district. The departmental surveyor advises that we are putting 1,000 men on a group settlement near Busselton. I do not know how the presence of so many people will be regarded in Busselton.

Hon. P. Collier: It will disturb their peace.

The PREMIER: The people are delighted that so many new settlers are going there and they are anxious to do their best for the newcomers. I do not know what it will feel like to have so many men in Busselton.

Hon. P. Collier: Then indeed will Busselton hustle itself.

The PREMIER: When between 3,000 and 4,000 people are settled in that locality, Busselton will be a still more thriving centre. There is some wonderful country to be settled in the Manjimup, Pemberton, Busselton, Margaret River, Augusta, and other districts. There are about 2,900 souls on the group settlements at the present time. This is a big work and there is no doubt that it is changing the character of electorates. This may account for some of the zeal shown in connection with these matters. There are 10 further groups available for married men, and others will follow in rapid succession.

Mr. Munsie: How many men have you to a group?

The PREMIER: Twenty. We can take 200 men now and place them on blocks that are ready for them. We can start all the married men we can get and far more than are available. The expenditure to date, including wages, amounts to £154,841. That is for wages and for housing, fencing, and so forth. The settlers are perfectly happy, because they have no rent to pay, no wood to buy, no rates or taxes, and, seeing that they can grow their own vegetables, these things make a great difference in the cost of living. I hope during the coming summer hon. members will seize the opportunity of visiting the group settlements to see what is going on. I should like to see members visiting these groups, because it appears to be the system suited for the development of the South-West. It is just as well that hon. members should meet these people on their blocks and see how they are faring. The soldier settlement scheme has absorbed a considerable sum of money. The total expenditure to date is £4,923,281. The Agricultural Bank approvals for loans to the end of last month represented £4,619,688. These loans were made available to 4,684 soldiers. These settlers are also taking up wheat lands as they are thrown open at Newdegate, Westonia, and in the Southern Cross district. At Newdegate the other day, however, 80 blocks were thrown open for selection but only 40 soldiers applied for them, so that it would seem that not many more are looking for wheat lands. The total commitments to date under this heading—when a man takes up Crown lands he is told that he may have so much for clearing, the erection of a house and for water conservation—represents £3,540,025, which gives us an average commitment of £1,180. This total includes expenditure on the Peel Estate and at Herdsman's Lake. The cost per man will probably be about £1,100. This compares more than favourably with the cost per man in connection with soldier settlement schemes

in the Eastern States. The soldiers, for the most part, have been well settled and nothing has been left to chance. They have been given every opportunity to make good. The land has been carefully selected and the improvements have been such as to give the soldier settler a chance to make good. We have done as much as was possible towards that end. Occasionally trouble arises but, generally speaking, the men have been contented and have been given a good chance to succeed. To cover the cost of roads in country districts, principally to act as feeders to railways, £45,000 is provided.

Mr. Munsie drew attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

The PREMIER: On road work for unemployed soldiers £16,000 is provided, the Commonwealth Government providing a similar sum. For public buildings we have set aside £66,545. This appears large, but it is heavily affected by the provision of £19,300 for the Claremont asylum, and £10,000 for the erection of a reception home. I draw attention to the item of £13,000 to be expended on the provision at Crawley of science rooms for the University. Years ago the House determined that there should be a University. The housing of that institution is altogether insufficient, and something has to be done if accommodation is to be provided for the students coming along. Bunbury High School accounts for the sum of £8,850. About two-thirds of the aggregate total of this money is for the development of agriculture. Only about £400,000 will be expended on materials purchased abroad, such as rails and fastenings. The remainder of the sum almost entirely represents wages to be paid to our own people. Probably there has never been an amount asked for which represented so much expenditure within the State, and so little outside of the State. This money will be used first to render unnecessary the importation of large quantities of food. It will be used also to increase population and production, and to foster our export trade. It will represent a large increase in production including, I hope, gold production, and generally it will serve to improve many of our industries, and establish others. The House believes that we can get out of our financial troubles by increased development and production. I ask the House to agree to the expenditure of this money to that end. We know more about our country now than ever before. I do not know why the full knowledge of its possibilities should have come so slowly. It was said we had no gold, when in point of fact we had gold in plenty. It was said we could grow no wheat, when we had wheat lands capable of producing a 50-million bushel harvest. It was said we could grow no fruit, when we had the best fruit country in the world. So it has been all along the line. These possibilities having revealed themselves so slowly accounts for

the backward state of our development. But we know now, and with our increased knowledge of the State's possibilities we should take advantage of all that is offering, and endeavour to increase our population, and so increase our usefulness to the Commonwealth and to the Empire.

Progress reported.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Companies Act Amendment.

Returned to the Council with an amendment.

2, Western Australian Bank Act Amendment (Private).

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—JARNADUP-DENMARK RAILWAY.

Report of Committee.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move—

That the Committee's report be adopted.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I should like an assurance from the Government as to the methods to be employed in the construction of the line, whether it is to be constructed by day labour or by contract. Public tenders should be called, and the departmental officers should be allowed to submit a tender as well. I want to be satisfied that we are getting value for our money.

Hon. P. Collier: Like the value the Collié people got with that church. It fell down.

Mr. A. THOMSON: They got good value. The church is still there.

The Minister for Mines: What do you want to know; whether the line is to be built by day labour or by contract?

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is so.

The Minister for Mines: The answer is "Yes."

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not want this matter treated with levity.

The Minister for Mines: Well, how can I say by which system it will be built?

Mr. Underwood: Of course we cannot expect a reply from a Minister who thinks only of going off to the Melbourne Cup.

Hon. P. Collier: Let brotherly love continue.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I want an assurance from the Government that for the construction of the line public tenders will be called, and that the department too shall submit a tender. Also I want the principle affirmed that when the departmental officers submit a price, they shall be held responsible for the price.

Hon. P. Collier: And if there be any loss, they shall make up the difference.

Mr. A. THOMSON: No, but if their estimate be not justified, they shall be dismissed.

The Minister for Mines: And what if they make a profit?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Then they should get a bonus on it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: On a point of order. Is this the stage at which to discuss the method by which the line is to be constructed?

Mr. SPEAKER: When the hon. member rose, I understood that he desired simply to ask a question.

Hon. P. Collier: That is so, but it has developed into a rambling, discursive kind of yarn.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The question may materially affect the votes of members.

Mr. Lutey: You voted for the second reading; why this delay now?

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is a principle which should be affirmed.

The Minister for Mines: This is not the time at which to discuss that principle.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If I have an assurance from the Premier—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! What is the hon. member's question? I cannot allow the hon. member to ramble all over the place.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This is not the stage at which such questions should be submitted. I am not in charge of the department which will undertake the construction of the line. It is the Minister for Works who is concerned, and he is away in his office at the moment. The question can be brought up when the item of £5,000 on the Loan Estimates is before us.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Last evening when discussing the Bill in Committee, I stated that the amount of £800,000 involved in the construction of this line was the largest authorised by Parliament for any public work since the days of Sir John Forrest, and the Minister for Mines corrected me by saying that the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line had cost about £800,000. I was not in a position then to challenge the statement of the Minister, but I have since looked up the figures and I find that the expenditure on the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line to date is £329,818.

Mr. Lutey: That was good bluff.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is less than one half of the amount stated by the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In fairness may I say that I first of all quoted the distance as being 190 miles and I was advised by one of my colleagues that the cost was £3,000 per mile. I ran out the figures and arrived at a total of £760,000. If I was wrong, I am sorry.

Mr. A. Thomson: Is it possible to obtain a reply to my question now that the Minister for Works has returned to his seat?

Mr. SPEAKER: This is not the proper time. The hon. member will have an opportunity on the Loan Estimates.

Question put and passed; report of Committee adopted.

BILL—PEARLING ACT AMENDMENT.**Council's Amendment.**

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 26, Subclause (1)—Add the following words: "If any person shall have any culture pearls in his possession, custody, or control, he shall be deemed to have such pearls for the purpose of selling or otherwise dealing in the same, unless he shall prove to the contrary."

Mr. TEESDALE: I hope the Committee will empty the amendment out.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no motion before the Chair.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Mr. TEESDALE: We gave this matter a tremendous amount of attention and I ask members to maintain their position. The amendment emanates from a disappointed member of this House who went to another place and worked up a man, who knew as much about the matter as he did, to move this amendment. It is a reflection on us. Some of us have knowledge of the industry, but any member is qualified to speak on this amendment. Would it be fair if I was wearing a culture pearl in a scarf pin, and some interfering John with a set on me or a sergeant of police demanded that I should go with him to the police station to explain where I got the pearl? It is a ridiculous provision to put in an Act of Parliament and it is a farce to subject people to such an indignity. I do not suppose there are two people in the city who possess culture pearls. It is a mad proposal to put into an Act of Parliament, and I ask members to—

Mr. Underwood: Show their contempt.

Mr. TEESDALE: Show anything they like, so long as the amendment is not carried.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Every effort possible and in reason should be exerted to prevent the culture of pearls, but we should not agree to the amendment. This is what might be termed the third degree. The accused person will have to prove his innocence. I am always suspicious of a proposal of that kind, and Parliament should hesitate before passing it.

Mr. Munsie: The same applies to gold.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The amendment is not likely to prevent the culture of pearls, but it might prove an aggravation to a few individuals.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The onus of proof should rest on the person in possession of culture pearls. The amendment is not intended to apply to a lady or gentleman wearing a pearl or a string of pearls as jewellery.

Mr. Heron: It could be applied in that way.

Mr. Teesdale: That is exactly what it says.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Such a person would not be called upon to give reasons for the possession of culture pearls. The object of the amendment is to prevent illicit dealing in culture pearls. The fears of the member for Roebourne are unnecessary in respect to the possession of an odd pearl or a string of pearls.

Mr. Underwood: How can you tell?

Mr. Teesdale: the amendment says he shall be deemed to have them for the purpose of selling.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Unless he can prove to the contrary. There would be no difficulty about proving that a pearl worn in a tie was carried for decorative purposes and not for trade.

Mr. Heron: A man might carry a culture pearl in that way and then sell it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is essential that the onus of proof should be on the person holding such pearl.

Mr. Underwood: The onus of proof should rest on the prosecution.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is the usual practice.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Well, we shall stick to the good old British practice.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: A similar proposal came before the Committee previously but was rejected owing to a misunderstanding. Certain words were struck out with the intention of rendering the clause effective in the direction sought by this amendment, but the deletion of those words spoilt the sense of the clause. Hence the amendment by another place. It was suggested that for offences of this kind, a fine or imprisonment would not be sufficient, but that it should be obligatory on the magistrate to impose both fine and imprisonment. That was not agreed to, but the onus of proof should rest on the person possessing culture pearls.

Mr. LUTEY: I oppose the Council's amendment. There was a time when it was our proud boast that every person was considered innocent until he was proved guilty. Under the Gold Buyers Act a similar provision was adopted. It is time we took a stand and blocked legislation of this description. It is useless for the Minister to quibble regarding the intention of the amendment. It is very explicit. Any person possessing such a pearl will never know when the hand of a policeman might be laid upon him accompanied by a demand to prove his reason for having it in his possession.

The Colonial Secretary: He could explain it.

Mr. LUTEY: We should purge our Acts of such provisions and not harass people in this way.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The clause makes it unlawful for any person to produce or

attempt to produce or to sell, offer for sale or deal in culture pearls, or to have any culture pearls in his possession or control for the purpose of selling or dealing in them. No stronger provision is required. I doubt whether the Minister is so anxious to put down the culture of pearls as he would have us believe. When the Bill was before us previously, I pointed out that the only way to stop the culture of pearls was by making the penalty imprisonment.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Are culture pearls produced only in Western Australia?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. A fine will not stop this sort of thing. In the case of a conviction under the Gold Buyers Act the person concerned is rarely fined and nearly always imprisoned. If a person is found with a culture pearl in his possession, he must go to the court and prove that it is not for sale, and will thus be put to great expense. I am opposed to the amendment.

Mr. MUNSIE: We should refuse to agree to this amendment.

Mr. Teesdale: It amounts to an inquisition.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes. All the laws on our Statute-book providing for this sort of thing should be repealed. There have been cases of great imposition in the past and the public should be protected. People should be deemed to be innocent until they have been proved to be guilty. If I wore a culture pearl in a scarf pin I might be arrested when walking down the street. The Bill as it stands should be good enough for the protection of the industry.

Mr. MANN: There is a section in the Police Act which covers the position, even if this Bill is not sufficiently strongly worded. I, too, am opposed to the amendment.

Mr. TEESDALE: A good deal has been said about culture pearls which cannot be substantiated. Such a pearl can be identified immediately by people who understand the business. When culture pearls were first placed upon the market, they gave rise to a good deal of trouble. It is to the credit of British commercial men that when some of these pearls were sold, before it was realised that they were counterfeit, in almost every instance the sales were cancelled and the money returned to those who had suffered over this transaction. There would be no chance of culture pearls being sold in London, for only the best pearls are sent there. This is not a matter of importance to the pearl-fishing industry.

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Teesdale and Mr. Munsie drew up reasons for not agreeing to the Council's amendment.

Reasons adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 16:

Mr. MARSHALL: I move an amendment—

That the following paragraph be added:—“Section 16 of the principal Act is further amended by adding a proviso to Subsection 1 as follows:—‘Provided also that if any person, being qualified to receive an old age pension, continues to work, and the income chargeable of such person does not exceed £300 a year, such income shall be exempt from taxation.’”

I desire merely to protect individuals who, from a feeling of personal dignity, do not wish to become old age pensioners so long as they find themselves physically able to work, and thereby support themselves and sometimes assist members of their families. Any old age pensioner who struggles along and manages to earn £100 is immediately subjected to taxation, if he is a single man. Such cases are to be found, and there are also women who scratch for a living and thereby avoid what they consider the undignified position of living on the Commonwealth Treasury. The State Parliament should say to such people, “We will exempt you from paying taxation.”

The PREMIER: I hope the Committee will not carry the amendment. I do not see how a man earning anything like £300 a year could be qualified for a pension. Age of itself does not qualify for a pension; there are other considerations. If a man were earning £50 a year, he could not qualify for a pension. Really the amendment does not mean anything; no one can benefit from it.

Mr. MARSHALL: I did not draft the amendment, and anyone reading it might overlook its main feature, namely, that it refers to qualified old age pensioners. I wish the amendment to refer to anyone over 60 years of age. I do not wish it to refer to a person who is drawing what by some is termed charity from the Commonwealth Treasury. I say that persons, male or female, over 60 years of age should be exempt from taxation in the period when they have largely lost their industrial usefulness. Frequently these people have battled all their lives, bringing up families; and the Government proceed to tax them as if they were just 21.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I feel inclined to support the amendment, though not exactly as drafted. There are many people fully entitled to pensions, but too independent to apply for them because they feel themselves able to work. They earn just sufficient income to keep them, and then they have to pay taxation on such income. If a man without dependants—and very few people over 65 have dependants—earns £101 in a year, he has to pay £10 or £12 out of it for taxation. That is

not right, since the man need not work at all, but could draw an old age pension. I know of a stonemason 72 years of age who earned £4 a week. There came a time when he was unable to work, but because he had earned about £200 during the preceding year he was billed for £3 tax. That is utterly wrong. The man who is sufficiently independent to obtain a living by personal exertion after arriving at the age of 65, should be exempt from taxation. It is the least we can do for such people, and the State would show its practical sympathy with the pioneers by adopting the amendment. I would suggest an alteration to the amendment by stipulating the age of men at 65 and that of women at 60.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps the member for Murchison will withdraw his amendment to permit of the member for Geraldton submitting his.

Mr. Marshall: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I move an amendment—

That the following paragraph be added: "Section 16 of the principal Act is further amended by adding a proviso to Sub-section (1) as follows:—'Provided also that any male person over the age of 65 years, or any female person over the age of 60 years, who continues to work, and the income chargeable of such person does not exceed £300 a year, such income shall be exempt from taxation.'"

The PREMIER: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. There are many men in the civil service who would come under this provision.

Mr. Willcock: But you push them out at 65.

The PREMIER: There is no logical reason why a man of 65 should be exempt any more than a man of 21.

Mr. Willcock: There is, because he can knock off work altogether if he likes and draw a pension from the State.

The PREMIER: This will not afford the relief intended. So far as the women are concerned, when they reach that age, their tastes change, and they have no desire for silk stockings or other expensive things. Therefore, they are relieved of certain expenditure.

Hon P. Collier: What an argument—silk stockings!

Mr. WILLCOCK: Let me cite an instance which may induce the Premier to change his mind. There are many old women in this State—

Mr. Marshall: And there are many in this Parliament.

Mr. WILLCOCK: —who are entitled to an old age pension. Some are getting £1 a week and their keep by working, and they are liable to taxation. Suppose they choose to continue to work, the heavy hand of the tax gatherer will not miss them. Many of

them are willing to continue to work rather than to receive charity at the hands of the State, and the least we can do for those people is to encourage them to go on by freeing them from paying tax. There is nothing unreasonable in the amendment.

Mr. CHESSON: Old men over the age of 60 who may earn up to £300 from personal exertion should be entitled to exemption. We know that many who are receiving £3 a week and their keep must pay income tax, and, as has been pointed out, there are many who prefer to work than to draw relief. The amendment should receive everyone's support. In my district there are a lot of prospectors, some receiving the old age pension. But as that pension does not amount to much, these old men go on toiling with their dryblowers, and though they make very little, the Taxation Department never miss them.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is not surprising to find the Premier desirous of extracting the last ounce from the most deplorably circumstanced section of the community. It is hard that while there are other avenues of possible taxation, the Premier is willing to sit back and smile at the idea of levying tribute from pioneers and others over 65 years of age who have no desire to become a burden on the State.

Mr. McCallum drew attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung.

Hon. P. Collier: Where are the loafers?

Mr. Heron: Where are those members who voted for meeting at half-past two?

Mr. McCallum: There were only three on the Government side and they were all sound asleep.

Quorum formed.

Mr. MARSHALL: The people included in the amendment are entitled to an exemption. There are other avenues for the Premier to exploit.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	..	16
Majority for					2

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Davies	Mr. Troy
Mr. Heron	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Corboy

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Carter
Mr. George
Mr. Gibson
Mr. Harrison
Mr. Hickmott
Mr. Latham
Mr. C. C. Maley
Mr. Mann

Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Plesse
Mr. Sampson
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Teesdale
Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Mullany

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Mr. MUNSIE: What is the meaning of this clause?

The Premier: You have assisted to pass it every session for years.

Mr. MUNSIE: Not in this Bill.

The PREMIER: Last year the House directed that it should appear in this Bill instead of in the Taxation Bill. We amended our Standing Orders, and the transfer became necessary.

Mr. MUNSIE: This clause deals with the amount to be paid by way of dividend duty and the effect on the income tax to be paid.

The Premier: We agreed last year to put the amount of the tax in the Taxation Bill.

Mr. MUNSIE: Am I correct in assuming that no alteration has been made?

The Premier: Yes.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 34:

Mr. MUNSIE: Why the alteration from three years to two years?

The PREMIER: The alteration is consequential.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 54:

Mr. A. THOMSON: Why should taxation be paid before the expiration of 30 days from receipt of assessment notice, subject to a fine of 10 per cent.? Every business firm allows 30 days for payment. The proposed amendment is unreasonable. I shall vote against the clause.

Mr. MUNSIE: Why does the Premier want to strike out the 30 days?

The PREMIER: Because the matter is already provided for in Section 53, and does not need to be provided for twice. Of course one does not expect a man to pay his tax before he gets his assessment notice.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6—agreed to.

New Clause—Amendment of Section 30:

Mr. MUNSIE: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 3—“Section thirty of the principal Act (as inserted by Section seven of the Act No. 17 of 1922) is hereby amended by adding to paragraph (d) of subsection (5) thereof the following words:—‘Such expenses shall include the cost of travelling

from the place of living of the taxpayer to the place where his income is earned or produced not exceeding fifteen pounds in any year: Provided that the travelling expenses of a member of Parliament shall be allowed and assessed as follows—If a member is the representative of the Metropolitan, Metropolitan-Suburban, or West Province or of an electoral district therein, such expenses shall be at the rate of £50 per annum; and if such member is the representative of any other province or district, such allowance shall be at the rate of £100 per annum.’”

Paragraph (b) of Section 7 of the Act of 1921 provides for a deduction of reasonable travelling expenses incurred in earning, producing, or protecting the assessable income.

Mr. A. Thomson: That was an extract from the Federal measure.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes; we were under the impression that a man would be allowed to deduct reasonable travelling expenses for getting to and from his work. The Federal Act allows this deduction. My amendment will prevent the Commissioner of Taxation from interpreting the Act in a manner other than that intended by Parliament.

Clause put and passed.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Section 30 of the Act provides that any taxpayer with dependants under a certain age is allowed £40 per year in respect of them. Any taxpayer with a dependant, instead of being taxed over £100, like a single person, is allowed an exemption up to £156. But any youth or girl keeping his or her mother and young brothers and sisters and receiving over £156, is not allowed any exemption whatever. I understood that we amended our legislation three or four years ago to make provision for such cases. The breadwinner dies leaving a family of five or six, and then the eldest son in a great many cases—Mr. Whitely informs me that 200 or 300 of these cases have been brought under his notice—keeps the mother and the other children, and if he has an income of £4 per week he gets no exemption whatever. He ought to receive the same exemption as the father would receive. The same remarks apply to a girl similarly situated. I move—

That the following new clause be added:—“Section 30 of the principal Act is hereby amended by adding a new subsection to stand as 11a, as follows:—‘Money up to £40 per annum for each dependant actually expended during the year by a taxpayer in or towards the support of dependants.’”

Hon. M. F. TROY: I know of a lad 21 years of age, earning an income of £208, whose father died leaving the mother and seven other children, and this boy has to maintain the whole lot of them. Out of his £4 per week he gives £3 10s. to his mother. He is taxed on the whole £208 of income, and is allowed no exemption whatever. He is the only one earning. He took his father's place.

The father, under the Act, would be entitled to certain exemptions and deductions; but the boy is not so entitled, merely because he is single. The Federal Commissioner of Taxation informs me that there are quite a number of these cases. The boy is not being taxed under the Federal Act; but he is being taxed under the State Act, and he ought not to be. Mr. Whitely says that undoubtedly it is a wrong under the State Act. It is not very often we find boys of that age sticking to their mothers and young brothers and sisters in that way, and we ought to encourage them.

The PREMIER: This amendment only alters the amount of exemption from £26 to £40.

Mr. Willecock: No. That is where we are under a misconception. In such cases, if the income is £158, there is no exemption.

The PREMIER: But such a taxpayer might be supporting children of 17 and 18 who are at school.

Mr. Willecock: Not at all.

Mr. Chesson: A taxpayer gets no exemption for a lad or girl over 16 years of age.

The PREMIER: I do not think any such exemption should be granted, either.

Mr. Willecock: The amendment provides for exemption up to £40 a year for each dependant.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Don't you think a married man keeping his mother should get some assistance?

The PREMIER: Yes, you want to take the lot.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is all we want.

The PREMIER: How can the State maintain schools, hospitals and so on unless we get taxation? Apparently the request in some districts is for more and more grants and no taxation at all.

Mr. Willecock: My amendment refers only to the money actually expended.

The PREMIER: I do not know that there are many such cases.

Mr. Heron: There are many.

The PREMIER: In many cases, these people are living on their parents and not contributing anything towards their support. I do not know how far-reaching this amendment will be. If it means that the single man contributing towards the support of his mother is to get more consideration than a married man with a family, I will oppose it. It would be ridiculous to make such a provision and should I find that it has that effect, I will ask the House to recommit the clause and move to have it struck out.

Mr. A. Thomson: You are agreeable that such a person should be placed on the same footing as the married man.

The PREMIER: Yes, but he should not have any better treatment than that.

Mr. Latham: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chesson: That is all we ask.

The PREMIER: I am afraid a good many people will get the exemption without contributing a penny towards the support of their parents.

Mr. Willcock: I certainly hope not.

The PREMIER: If I find the amendment goes as far as I think it does and further than the member for Geraldton says he wants, I will have it recommitted.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move an amendment—

That a new clause be added to stand as Clause 4 as follows:—"A section is inserted in the principal Act as follows:— 'In the case of a person other than an absentee there shall be deducted, in addition to the sums set forth in the last preceding section, the sum of £200 less £1 for every £3 by which the income chargeable exceeds £200.' "

The object of the amendment is to raise the exemption from £156 to £200.

The Premier: That is against your own proposal. What about paying for the hospitals, education and so on?

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is not against your proposal. I want to get away from the principle embodied in our present Act whereby if the exemption were £200 and the chargeable income of a taxpayer amounted to £210, he pays on the whole £210 because the exemption disappears. My amendment will mean that for every £3 of income over £200, £1 will be deducted from the exemption, until it will gradually be reduced altogether. In the case of an income amounting to £300, the exemption would disappear entirely.

Mr. Davies: Is that the Federal proposal?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is similar to the provision in the Federal Act and my amendment seeks to bring our legislation into conformity with the Federal measure. During the session just closed, the Federal Parliament increased our exemption from £156 to £200. If the amendment be carried, it will simplify the work of the Taxation Department. Instead of separate calculations having to be made for the State and Federal taxes, the one form and set of figures and information will do for both.

Mr. Davies: What is the exemption under the Federal Taxation Department?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is £200, and that is what I was proposing in my amendment.

Mr. Teesdale: Did they do that recently?

Mr. Heron: Yes. Just prior to the election.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Prior to that, the exemption was £156 but the same basis of reduction existed. My amendment is similar in wording to Section 24 of the Federal Act No. 3 of 1922.

The Premier: Cannot you go back further than that?

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is reasonable. I would like to make the exemption £250, which is what the Labour Party stand for. Prior to 1918 the exemption was £200. The Act was amended and the exemption was reduced

to £156 in the case of a married man and to £104 in the case of a single man. Hardship has been worked, in consequence of that amendment, to a large section of the community. Parliament should not shut its eyes to the fact that we are not justified in levying taxation upon those who are not in a position to pay it. A married man who is getting £4 a week today is not in a position to pay taxation.

The Premier: A man who gets 15s. 4d. today is better off than a man who got 8s. a day some years ago.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But £4 a week today is not equivalent to more than £2 15s. some years ago. In any case, a married man who receives £200 a year is not in a position to pay income tax. Those in receipt of a large income often wonder how the man in receipt of such a small income can live.

Mr. Teesdale: Such a man would probably not pay any income tax at all on £200.

Mr. Hickmott: The tax paid would be only £2 or £3 a year on the existing basis.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but the fact remains that such a man cannot afford to pay anything. I hope the Committee will agree to increase the exemption and to adopt the Commonwealth sliding scale method, which is a scientific one as against our rule of thumb method. Since 1918 we have been taxing a large number of our citizens who have not been in a position to pay taxation.

Mr. Davies: Does the exemption apply equally to single men and married men?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes.

Mr. Davies: Then it is not very scientific.

The Premier: A single man ought to pay more than a married man.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Until 1918 there was a distinction between single men and married men. The Commonwealth have abolished the distinction between the two and made a general exemption of £200 for both. My amendment is taken from the Commonwealth Act, and I hope the Committee will agree to it.

The PREMIER: I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	13

Majority for .. 5

AYES.

Mr. Carter	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Davies	Mr. Sampson
Mr. George	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Mann	Mr. Underwood
Str James Mitchell	Mr. Mullany

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Chesson	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Mr. Walker
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Heron
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)

Motion thus passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—DAIRY INDUSTRY.

Council's Amendments.

Message received from the Council, notifying that it had agreed to the Bill with amendments.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—PERPETUAL TRUSTEES, EXECUTORS, AND AGENCY COMPANY (W.A.) LTD. (PRIVATE).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 9th November.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [540]: One might well compliment the hon. member in charge of the Bill on his ability to get priority of consideration for this purely private measure. I do not know whether it is because of the gratitude which the Premier feels for the loyal support given him by the hon. member that he has placed the Bill in the fore-front of the Notice Paper for the past week or two. It is incomprehensible to me that a Premier with a crowded Notice Paper, who has asked the House to meet two hours earlier each sitting and, no doubt, will be asking the House to sit many hours later than the usual time for adjournment, and who has displayed anxiety to carry into law the many Government Bills which we have on the Notice Paper, it is incomprehensible that, notwithstanding all these things, the Premier should give a purely private Bill precedence over Government business, a Bill that nobody has asked for. If ever the House was engaged on a measure of a purely private character, one which is designed, not in the interests of any solitary citizen outside the circle of shareholders of this company, it is now. The Bill is not required in the public interest. Nobody has asked for it. On the other hand, very considerable sections of the community are asking for legislation which in some cases has been pressing for years past, but the Government are unable to find time to meet their wishes. Yet they can find time and opportunity for the consideration of a Bill of this kind. I have endeavoured to be reasonable in assisting the Government to get through their

business. Without making any threats I say I am not going to sit in this House until the small hours of the morning, and come here early the next day to assist the Government to get through their business, especially when the great majority of their supporters are so indifferent to the legislation before them, or to the interests of the electors who sent them here to perform their duties, that they can seldom muster six or seven members out of 34, or to facilitate the passage of business such as this purely boodling Bill which is given precedence over important legislation affecting this country. Why is the time of the House taken up with this Bill? If it had been brought down earlier in the session, and ample time given in which to consider it, no objection would have been raised. A private member is entitled to introduce any Bill that is in the interests of even a small section of the community, as this is, if he so desires, but it is not expected of the House that it should set aside the interests of the country and of the taxpayers in order to facilitate the passage of a Bill of this kind at this late period of the session. Whilst commenting upon the work of the session it may not be out of place for me to make reference to a paragraph which appears in this evening's "Daily News."

When is the Parliamentary session going to end? Premier Mitchell is optimistic enough to hope that the business listed will be concluded before Christmas. The Notice Paper is somewhat forbidding, and the Opposition is disinclined to help towards an early rising. Mr. Collier, as a member of the Labour Party, is merely consistent in wanting to "go slow." The miserable squib who wrote that, the miserable penny-a-liner journalistic prostitute—

Mr. Marshall: And that is too complimentary for him.

Hon. P. COLLIER: —knows he wrote a lie. That is the class of gratitude members of the Opposition get for assisting the Government. There has never been in any Parliament of Australia an Opposition which has been more generous towards the Government than the Opposition in this Chamber, and this is the usual sort of thanks we get at the end of it all, no matter how we may have co-operated with those in power to transact the business of the country. We have these miserable squibs who will write a paragraph like this, saying that as a member of the Labour Party, I am only adopting the policy of the Labour Party and going slow.

Mr. Munzie: He is a liar of the first water.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If he is so anxious honestly to comment upon the go slow policy, he might reasonably comment upon the large proportion of members in this Assembly who pay absolutely no heed or give no time to the work they are elected to perform here. The House is practically empty most of the time, and in that, these so-called critics can find food for comment on the question of going

slow. So far as members of the Opposition are concerned and the attention they pay to their duties and the work they have been sent here to perform, I say that no one could honestly lay at their door any charge connected with a go-slow policy. Whatever our views may be we always endeavour to give a reasonable amount of time and attention to the work that is placed before Parliament for consideration. The Premier is anxious to secure additional revenue because of the unfortunate financial position of the country. Even though he wants to obtain an additional £100,000 under his Hospitals Bill, which means a difference of £100,000 to the deficit at the end of the year, that Bill has to stand down, and this private measure, which will make not one penny of difference to the Treasury, or to any individual in the country except the shareholders, is to take precedence over it. The Premier knows that any Bill that does not pass through this Chamber by the end of next week stands a good chance of being lost at the end of the session. Even though the Hospitals Bill, plus the £100,000, were thrown overboard, as well as the other important measures on the Notice Paper, because there may be insufficient time in which to consider them, ample opportunity is to be given for the consideration of this Bill in another place. This Bill at all events must not be numbered amongst the slaughtered innocents. This Bill seeks to set up a trustee company to deal with estates, particularly those of deceased persons. One would imagine that thousands of people in the State were waiting until this Bill was passed to appoint the company their trustees before making their last will and testament; that, in fact, thousands were waiting to die who would die happy and comfortable if only they could hand over their estates to the conduct and control of this company. I notice that the list of provisional directors contains names that are familiar to us. They are the names of men who have served on this committee, that trust or this board, everywhere that offers an opportunity for the exercise of power or influence, or may influence the administration of the affairs of the country. It somehow happens that practically all these names occur from time to time in connection with the leading institutions in the State. As chairman of these provisional directors we have Mr. A. J. Manger.

Mr. A. Thomson: That name has never been mentioned in this House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Oh, no! Then there are Mr. Alexander, Mr. C. S. Nathan, Mr. J. J. Holmes, M.L.C., Dr. A. J. H. Saw, M.L.C., and Mr. W. H. Vincent, merchant.

Mr. Latham: The enterprising men of the State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. So influential are they that they are able to command the Government to put aside all Government work, and possibly prevent the enactment of a number of important Bills, in order that a matter which affects their own particular interests may be considered. This Bill serves no in-

terest except that of the shareholders, who desire to establish a company that will afford them a profitable investment for their surplus cash. There are two evils that stand out prominently, almost as prominently as the Darling Ranges, when one walks down St. George's-terrace, between William-street and Barrack-street. At the one end the Terrace is given up almost entirely to those enterprising gentlemen who wield the pencil, namely the street bookmakers. The rest of this part of that fine thoroughfare is given up largely to groups or coteries of men of another type. If members have visited the Zoological Gardens they will have seen the model house that is called the Guinea Pigs' castle. The guinea pigs dart in at one end and out at the other, flitting in and out of the various entrances and exits that are provided for them. So it is with St. George's-terrace. We see groups of four or five men, who, after looking at their watches, will suddenly dart into this or that door. After a while they will come out again, and join or make up another group, only to dart into other doors a little later.

Mr. Teesdale: Perhaps they are dodging their creditors.

Hon. P. COLLIER: These are the guinea pigs of St. George's-terrace. Perhaps they are darting in for some meeting of directors, to attend which they draw their fees. The only effect the Bill will have will be to add another opening for these St. George's-terrace guinea pigs, to enable them to draw fees for the services they render to this company. People of this class ought not to be encouraged. They are not producers.

Mr. Mann: Some of the gentlemen whose names are on the directorate are producers.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They may be producers in other walks of life, but not in their relationship to this company. They are merely parasites, drawing their fees or dividends, and producing nothing. Not one pound worth of wealth is added to the community, or produced as the result of the efforts of these people in regard to this company. We may, therefore, refer to these men as St. George's Terrace guinea pigs, in whose interests the Bill is designed. I might refer to them in the picturesque language of Prime Minister Hughes, who has a matchless capacity for describing an opponent, whether he be a boddler or a Labour man. Whoever his opponent is for the time being, Mr. Hughes has no equal in Australia for describing in condemnatory terms what he thinks of him. He must have had in mind such men as these guinea pigs, perhaps such men as those I have mentioned, when he referred on another occasion to men as being "smug-faced, round-bellied men, upon whom the sun shines every day." That is the type of man which infests St. George's Terrace. Some of them are here too.

Mr. Mullany: They must be migratory birds.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No doubt they are such men as the immortal bard had in mind

when he said "Let me have men about me that are fat—and such as sleep o' nights," not Cassius-like men who have a lean and hungry look, but fat men who sleep o' nights, and often sleep o' day too. This is the class of man we find engaged in promoting this company, men who are in every good thing that is going. We find the same list of names connected with the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Manufactures, and the chambers that govern the insurance and banking business of the State. They control practically all our financial institutions, and exercise altogether disproportionate powers in the control of the government of the country. It was just such a notion that Mr. Hughes had in mind when he said that the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Manufactures, and the Employers' Federation did not hesitate to bring to bear whatever pressure was possible upon the Legislature in order to secure what was desired. How truly Mr. Hughes depicted the conditions of things we find here to-day. "They did not hesitate to bring pressure to bear upon legislators in order to obtain what they desired." The very fact that we are now engaged in considering this Bill before many others, is proof that this little section to whom I have referred are able to bring pressure to bear upon legislators; they are able to have their desires and wishes granted, even though the whole business of the country must stand still or give way. These are the men so well described by Mr. Hughes. Here are more of his words—

The sacred band of privilege and monopoly—men denationalised, knowing no country, affecting a bastard patriotism.

Mr. Mann: I do not think that is fair.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am quoting Mr. Hughes's words. He was referring to men of this class.

Mr. Mann: Anyhow, it is not fair.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Mr. Hughes was referring to members of the Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures, and of the Employers' Federation. The people we are now discussing belong to one or other of these institutions.

Mr. Underwood: And are you accepting what Hughes said?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am quoting the language of the hon. member's National leader.

Mr. Underwood: Do you believe in Hughes?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know that I believe in him, but I believe that there were times when he spoke immortal truths, and this was one of them.

Mr. Richardson: What was the occasion?

Mr. Corboy: It was before he got his £25,000.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am quoting from an illustrious work which, I am sorry to say, is not to be found in our Parliamentary Library. The title of it is, "The Case for Labour," written by W. M. Hughes.

The Minister for Mines: It must be out of print.

Mr. Mann: Anyhow, it is not your opinion, is it?

Mr. McCallum: It is the opinion of your Leader.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I would not apply these words to the gentlemen to whom I am referring. The opinion is that of the hon. member's Federal Leader, and the leader of those members around him who are responsible for the Bill. But let me continue to quote what Mr. Hughes said—

They are screaming with jingoistic hysteria when necessary to "rig the marker" or befool the people. Gold is their god, the stock exchange their temple, the world their hunting ground, their fellow man the game they hunt, capture, sell and degrade. From their fellows they wring the fruits of their toil, save the means of bare subsistence; and with this ill-gotten gold purchase the mercenary ones of the earth body and soul.

Mr. Richardson: It sounds like Lenin or Trotsky.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, it sounds like Lenin or Trotsky.

Mr. Lutley: Lenin or Trotsky were never in it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If I were to employ such language, I would be classed with them. That was the opinion held by W. M. Hughes before he became associated with these very people. I do not know what has become of those men whom he described in that work. They must have got off the earth, because he denies that they are behind him to-day. They have not attached themselves to the Labour Party. They certainly are not to be found in Beaufort-street, but you will find them in St. George's-terrace. To which body or party they belong, I do not know. But certainly Mr. Hughes will not admit that they are associated with him to-day. So, I suppose, they have gone off the face of Australia. Regarding the Bill, I can only conclude that the Government are not anxious to get on with the business before the House. If the Government are not concerned about the passage of their Bills, I cannot be expected to use too much expedition in connection with this Bill. As an inducement for the public to subscribe to the shares of this company, the directors have made statements regarding the success of similar organisations in other parts of Australia. This is what they had to say in their prospectus—

The experience of similar companies shows that they become sound and substantial concerns and form very safe and profitable investments for capital. There is not an executor and trustee company formed in Australia that has afterwards ceased operations or failed to make progress. In Western Australia there is only one company carrying on this business,

and when formed in 1893 it was considered not only necessary to the community but also a prudent investment for capital. The success that has attended the operations of that company is well known, and it is apparent that the great growth of this State (practically all of which has taken place during that period) and the future development of the State, with its increasing population, affords an opening for the establishment of another executor and trustee company here.

Mr. Mann: That is a reasonable prospectus.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What benefit will such an institution be to the State? What service will it give to the people of Western Australia which they cannot freely obtain at the present time? That is the point. What will it add to the wealth and production of the State, and what will it do other than to provide a profitable investment for the shareholders? It is an absolute waste of money. We have a trustee company operating in this State at the present time, and that company finds itself able to cope with all the business that is offered. To set up another company to duplicate the staff, as it were, to employ a general manager at £2,000 per annum, an assistant manager at £1,200, and the attendant expenses of office and the staff—all this means unnecessary and costly duplication of services. The people have to pay for it all and the clients of the company will have to provide the money whereby the salaries will be paid, as well as the overhead expenses of the company. Why set up two businesses to cope with something that can be attended to by one? This is not the question of the establishment of an industry. This House does not give much of its time towards the consideration of measures having for their object the establishment of new industries in the State. With the condition in which we find ourselves, we might well devote our attention to the consideration of measures to assist in the establishment of new industries or to aid the development of existing ones. That would be doing a national service, doing something for the well being of the community. But to spend our time creating a new body, as we are asked to do, means nothing more than to set up in the State another of the already numerous parasitic organisations, another drain upon industry. If these people were to invest their £150,000 in some of our industries, to benefit the people on the land, or in connection with manufactures, some service would be done to the country. The proposal to establish this company will not return one additional pound of wealth to Western Australia. All it will do will be to provide opportunity for the payment of substantial dividends to the shareholders. Can we not be better employed at this juncture, within three weeks of the close of the session, in trying to do something which will work some good for the country rather than to help those who spend their time along St.

George's-terrace collecting fees and dividends?

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Before tea I was pointing out that the business which this company will carry on is already catered for, that its establishment will mean merely the duplication of an enterprise already in existence, and that whatever money be put into this company will be withdrawn from legitimate and desirable industry. A number of men are engaged in scouring the State in search of capital for the establishment of woollen mills. I understand they are meeting with a good deal of difficulty.

Mr. Mann: Investors in this State have done their share in contributing that capital.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But those concerned in this proposed company would be doing a national service if they were to put the £150,000 constituting the capital of this company into the establishment of woollen mills, for they would thus be aiding something of real value to the State. Alternatively they would be rendering a service to the community if they were to put the money into agriculture or mining or the pastoral industry, or even into any of our secondary industries. For years past the cry has been for increased production. The solution of the State's difficulties depends largely upon increased production. The two essential factors affecting increased production are population and capital. The Premier this afternoon introduced Loan Estimates providing for the expenditure during the next 12 months of more than four millions of money, every penny of which will go towards the development of our resources, and so will serve to increase production. By that means we hope to see the position of the State greatly improved. There is no other way. If there be any money available for investment, the House should do all it can to turn it into channels where it will result in increased production. On the other hand we should do everything possible to prevent its investment in an enterprise where it will serve only to furnish profit for capital. A valuable building will be utilised for the carrying on of the business of the proposed company, and an expensive staff will be engaged merely to do work for which ample provision already has been made. It means wasted energy and wasted capital. The House ought not to encourage it, for it is all tending to intensify the policy of centralisation. It will be another parasitic company drawing its profits from the producers. The great problem confronting the people of the Commonwealth is presented by the concentration in our capital cities of more than 50 per cent. of the total population, in consequence of which the smaller half, engaged in primary industry, have to provide sufficient wealth to maintain the whole of that large parasitic section dwelling in the cities. Has any member been asked by any citizen to

assist in the establishment of this proposed new company? Not one. No public requirement will be met by the new company. It is exclusively for the benefit of the shareholders. The hon. member responsible for the Bill would be doing something much more advantageous to the State if he endeavoured to divert into more wholesome channels the money which will be put into this company. Some day there will be established in this State a public trustee. The member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) has shown from the records of New Zealand the value of a business of that kind. This, and insurance, are two of the functions which the State ought to undertake. Strangely enough, at a time when money is scarce and the State is languishing in financial difficulties, when we have to go to the overseas money lender to enable us to carry on even some of the ordinary services, we have no Bill for the appointment of a public trustee, but instead we are asked to sanction the appointment of this parasitic company. A perusal of the expenditure from loan fund last year will show that we have been spending considerable sums from loan on work and services wholly of a non-productive character which ought to have been provided out of ordinary revenue. That being so, one would think the Government would avail themselves of this opportunity to introduce legislation providing for the appointment of the public trustee. It is undoubted that a public trustee, charging the ordinary fees now charged by the one institution of its kind existing in the State, would represent a profitable investment. Similarly in respect of insurance, we find from the report of the Agricultural Department that a very substantial profit, amounting to something over £30,000, was made last year by the insurance companies doing business with the Industries Assistance Board. All these things which stand out as being desirable for Government undertaking, which ensure almost a certainty of great profit, are left to the "guinea pigs." They are left to the investor. It is only when a proposition is doubtful from its profit earning possibilities that it is left to the Government. The Government are always asked to embark on those things in respect of which the private individual buttons up his pocket, considering the risk too great. Some again do not mind being interested in a concern if the Government find the major portion of the capital required. In directions such as this and such as insurance where a quick and safe return is assured, the Government stand off and leave it to the class of men whom Mr. Hughes described as being smug-faced, round-bellied men upon whom the sun shines every day. These smug-faced, round-bellied men should not be encouraged.

The Premier: Are you referring to the member for North-East Fremantle or the member for Leonora?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No; the majority of men in Western Australia who come within Mr. Hughes' description are to be found in

and around the Terrace—the St. George's terrace farmers and the Barrack-street miners, upon whom the sun shines every day. I suppose there has not been an opening for safe, sound, secure investment for some little time, and that the sun of their prosperity has been suffering an eclipse and so, in order that their sun may shine again the hon. member was induced to come down with this innocent-looking little bantam to provide for these gentlemen, whose names so frequently appear in desirable enterprises of this kind. It has already been stated that a public trustee has been established in Great Britain for many years. I know there are opposed to the principle of State trading those who, under a misapprehension or misconception of the whole principle of State trading, consider that the State ought not to engage in enterprises of any kind. To those I would say that Government control of business of this kind does not come within the category of State trading in the ordinary acceptation of the term. That is established by the fact that Great Britain, a country which up to date has not embarked in the slightest degree on a policy of State control of trade or Government trading concerns, has had a public trustee since 1908. As showing that the people of that country appreciate the existence of this institution and have given it their business and custom to an ever increasing extent every year, I propose to quote from the latest report available to me. The report was laid before both Houses of Parliament and is signed "C. J. Stewart, Public Trustee." It states:—

The chief features of the present report may be summarised as follows:—(1) The continued remarkable expansion of the work of the Department; the business transacted in the 12 months now reported upon being 32 per cent. greater than that of the previous 12 months and 175 per cent. greater than that of the first complete year. (2) The satisfactory financial position reached by the Department. The surplus in excess of expenditure is now £11,000.

That may not seem a very large sum, but it will be evident from the succeeding portions of the report why the surplus is not greater. It is due to the fact that the object was not to make large profits, but was merely to charge such fees as would cover the cost of administration so that the general public should get the benefit.

(3) An announcement of a reduction of the income fee by the New Fees Order, 1912, rendered possible by this satisfactory financial position. (4) An explanation of the amendment of the Rules and Fees Order carried out by the new Rules and Fees Order, 1912, and (5) a notice of certain suggested amendments of the Public Trustee Act which from experience gained in the practical administration of trusts and estates since the Act came into operation, appear desirable in the interests of the public. It will be seen that after charging the Department in full with every

expense incurred since the 1st October, 1907, to the 31st March, 1912, and allowing for depreciation upon furniture and typewriting machines, the deficit unavoidably incurred in the first two years of the department, which at the end of the first two years amounted to £5,208, has now been entirely obliterated, and I enter upon the fifth year of office with a clear surplus of £11,000. In the four years a large business has been negotiated with all classes, in all parts of England and Wales, approximating in value to some £70,000,000, which business has been secured, and a wide connection built up entirely out of revenue.

There is the result of four years operations of the Act in Great Britain. Surely if it was thought desirable by the British Parliament to engage in this business, it is sound and good enough for Western Australia. Dealing with the particulars of the business transacted, the report says:—

The current business up to 31st March, 1912, is £24,681,987. Applications from intending testators requesting that the public trustee should act as executor, 2,029—£44,030,000. Total value of the business of all kinds negotiated since 1st January, 1908, £68,711,987. 1,166 wills have been deposited for safe custody. It will be seen that the business of all kinds shows a steady and remarkable expansion. It has come from all classes in England and Wales.

Mr. Davies: It is not many out of 45 millions of people.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member should bear in mind that the business has been conducted for only four years.

Mr. Davies: Yes, and that not too many people leave wills.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Exactly; the great majority of those who pass over are not worried with the leaving of estates.

It has come from all classes in England and Wales. Persons of means above the average have availed themselves as freely of the advantage of the statute, as any other class. It would seem that these value the security of State guarantee, the economy of a permanent trustee, the freedom to nominate an executor or trustee who will certainly survive them, who from the measure of his success is necessarily highly skilled and experienced in his duties, and who, being remunerated, acts without any sense of personal obligation arising. Moreover, the fact that the fees are not to be profit bearing gives a mutual character to the Department; so that those who resort to it assist each other in effecting a reduction in the cost of administration. It is undeniable also that the success which has attended the work of investment has proved an attraction.

The report indicates that a very considerable proportion of the people who have been doing business with the public trustee in England are those of the middle class at any rate—they are not drawn from the working

class section—but they were quick to appreciate the value of doing business with an institution which has behind it the guarantee of the State, as distinct from doing business with a company such as the present one with a capital of £150,000. Should disaster overtake the State and the company be overwhelmed in financial ruin, those who have placed in the company's hands the management of their estates will have no redress.

Mr. Mann: The company would do just as the State would do—reinvest the funds.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But with this difference: If the State's investment of the funds turned out to be unsuccessful, the whole security of the State is there to make good the loss and the persons concerned or the estates would not suffer in any way. But not so with the company. Undoubtedly they would endeavour to invest their funds and administer the estates to the best of their ability, but we know that even in the recent history of Australia, some of the most astute business men and men credited with being keen financiers have brought ruin not only to themselves but to a large number of people who were doing business with them. We cannot forget that in Victoria in 1893 nearly the whole of the banking institutions went broke. Many building societies in which large numbers of people especially workers, had their all invested, also closed their doors and the financial collapse brought absolute ruin upon thousands of people, who had no redress whatever. People who went to the bank the next day found it was impossible to withdraw their money.

The Premier: They all recovered.

Hon. P. COLLIER: All the banks did not recover.

The Premier: They paid their notes.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I shall maintain the truth of my assertion until the Premier proves that I am wrong.

The Premier: I can prove it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier will have plenty of time to do so before I sit down.

The Premier: When we adjourn the debate, I will show you the proof.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We shall not be adjourning the debate for a little while.

The Premier: We will put the question.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier cannot do that while I am on my feet, and I am not exhausted yet. Fortunately I am in fairly good health. Under the heading of the investment of these funds, the report has something interesting to say—

Investment to-day has become as complicated as it is extensive, so that a private trustee in estates of any value can rarely hope to do more for a trust than give it the benefit of his judgment in selecting those upon whose opinion in such matters he must largely rely. Nor can he usually provide any organisation for keeping under ready observation the investments when made and thus minimise the risk of loss and depreciation. On the other hand, the Public Trustee com-

pares favourably with other Corporate Bodies in that apart from his experience and organisation, he has no business interests which may conflict with his duty, nor has he anything to gain by recommending any particular stocks. With these advantages working under the guarantee of the State he presents a favourable medium for prudent and profitable investment. His services in this respect in connection with large estates have often been of marked assistance; while there is a growing tendency for ladies and others of smaller means who may be under serious disadvantages in knowing how best to invest their funds to resort to the Department, evidently primarily to obtain the security and benefit of sound and profitable investment. In this connection declaration of trusts which have the advantage of leaving moneys handed to the Public Trustee at the call of the owner have recently proved to be extremely popular, and it is now becoming more generally known that moneys or investments whether large or small, representing savings or the like, can be transferred to the Public Trustee and invested in sound securities so as to produce well over 4 per cent. This class of business must largely increase in the future.

An important point is contained in that paragraph. The public trustee has no interest likely to conflict with his duty to the public. It is conceivable that members of the Perpetual Trustee Company, even those prominent, powerful, influential, smug, round-bellied gentlemen—

The Premier: Don't be rude to the member for Leonora.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Who are interested in this, may have personal interests which will conflict with those of the clients of the company. That is an important point in the administration of estates, particularly those of deceased persons, in favour of the public trustee. I presume the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) has an effective reply to these points. He is taking ample notes.

Mr. Mann: I am just jotting down your name.

The Minister for Mines: He will want your address next, from force of habit.

Mr. Corboy: Keep your hands in your pockets.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It has been found possible in England to reduce the fees when the revenue of the department has been sufficient to cover the expenditure. Wherever there has been a surplus, the benefit has been passed on to the clients of the department by way of reduced fees. Can one imagine this private company, finding it has a substantial surplus at the end of its year's operations, giving to the general public the benefit of reduced fees? One of the arguments advanced in favour of the creation of this trust is that there would be competition between it and the W.A. Trustee Company.

Mr. Mann: The manager of the W.A. Trustee Coy. said there was room for another company.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He could not say there would be no room.

Mr. Corboy: He did not say another company was necessary.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If a town with a population of 100 people had a dozen grocery shops, there would still be room for one more.

Mr. Mann: You do not agree with monopolies.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It all depends on circumstances. A monopoly in itself is not an evil. Monopolies are sometimes good things. A monopoly conducted in the interests of the general public eliminates waste and the cost of—

The Minister for Mines: Competition.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes.

Mr. Davies: We have no monopolies like that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: A State monopoly, or one that is effectively controlled by legislation, may be a good thing. If there are several establishments of a similar character in a small community, there is the collective cost of maintenance, overhead charges and the running of such establishments. One business might be able to cater for all the requirements of that community, thus eliminating waste and the needless expenditure associated with competitive businesses. I am in favour of monopolies controlled in the public interest. The hon. member's argument is of no value unless the competition is for the benefit of the general community. That can be brought about only by efficient service and reduced costs.

Mr. Mann: And a desire to get better investments.

Hon. P. COLLIER: All those factors are present in the case of one company.

Mr. Mann: Another company would mean that both companies would look for the best possible investments for their money.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It would mean instead of one manager there would be two; instead of one building housing the employees there would be two, and the costs would be duplicated all round, the expenditure having to come out of the pockets of the clients of the two concerns. Can it be imagined that two companies of this character would cut each other's throat by reducing charges and fees?

Mr. Mann: The fees are fixed by statute.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The fees cannot exceed a certain amount.

Mr. Mann: The maximum is fixed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Later on I intend to move an amendment that will mean the fixing of the fees to be charged by this company. I hope the hon. member will support me. If it is intended only to serve the public interest by means of this company, he ought not to object to what would amount to a fair return on the capital invested.

Capt. Carter: Would you make it apply to both companies?

Hon. P. COLLIER: That would hardly be possible.

Capt. Carter: It could not be made to apply only to one company.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We must make a start somewhere. If we have been going along wrong lines in one case, there is no reason why we should perpetuate the wrong. There will still be a monopoly, whether one company exists or both exist. They will not compete with each other. There will be an honourable understanding between them, and their fees, charges and commissions will be arranged by agreement. They will have an association to fix prices, in just the same way that prices are fixed for nearly all our requirements of life. There is no such thing as competition. The day of competition is entirely past. There was a time when men might logically argue in favour of what is known as the law of supply and demand, in that if the law had free and full operation the public would get the benefit in more efficient service and probably in lower cost. But in these days competition has been entirely abandoned; there are monopolies and combinations which fix fees and prices that the public have no alternative but to pay.

Capt. Carter: It depends on the amount of work turned out per day per man.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is a remarkable thing that some men and some newspapers are always commenting on the amount of work turned out per day per man. It is time that the people who talk and the newspapers which print such stuff should produce some tangible evidence of the existence of a policy of go slow. If a man who from boyhood has been chained to a workshop or a factory, chained to it for 40 or 50 years from the blowing of the whistle at 7 in the morning until the whistle blows again at 5 in the evening, living a life of economic slavery, finds himself becoming a little weary as he approaches the close of his life's journey, we are told that he is going slow.

Mr. McCallum: The member for Leederville will be seeking the votes of such men before long.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does this apply to the Bill?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, Mr. Speaker; but I think I am justified in replying to the interjection. We never hear anything about a policy of go slow in the case of capital. But the people who feed and clothe the world are slandered day after day in the columns of the newspapers and on the platforms. There was no question of going slow when the war was on. It was the people who are now charged with going slow, the workers—using the term in its broadest sense, as including the vast bulk of our population—by whom the supremacy of the British nation was maintained. The place to find the essential policy of go slow is among the smug-faced, round-bellied gentlemen of St. George's-terrace, who smoke large cigars and casually drift in and out of offices to draw fees; the men who enjoy life, upon whom the sun shines every

day, and a very bright moon in the evenings.

Hon. Mr. Corboy drew attention to the state of the House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes; it is just as well to have some of the loafers in, the go-slow people.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have no doubt whatever that we shall see the go slow policy in operation again before very long so far as the benches opposite are concerned. This report indicates what has been accomplished in Great Britain—

Reference has been made to the support which the department has received from persons of means. The average value of an estate for probate in this country is about £4,000. The average value of the estates in the hands of the Public Trustee is £8,000, which in like manner, as he has small estates and compensation cases, implies that there are many large estates there. It has been thought just, therefore, that a reduction of fees should be first applied to the large estates, where the rate of fee has been felt to be somewhat high. Accordingly, where the income is over £2,000 a year, half the former fee is to be given up on the excess; that is to say, 10s. per cent. only will be charged where £1 per cent. has hitherto been collected.

On those estates, therefore, after only four years' operation the fees have been reduced by 50 per cent., undeniably a substantial concession. The report proceeds—

The Act provides that the fees are not to be profit-bearing.

Imagine our putting such a provision as that in this Bill!

Although the department is at the end of only its fourth year, and carries a liability on current trusts valued at 21 million pounds, compared to which a surplus of £11,000, entirely provided out of revenue, is insignificant, and although a large number of small cases, which the Public Trustee is expected to take, and feels it his duty to take, are not remunerative, nevertheless a business which has behind it the guarantee of the Consolidated Revenue Fund is not concerned to accumulate unduly large reserves. It is the intention of the Public Trustee, therefore, to keep the economical principles of the Act closely in view, and make concessions as quickly as prudent. Should the prosperity of the office continue, as there seems no reason to doubt, further reductions will be effected as soon as possible.

That paragraph indicates the very striking difference between a public trustee and a private institution of this kind. This company is being formed for no other purpose than that of profit earning, which the public trustee expressly disclaims. The people who are promoting this company do not care about the public needs. No doubt we shall find in the annual report of this company a repeti-

tion of such information as we had last night. I can imagine Mr. Monger, the chairman of directors, rising in years ahead at the annual meeting to congratulate the shareholders upon the wonderful success of the year's operations, and announcing that a 20 per cent. dividend is available after payment of dividend duty, and that a substantial sum has been carried to reserve, and a further sum carried forward for future operations. There are big profits in the business.

Mr. Teesdale: Not if you fix maximum fees.

Mr. Mann: They are fixed in the Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then I shall claim the support of the member for Perth in fixing the maximum in such a way that there will be no escape. I think the provisional directors are men who will desire a free hand as to profits and dividends. The administration of estates of deceased persons should not be a matter for profit making. It is essentially a matter to be undertaken by the State.

Mr. Mann: The passing of this Bill will not prevent the State doing so, if desired. It will rather educate the people.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The passing of the Bill will hinder it to this extent, that it will create another vested interest adverse to the establishment of a public trustee office here. By passing the Bill we shall multiply the number of men whose interest will be directed in opposition to the State embarking upon this business. Can one imagine the five directors whose names I have mentioned—Messrs. Monger, Nathan, and Alexander, Mr. J. J. Holmes, M.L.C., and Dr. Saw, M.L.C.—in the event of this Bill passing, and in the event of a Bill for the establishment of a public trustee coming down next year or the year after, remaining indifferent as to the passing of the latter measure? Can hon. members imagine them being silent and unconcerned as to whether the State intended to embark in competition with them? Earlier in the evening I quoted the statement of the Prime Minister whose word will surely not be discounted by those whose Australian Nationalist leader he is.

Mr. Latham: He was not the hon. member's leader when that statement was made.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He may not have been.

Mr. Mann: He has probably changed his views since.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Does the member for Perth know that the Prime Minister stated that these people concern themselves in influencing the legislature regarding both legislation and administration?

Mr. McCallum: He has had a good experience, too.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If only he would speak from the fulness of his experience of recent years as to how far these people have been able to influence the Government of the country, he would be able to describe it in still more graphic language than he indulged in when he put up the case for Labour.

Mr. Davies: It is only fair to say that some of them want to scrap him now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know that that section belongs to the class known as big business men who want to control the legislature.

Mr. Davies: They showed their hands in Victoria and South Australia.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But they are not in the inner circle; they are in the second or third degree lower down.

Mr. McCallum: It is only in accordance with the natural order of things that they will adopt that attitude when they have finished with him. It will come the way of the member for Guildford yet.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for Perth suggests that the passing of the Bill will not prevent the State undertaking this business in the future. The more we permit people by Acts of Parliament to establish themselves in this business, the stronger will be the opposition to the State embarking in it in the future. If we were living in normal times and if the country were governed by Parliament or by the people through Parliament, it would not matter. In such circumstances, we might reasonably rely upon Parliament being influenced only by considerations of public welfare. When we realise that we live in times when the Government are run and controlled by outside coteries, cliques and individuals, it is a different matter. When we have men sitting on directorates, issuing ultimatums to the Government that unless funds are handed out at once—probably the next order will be, "If you do not pay up, get out"—I have no doubt that these gentlemen exercise sufficient influence to bring about the downfall of the Government at any time they like. It is because I am convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that the passing of the Bill will militate against the State embarking upon this business in future, that I oppose the Bill.

Hon. A. Thomson interjected.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Do not disturb the sleeping "go-slows"!

The Premier: We were not asleep.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I was not referring to the Premier; I was referring to the "go-slows" outside. Dealing with the general administration of the office the report goes on to say—

As this report deals with the first four complete years of the work of the department and the four and a half years of the five years for which the first public trustee was appointed, it may perhaps be expected of me that I should comment briefly upon the position which has been reached in the five years covered in the appointment. The conviction and judgment of the founders of the office have been proved to be well founded.

Mr. Mann: Do you know how many public companies there are in Great Britain?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know.

Mr. Mann: There are some, I believe.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course there are. There are criminals in every country, but are we to welcome criminals here?

Mr. Mann: Apparently the public companies do not fear the Government trust in England.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Perhaps not, but that may be because the House of Commons is not so much under the influence of outside gentlemen and corporations as is the Parliament of Western Australia. I know that powerful money interests may influence legislation in the Old Country, but I also know that the constitutional history of Britain shows that at times when the actual well-being of the people was concerned, they did not hesitate to take definite steps, even if those steps involved the cutting off of a king's head. Many times during the course of history the Parliament of Great Britain has shown that it has not been subservient to moneyed influences outside its four walls. I hope that explanation will satisfy the member for Perth. Continuing, the report states:—

There was, and is, evidently a widespread public need for a public trustee. Nevertheless, in an undertaking of this character, to invite the public voluntarily to place their most important, confidential, and personal matters in the hands of a Government department was something in the nature of an experiment. It might easily have failed, or have reached only a constant moderate measure of success, whereas on the contrary the business has increased at a remarkable rate year by year. There is little doubt that the success experienced in meeting the public need is due to the adoption of the business-like policy of organisation stipulated for, with wise forethought, by the Parliamentary Committee on Trusts of 1895.

Later on the report states—

As referred to in my former reports the policy of the department has developed in the staff a capacity for initiative, for taking responsibility and for promptness in administration.

The report concludes with complimentary references to the services rendered by the staff during the year, and it is signed by C. J. Stewart, Public Trustee. I hope the member for Perth will consider the advisability of withdrawing the Bill even at this stage.

Mr. Mann: You have been more serious in some of your statements than in that one.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Not at all. Does the member for Perth think he is serving a public need? Why do not these gentlemen who are interesting themselves in the establishment of this trust, turn their energies and attention together with their capital, into more legitimate channels?

Mr. Mann: You will admit they have done their share in that direction.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They are certainly doing their share for themselves in connection with the Bill. They could invest their money in a hundred ways, all of which would be of greater advantage to the State. Our

industries are crying out for money to assist in development.

Mr. Marshall drew attention to the state of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House, and there is a quorum present. The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. Teesdale: That was a false alarm!

Hon. P. COLLIER: A quorum consists of 17 members, and I trust they can bear the strain.

Mr. Mann: Some members are tired from walking in and out!

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have no doubt the Bill will receive whole-hearted support in certain quarters. There are people willing and anxious to assist in promoting schemes and ventures of this kind. They spend their time ferreting round to see whether it is possible to form a company here or a trust there, not with the object of rendering any service to the State or assisting the material welfare of Western Australia, but solely for the purpose of finding means to augment their own bank balances. That is what is behind this particular company. The men who are concerned in promoting it are those who exercise considerable influence, not only in the private life of the State, but in the public life and Government of the country. There are to be found along St. George's-terrace men who are able to influence the course of administration and of legislation. The time of the House is taken up in order that a Bill might be passed solely in the interests of certain persons. Have we nothing better to do than devote our time to work of this description? Will the well being of any section of the community be affected if the Bill fail to pass? Certainly not. With a Notice Paper full of important business, we are asked to give attention to the consideration of this measure, and that, too, at an early hour in the evening. Yet before the session closes we shall be asked to sit into the small hours of the morning dealing with Bills of the utmost importance. Next week, when the House will be discussing the Loan Estimates, involving the expenditure of over £4,000,000 of money on projects intimately affecting the life of the community, members will be giving sleepy, indifferent consideration to the business. Only a small proportion of members are prepared to concentrate thought on the questions before the House. Hour after hour we have but a dozen members dealing with business affecting thousands of taxpayers. Nevertheless we are now asked to give consideration to this Bill, described as a boddlers' Bill, a description not altogether inapt. It is from the industries of the State that all the cost of Government comes. If we overload those industries with taxes and charges we shall be doing something which will seriously hamper the development of the State. What money may be available should be invested in productive industry instead of being put into parasitic

companies. The more opportunities we provide for the establishment of that class of enterprise, the greater the burden we impose on the taxpayers. This company will require a fairly large office staff. How much better would it be if that staff were engaged in productive industry, instead of being occupied with something of no real benefit to the community? It is because of companies such as this that we have in Australia the spectacle of bloated capital cities and a sparsely populated hinterland. About 45 per cent. of the population of Western Australia are concentrated between Midland Junction and Fremantle. No wonder we hear of empty spaces and their danger, not only to the State but to the Commonwealth! We are merely in the pioneering stage. All our work lies ahead of us. We have this great country to develop. To do that we require men and women, but not in city offices. We should avoid the multiplication of offices in the city. Men and women should be assisted to engage in the industries that count. It is a wrong policy for Parliament to aid in the establishment of a company such as is proposed in the Bill, a company which can have no beneficial influence on the life of the community. The borrowing of large sums of money each year has the effect of creating a fictitious prosperity while piling up the national debt and creating interest and sinking fund charges the annual payments of which tend to load down the State with a burden of taxation. Every spare hour we have should be devoted to dealing with Bills to promote the welfare of the State, and not to the consideration of a paltry measure of this kind intended to benefit merely a few individuals. Because a coterie of men who spend their leisure hours along the terrace and have considerable influence in the commercial life of the community think it desirable, purely in their own interests, to form a company to provide investment for them is no reason why we should endorse their attitude. I ask members on the cross-benches to disregard the fact that Mr. Monger is chairman of directors.

Mr. Latham: He will not be taken into consideration in dealing with the Bill.

Mr. McCallum: Has this Bill been before caucus?

The Minister for Mines: There is plenty of time yet.

Hon. P. COLLIER: All the profits distributed in the city from corporations of this kind are drawn from industry which is mainly agricultural, and country members would be serving the interests of those they represent by refusing to sanction such legislation.

Mr. Davies: People are not compelled to go to the company, are they?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course not, but what will the company do? The people who go to them will have to pay the fees and charges for the maintenance of the institution and the £2,000 a year for the manager.

Mr. Mann: They are sure of having their estates well controlled, and this is not always the case when you go to a private individual.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They are not compelled to go to a private individual; there is already a trustee company in Perth.

Capt. Carter: Can you trust them?

Hon. P. COLLIER: If they are evil, I do not wish to add to the evil. If there is need for another trustee, the sound and sensible course is to create a public trustee. There can be no question as to the success of it. The Labour policy is not involved. England has had a public trustee since 1908 and New Zealand has had a public trustee for 20 years, and neither of those countries has had a Labour Government.

The Minister for Works: Politics does not enter into it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, and no question of Labour principle is involved. It has been accepted in the most conservative countries that it is a good thing, in the interests of the people, to have a public trustee. Therefore, why do we hesitate? I hope the Bill will be rejected on the second reading so that we may devote our attention to business which counts.

Mr. Mann: I thought you were going to move something in Committee.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I intend to do so if the Bill is taken into Committee, but we shall save the time of the country by rejecting the Bill on the second reading.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1922-23.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 23rd November; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Department of the Minister for Justice (Hon. H. P. Colebatch, M.L.C., Minister; the Minister for Justice, Hon. J. Scaddan, in charge of the votes).

Vote—Minister for Justice, £78,528:

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [9.8]: The Estimates of the Department of the Minister for Justice call for very few remarks by way of introduction. Members will observe that the figures for the year disclose an estimated decrease in the expenditure of £2,704. This department controls the Crown Law offices, Electoral, Land Titles, Stipendiary Magistracy, Supreme Court, and the Arbitration Court transfer from the Colonial Secretary's department. During the year the Chief Electoral Officer retired and a fresh appointment was made.

Mr. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [9.9]: I am pleased that the administration of the Arbitration Court has been centralised and brought under one heading. Previously half the administration was under

the Colonial Secretary and the other half under the Minister for Justice. Anyone having business with the court now has only the one head to deal with. This will facilitate the business considerably. There is no comparison between the value of the work carried out by the Arbitration Court and that of the other courts. The expenditure of a couple of thousand pounds is all that the Arbitration Court is costing the State for administration, as against something over £70,000 for the other courts. The Arbitration Court is undoubtedly the most important court. Whereas other courts sit for days on end to determine the ownership of a few pounds, this court decides the ownership of hundreds of thousands of pounds during the course of a year. It actually fixes the standard of living for the industrial community, and has under its control over 1,000 apprentices. The work it is doing, therefore, is considerable. I appeal to the Government to give the court better facilities to carry out its work. There is a tremendous congestion of work in the court. I was down there on Tuesday last endeavouring to get a decision in a dispute that occurred nearly two years ago. The whole of the delay has not been due to the court, but no decision has yet been given, and I was unable to secure a date. The staff is altogether inadequate to keep the necessary filing and work up to date, and provide the facilities that those having business at the court are entitled to. I am not finding fault with the members of the staff. I consider the Registrar a very capable officer, who is most obliging to all parties and gives sound advice and assistance to all who seek it. But special care should be taken in selecting the staff for the court. The ordinary clerical official is not always suitable for a job of that description. To be successful in the business of that court, a man requires special training. Better accommodation should be provided for the staff and for those doing business at the court. There is no place where one can have a private conversation with the Registrar, which makes it awkward for the representatives of the unions, as well as the employers. The parties should be able to talk frankly with the Registrar, who should be in a position to win the confidence of both sides. A clear expression of opinion facilitates the work and leads to better relationships between the parties. At present there is no privacy; there are only two rooms for the staff, and it is impossible to have a private conversation with the Registrar. The court itself is eminently suitable. I understand the Government contemplated accommodating the court in other premises. I hope the court will not be moved into the bigger courts of the Supreme Court building, because the present court is compact and the parties are not far removed from the bench, and the proceedings therefore, are not so stiff as they would be if the bench were as far away as in the Supreme Court. The compactness and the

fact of the parties and the bench being close together engenders a more friendly feeling. There is no conference room, and no place where the clerk can confer with either side in the settlement of issues. It is essential that a suitable conference room be provided. There is no private office for any member of the court. There are no public officials in this State occupying such important positions as members of the court who have not offices of their own. Each member of the court should be provided with his own room, in which to transact business, or interview any person who had business with him. There is only an outside room at the back which is used by all the members of the court. There should also be other rooms for the staff, as well as accommodation for members of the court, added to the present building. That work should be put in hand immediately. The court should create a library in which should be kept a record of the decisions of industrial tribunals in Australia and in other countries, as well as the agreements arrived at in connection with different classes of workers. This information should be available to both sides. The records there are those of the Eastern States. They are fairly well kept, but it is very difficult to get information with regard to other countries. Each party has to find its own way of obtaining such information, and having got it, uses it to its own advantage, and suppresses that which it is desirable from its own view point to suppress. If an industrial library were established, containing information of this nature, it would be available for the benefit of all parties interested and would be of considerable value to them. It is not possible for the court to bring about a settlement of the present dispute in the iron trade? If the President had allowed the court to function, this dispute would not have developed as it has done. There would never have been a stoppage of work. The President has refused to allow the court to function and the whole of the iron industry in the private establishments is hung up. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers secured a 44 hour week from the Federal court. As soon as the terms expired, the employers cited them before the Federal court and obtained an alteration to the 48 hour week. When the 48-hour week was awarded to the amalgamated engineers, the employers locked out the rest of the unions, the Australian engineers, the boilermakers, and the moulders, with the object of altering their week to 48 hours. The employers forced this on the other unions, notwithstanding the fact that neither of these unions was a party to the case, and that the boilermakers had an application pending before the State court. Before there was any stoppage of work, a compulsory conference was summoned, and the judge was asked to take action. In face of the fact that the Federal court's decision had been given in the case of the amalgamated engineers, the judge refused to act. He declined to take the case in connection with either of the

other unions, whose members were not involved in the Federal case, thus denying them the right to get a decision from the State Arbitration Court. The Government have taken a stand in regard to the 44-hour week so far as the Implement Works and the timber mills are concerned. They have appealed to the Privy Council on the ground that the Federal Court had no jurisdiction over the State instrumentality. They have not recognised the award, or paid the wages, or fulfilled any of the conditions which the court awarded, but they have continued the 44 hours week, and not enforced the 48 hour week. They have allowed matters to go on pending the appeal, which, I believe, to be right in the circumstances. When we were discussing arbitration a little while ago, the Premier admitted that once a case is cited before the court neither party has a right to endeavour to alter the decision or force the conditions on the other side. Whilst the boilermakers had a case pending in the court, the employers enforced the additional four hours work upon the members of that union. That amounted to a distinct lock-out. There can be no questioning that decision. The judge clearly laid it down in the case of the printing industry trouble a few months ago. While the boilermakers had their papers awaiting the decision of the court, the employers locked them out, and the judge refused to refer the case to court for decision. He is refusing to allow the court to function, and is going slow on the job. This dispute could be settled if the judge carried out his duties, referred the case to the court, and allowed it to be determined there. It has always been the practice in the event of a compulsory conference for the President of the court to order work to be resumed on the conditions operating at the time work ceased, and to arrange at the first opportunity to hear the case, and arrive at a decision. If that practice was followed in this case, I am of opinion that it would end the dispute. The A.S.E. has pleaded guilty to being on strike. The judge could have referred into court the case of the other unions which are locked out, and the dispute could have been settled even before work had ceased. Under Section 59 of the Act, the court has power to deal with a case on an application from a union which is interested in the industry affected. It reads—

An industrial dispute may relate either to an industry in which the party by whom the dispute is referred for settlement to the court as hereinafter provided is engaged, concerned or interested, or to any industry or industries related thereto.

The boilermakers and moulders cannot be said not to be so interested or related to engineering work through this particular dispute. The A.S.E., whose constitution is similar to that of the amalgamated engineers, are involved, but because one union is on strike, all the other unions are affected as well as the whole of the iron industry.

The Minister for Works: They stopped work.

Mr. McCALLUM: The employers locked the door, and forced a different working week on the members of these unions. The boiler-makers have an application pending before the court, and it might be arranged that the decision given in one case could be accepted for the lot.

The Minister for Works: Would you give a guarantee that this would be the case?

Mr. McCALLUM: I cannot do that; I merely throw out the suggestion. If the Government will adopt it, I think it will lead to a settlement of the dispute. If the President took the usual course at compulsory conferences of ordering work to be resumed on the conditions operating at the time when work ceased, and acted under Section 59, and took the case of the boiler-makers and the moulders, or of the Australian Engineers, heard the case right away before going into recess, and announced the decision of the court, I am of opinion that the dispute would terminate. This is the most important work that any court could have to perform. The President is taken away from arbitration work, and I believe will be engaged on Full Court work directly. We found him sitting on divorce cases while the arbitration work was being hung up, and the iron industry allowed to stagnate. The mere possession of a wife is nothing in comparison with the effect of this position upon the standard of living for the men, women, and children affected by the trouble. The question of the possession of a wife could well stand over for a term.

The Minister for Mines: It may be the possession of the wife by someone else.

Mr. McCALLUM: He could wait too. Is there any Full Court decision likely to be given that will mean as much to the country as keeping this industry going? If the strike goes on much longer, a serious position will be created. The whole of the iron trade is hung up. The machinery in the different factories cannot much longer continue to operate without attention. It is surprising that it has been kept running so long. It has been patched up, and is being worked under great difficulties. The machinery connected with the different establishments cannot continue to run much longer. I have no authority to make the suggestion I have submitted, but I am prepared to meet the men and advocate it. In my judgment it will find acceptance. If the suggestion could be adopted, it should be adopted. The fact that the President is engaged in Full Court work should not mean that this trouble must stand over. If necessary the court could take its recess later on in the year, for it is an urgent matter that this trouble should end. No move can be expected from the side of the employers. There is a clause in the Commonwealth award which provides that any employer or employers' organisation can make application to any court of summary jurisdiction to have a de-

claration made that the employees are on strike, and the award then lapses. But no employer has attempted to apply to the court for a declaration that the Amalgamated Engineers are on strike. The employers recognise that the award is all in their favour, and therefore they are content to sit back and let the dispute be fought out by direct action. My aim is to get the wheels of industry going again in the shortest space of time. Work would never have ceased if the President of the Arbitration Court had exercised his powers. I hope my present suggestion will be adopted without delay. There are three unions other than the Amalgamated Engineers involved. The members of each of these three unions are out without any prospect of redress, and it a poor lookout if the Government cannot find some means, through the Arbitration Act, to secure redress for men who are not parties to the strike, and who are out of work solely because of the action of the employers. I see no difficulty in giving effect to my suggestion. Other Arbitration Court work can stand over. I feel sure no other union would complain if that course were taken. Thus work might be resumed before Christmas. The strike cannot last much longer without hundreds of additional men being involved. If the cessation of work is further prolonged, the machinery in the factories is sure to break down. At the instance of the unions, two compulsory conferences have been held—one before and one after the cessation of work. However, the judge refuses to act; and that is an extraordinary stand for him to take in view of the provision for compulsory conferences, a provision adopted at the instance of the judge when Attorney General. One of the other unions affected, either the boiler makers, or the engineers' moulders, or the Australian Engineers, could cite a case, on which a decision could be given. That is the simple and direct way, and the Arbitration Court is there to hear the case. Surely the Government will not sit by and allow the law to remain inoperative. It should be pointed out to the judge that his duty is, clearly, to act in this way. He may refuse to hear one union because he may consider that union to be on strike under the Federal Arbitration Act. But the other unions are not on strike; they are locked out. Let the decision be given on their case.

Mr. LUTEY (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [9.35]: As to the office of the Official Trustee for maintaining which the country paid last year £1,978, I wish to point out that the Trustee Company have to go to the Official Trustee for a good deal of work in connection with probates. Would it not be possible for the existing office, with a small addition to the staff and some reorganisation, to do the work that is done by public trustees in other countries? Here we have a proposed trustee company asking permission to start in business. On this vote members should be informed of the possibilities of the Government going in for this business and deriving the benefits.

Capt. CARTER (Leederville) [9.37]: With the first portion of the remarks of the member for South Fremantle I heartily agree. There is great necessity for improvement in the housing of our Arbitration Court. The present accommodation is totally inadequate, and the conditions are such as should bring a blush of shame to the faces of those responsible, having regard to the importance of the court. I agree that the staff should be carefully chosen, and I think that that has been done in the case of the chief clerk, who, so far as I know, has given every satisfaction. I agree, further, that there should be special accommodation not only for the members of the Arbitration Court bench, but for the advocates on either side. Under present conditions a settlement of issues is often delayed because the one room available for that purpose is being used for some other purpose. I also agree that there is no privacy in the chief clerk's room during most hours of the day. Seeing that that officer deals confidentially with representatives of both sides, he ought to have a special room for his work. I do not wish to anticipate the discussion of an item on the Notice Paper—the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill—but I may say that in the best interests of all parties and of our industries, it is desirable that a special judge should be appointed to take charge of the work in the Arbitration Court. The president is taken away day after day to civil work in the Supreme Court, with the inevitable result of further delay to the work which has been piling up for over 12 months in the Arbitration Court. Such a condition of affairs does not make for industrial peace and the settlement of disputes, but in the opposite direction. The Government are largely responsible, because they have not placed a full-time judge on the Arbitration Court bench. I trust that the forthcoming Bill will make provision for such an appointment. With regard to the suggestion of the member for South Fremantle as to settlement of the existing dispute, I will only say that he did not state he could guarantee compliance with an award if eventually delivered by Mr. Justice Draper.

Mr. McCallum: The judge would get that assurance from the parties concerned. Surely it is not for me to get such an assurance.

Capt. CARTER: I mention the matter, because, in my opinion, the present dispute exists by reason of failure to obey an award. If a new award is made on the existing award, what guarantee have we of compliance?

Mr. McCallum: What justification is there for knocking out the other three unions?

Capt. CARTER: If an employer engages members of various unions, and one of those unions refuse to work under an award of the Federal Arbitration Court, and thus throws his business out of gear, he is only protecting himself and his property by closing down.

Mr. McCallum: If you stand for that, you will have every industry in the country hung up.

Capt. CARTER: I stand for conciliation and arbitration, but if a union refuses to

obey an award we have no common basis for understanding. I recognise that it is more by good luck than anything else we are carrying on in Perth to-day certain of our utilities. Unless we get a common basis of understanding it is not much use our going to the court at all.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member's suggestion, however, is worthy of consideration.

Capt. CARTER: It is a good suggestion.

Hon. P. Collier: If the judge, before proceeding, could get an assurance, there would be no obstacle then to his going on. I can understand his refusing unless he has such an assurance.

Capt. CARTER: All the judge has to go on is the evidence of the present position.

Hon. P. Collier: Do not forget that the judge would be dealing with a different union and different men.

Capt. CARTER: That is true; but the whole position revolves around the 48-hour award, over which the whole trouble has arisen. I apologise for being drawn into this discussion, and I wish to say that the member for South Fremantle made an honest effort to put forward a solution of the problem. The member for South-Fremantle has given his opinion; I have given mine. I am as keenly desirous as anyone else in the House to see the dispute settled, but I cannot see how it can be determined.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [9.45]: I endorse the remarks of the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) and the member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) regarding the accommodation available at the Arbitration Court. The public generally and the Government in particular look upon the State Arbitration Court as subsidiary to the ordinary courts of law. In my opinion, the most important court in Western Australia is the Arbitration Court. The decision of that court in connection with the mining industry, which was delivered at Kalgoorlie recently, meant a reduction of 1s. per day in the wages of miners.

Mr. Heron: It was 1s. 6d. in the back country.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am giving the figure as a shilling per day all round. That decision represented a sum of £62,000 for the 12 months' currency of the award.

Mr. McCallum: All the other courts put together would not deal with such a sum in one year.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is probably so. That decision meant a saving to the employers here of £62,000 for that year. I agree with the decision to make the clerk of the Arbitration Court the Registrar of trade unions. That step will be beneficial to those concerned. As to the present industrial dispute, I hope the Government will take heed of the suggestion thrown out by the member for South Fremantle. Regarding the views expressed by the member for Leederville, everyone connected directly with the employees' side of the dispute, gave to the employers and to the President of the State Arbitration Court, a guarantee—this was before the men ceased

work—that they were prepared to abide by the decision of the State court. I do not wish to go into the whole question as to why the men have not abided by the decision of the Federal Arbitration Court. If I were a member of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, I would have acted as they are doing to-day, that, too, despite the fact that there is no man who believes more in settling industrial disputes by arbitration than I do. If we have a dispute to settle by arbitration, both sides should have some say in the constitution of the court. Out of all the members of that organisation, I do not think one could be found who would have repudiated or questioned the decision for a 48-hour week, had it been given by the court which originally decreed the 44-hour week. On the other hand, the men will not sit down under all sorts of conditions. As to the guarantee, I assert, as one who is in an executive position representing the employees of Western Australia, that all the guarantees possible have been given. If the President of the State Arbitration Court had adopted the suggestion made to him when the compulsory conference was held, neither the engineers nor any other union would have had the backing of labour organisations or any individual if they had refused to abide by the pledge given. That pledge was given before the men ceased work. I do not wish to plead on behalf of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. They admit their guilt in the matter of the strike; there is no doubt that they are on strike. Is it not a fair proposition that the employers should take the course of action they are entitled to do? Why do not the employers take action against the Amalgamated Society of Engineers? They will not do it. The President of the Federal Arbitration Court, Mr. Justice Powers, asked the employers to cite a case against the union but they would not do it. Before the decision in favour of 48 hours was delivered, an application was before the Federal Arbitration Court asking for a variation of the award, releasing the Western Australian section from its provisions altogether. That application has been before the Federal Court on three occasions, but the judge has always adjourned the case, intimating that he was waiting for the men's decision to return to work. The President of the Arbitration Court here has power to get the men to return to work. As one who is connected with the dispute, I can say that if the men were permitted to return to work to-morrow on the conditions prevailing when they ceased work, they would be prepared to stand by the decision given by the local Arbitration Court. That proposition has been put before the Premier, the President of the Arbitration Court, and the Employers' Federation. We have given every assurance possible on that point. The position, however, is that the employers in Western Australia are mostly men who are operating in a small way and they are prepared to sit back with what assistance they can get, thus endeavouring to starve the men into submission.

The Minister for Works: The dispute is killing trade.

Mr. MUNSIE: The men will not be starved into submission for months to come. I can assure hon. members that this matter is becoming serious. The men are getting in such a state of mind, that I do not know how their leaders can control them for much longer. It does not matter what we endeavour to do, the employers will have nothing to do with us. They will not discuss the matter with us, not even the Perth City Council, who are the biggest employers of men who are on strike. The City Council refused to meet their own employees to discuss matters. If we go to the Employers' Federation, we are informed that no good can come of such an interview unless the men are prepared to return to work on the 48-hour basis. They were not working a 48-hour week when they ceased work. The proposition we put forward is a fair one. There was a case in which the Government took action in connection with the Potosi mining case, in which the company committed a breach of the Act. The present case, however, is a more definite instance of a lockout than was furnished by the Potosi case. I do not know why the Government have refrained from taking action for so long. They should take action to compel an alteration in the conditions governing the employment of boilermakers in Western Australia. The boilermakers had their citation before the State Arbitration Court and the employers had furnished their reply. The case was coming on for hearing and while the preparations for the case were proceeding, the employers said that although they were working 44 hours, the men would have to work 48 hours for the same money or they could not be employed. That is what the employers did to the boilermakers and yet no action has been taken against them!

The Minister for Works: There has not been too much work available.

Mr. MUNSIE: There was enough to keep them going. If the Amalgamated Society of Engineers had accepted the award and continued to work on the 48-hour basis, the boilermakers, under their own award, would have been entitled to work 44 hours. The employers would have been liable for prosecution if they had refused to employ the men for the 44 hours, until such time as the court altered the award. This has been done, without any action being taken against them! If such things are to be continued, we must look for trouble. That trouble may come although it will not come if I can stop it by my advice. At the same time, I will not accept responsibility for what the men may do if the present conditions are to continue. If I can prevent it, they will not do anything drastic or wrong, but I cannot say that they will accept my advice, particularly when they see the employers doing everything possible to tantalise them into taking drastic action. If the employers are looking for that trouble, they must abide by the consequences. I trust the Government will do something. We have approached the Ar-

bitration Court and also the Premier. When we put the position to the Premier he admitted that we probably had a case, and promised to get into communication with the Arbitration Court. At that time he did not know that the President was in Kalgoolie, but when he ascertained that fact, he telegraphed to the President explaining the proposition as we put it to him. We got a reply from the court asking what could be done. We replied saying that the court could hear the case which was already cited. The President refused to do so and he will not order the case into court. He contends he has no jurisdiction in connection with the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. I do not think he has any jurisdiction, because if he did give an award, until such time as we are freed from the Federal Arbitration Court, a State award would not hold good in face of a Federal award. That, however, would not affect the status of the moulders, the boilermakers, or the Australian Society of Engineers. They have no agreement with the Federal Court. The moulders are working under no registered agreement, State or Federal. The boilermakers are working under an agreement. It is up to the Government to do something to ascertain whether the court cannot function as laid down in the Arbitration Act. That is all we ask. If the court will do that, something can be done to settle the dispute.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany—in reply) [10.0]: I will take the earliest opportunity to present to the Minister in charge of these departments the views expressed by hon. members. The other matter is a question for the decision of the court. The Government are just as anxious to have this matter settled as are hon. members, but there is a point beyond which we cannot go. Parliament endeavoured to establish the Arbitration Court on a basis that would save it from being hamstrung by a lot of conditions which apply to ordinary courts of law. Still, we have to recognise that the president of the court is, under the statute, a judge of the Supreme Court, and so is not directly under the control of the Government. It would not be right that our judges should be controlled by the Legislature and, through the Legislature, by the Executive.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They should be controlled in their work.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think so.

Mr. Munsie: You would not have had this trouble but for political influence affecting the other court.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The judiciary have a separate task to perform, and under the British Constitution are recognised as being quite apart from the Administration.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are supposed to administer justice.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, but the Arbitration Court was established free from the conditions generally recognised in other courts of the land, the sole condition being that the president of the court should be a judge of the Supreme Court. Because he is expected to be removed from all political and other influences, his appointment is for life. Judges cannot go on strike and refuse to perform their work. The Chief Justice determines the work to be performed by the other judges, each of whom is loth to be permanently appointed president of the Arbitration Court. None of them has raised objection to acting in his turn, but it must be admitted that none is very keen about it. If we want industrial peace we should have a court that could function under all circumstances. We shall only arrive at that position when we can get a permanent president of the Arbitration Court whose duty will begin and end with industrial affairs. Such a man could devote a good deal of time to becoming au fait with industrial conditions here and elsewhere, just as a judge or lawyer is called upon to keep himself abreast of the laws in other parts of the British Dominions. That point has not been lost sight of by the Government. There ought to be a way out of these industrial troubles without having industry held up and a large number of innocent persons made to suffer for the guilty.

Mr. Munsie: You cannot have conciliation if the parties refuse to meet.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I admit that. I have no sympathy with those who refuse to confer on matters affecting the general welfare of the community. Nothing can be lost by discussing such matters. However, I will take the earliest opportunity to advise the Premier, if he has not heard the discussion, of the views of hon. members so that he can see if anything can be done to help bring the parties together and get the dispute settled. The Government are as anxious as are hon. members to bring to an end the existing condition of affairs. Too frequently our employers and employees are used by larger groups of employers and employees in the other States. We should not tolerate that. I will mention the matter to the Minister in charge of the department and to the Premier, and see if something cannot be done to settle the dispute.

Vote put and passed.

Department of the North-West (Hon. H. P. Colebatch, M.L.C., Minister), £26,401.

Vote—North-West Department, £22,895:

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [10.10]: Seeing that this is a new department, it would be only reasonable if some Minister were to introduce these Estimates and at least tell the Committee why the department was created, and why there should be so great an increase in the expenditure.

Mr. Munsie: And what they have done to justify themselves.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [10.11]: Some notes dealing with the department have been handed to me, but I do not feel called upon to answer the questions submitted by the member for Pillara, at least not in the way he submitted them. The department was established largely as the result of criticism of various Government departments, and of the desire expressed by northern members.

Mr. Underwood: Which northern members?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And to provide a nucleus for building up a separate State.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It might have been that. Presently we shall hear from members representing the North-West.

Mr. Underwood: Will you not give us reasons for the establishment of the department?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The department was not established this year. When, last year, it was established the hon. member could have obtained from the Premier the grounds for its establishment. I have been furnished with notes setting out the work performed during last year, and indicating what is proposed during the current year; but as to the policy underlying the establishment of the department two years ago, I am not in a position to explain it. Members will want to know why the vote has increased. I am assured by the department that it is not possible to make a proper comparison of the estimated expenditure for last year with that for the present year, because this year the department have assumed more fully what they term their proper functions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am glad you say "what they term."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am putting up the position as it has been put up to me. I know nothing about the administration of the North-West.

Mr. Underwood: The question is, what is being put up to us?

Mr. Teesdale: Anything will do. Why bother about the North-West?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I can furnish only the information supplied to me. I am advised that as from February last the North-West Department began to take over the whole of the activities ordinarily controlled by the Public Works Department in the territory now under the North-West Department, the control and renting of public buildings, the administration of the Road Districts Act, the Municipal Corporations and other relative Acts, the Water Boards Act, stock routes, water supplies and bores, and the transfer of all public works.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They did not transfer the very man who should have got the place.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am anxious to make them a further transfer.

Mr. Underwood: You know nothing about it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is so, and I am in good company with the hon. member. He assumes knowledge of the subject; I do not assume anything. That is the difference between us.

Hon. P. Collier: You are modest about your want of knowledge.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is so. I do not parade it, as does the hon. member. Whether it has been desirable to transfer the work of these sub-departments, I am not in a position to judge.

Mr. Underwood: Of course you are not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: But there is in my department an obligation which I am very anxious to transfer to the North-West Department, namely the operating of the Port Hedland-Marble Bar Railway. Such a transfer would relieve me and the Commissioner of Railways of a good deal of worry. Unfortunately the North-West Department would be taking over a heavily losing proposition. Let me read from the notes which have been supplied to me—

Beadon Point jetty will not be transferred until completed, nor will the Carnarvon water supply. Commonwealth works are carried out as desired by the chief architect. The basis of comparison, therefore, is the expenditure by both the Public Works and North-West departments on North-West matters last year. Whatever may be said to the contrary, the concentration of all these activities under one department solely responsible has already resulted in greater expedition, economy in working and increased efficiency.

The Minister for Works: Are you responsible for that statement?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, nor for any of the statements.

Numerous small matters, which have been hanging fire for a considerable time have been cleared up, enabling consideration to be given to more important matters and development generally. Tropical agriculture in a small way is already being entered upon, both by private enterprise and with a small measure of financial backing from the Government, and the experimental work now being undertaken will later indicate how future operations should be directed. A cotton expert has lately been visiting various parts of the State, and his advice is to the effect that cotton growing in the North should prove a profitable undertaking.

The Minister for Works: Is that ratoon, or what?

Mr. Teesdale: What.

Mr. Underwood: This North-West department is a wonderful joke.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member will allow me to supply the information, I shall do it.

Hon. P. Collier: This is the comedy, is it?

Mr. Underwood: Yes, the Charlie Chaplin stunt.

Hon. P. Collier: We have had the tragedy.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I would rather be a Charlie Chaplin than that particularly fat funny gentleman who used to appear in the pictures, but is now off the screen.

Last year, of the sum of £25,548 voted, £21,982 was spent. In the process of transfer from one department to another, there was naturally a little delay in arranging works, but this has since been more than overtaken. Moreover, the North-West department was able to effect several economies, and works have been carried out below estimated cost. This year the estimated expenditure of £22,895 is £963 greater than the actual expenditure for last year.

That is the information supplied to me with the exception of the details. The actual operations in the districts represented by North-West members will be best known to them.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [10.18]: The North-West will feel very grateful for the explanation given by Charlie—the Minister for Mines.

The Minister for Mines: According to Fatty Arbuckle.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We have in service and loan something like £3,500. Before we had the North-West department we used to do the work more effectively for about £1,500. I would like some Minister to show what the result has been in other departments. For my section of the North-West, I say the service we are receiving to-day is infinitely inferior to that which we received before the department was formed. It is a pity we have no Minister here who can do anything better than a Charlie Chaplin stunt. The Estimates show some economies—a reduction of £300 or £400 in the subsidies to road boards for the maintenance of roads. We have travelling expenses £800 and upkeep of motor car £250. There should be a Minister here to tell the people of the North-West that it is better to have expenditure on these items and subsidies to road boards—

The Minister for Works: The subsidies have not been reduced.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: A reduction is shown on the Estimates.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Is the Minister for Works going to take charge?

Mr. Teesdale: You have killed one Minister; he has gone out.

The Minister for Works: I shall take a lot of killing.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Estimates show a reduction in the subsidies to road boards of about £300. That is a saving, an economy. If we examine the cost of the department, we find it has increased by about £2,000. The idea of the department and the appointment of a Minister was born in theory or poetry. I think it was proposed by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo). The Minis-

ter for Justice (Hon. H. P. Colebatch) went through that country. It is a glorious country to look at if one goes through in a motor car at the right time of the year. The Minister for Justice hooked himself on to us. It is hard for us dinkum Nor'-Westers in Roebourne, Pilbara, and Kimberley, but it must be exceedingly hard for the North-West suburban men such as those of Gascoyne and Murchison. We are the dinkum Nor'-Westers, but the department rake in the suburbs of the North-West, Meekatharra, Shark Bay and Carnarvon. I want to ask—but it is utterly useless to ask, because there is no Minister who understands the question.

Mr. Mann: That is a reflection.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If there is a Minister for the North-West—

The Minister for Works: You were a Minister once.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, and I knew my business.

The Minister for Works: Then you ought to tell us.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Is there a Minister now who knows his business?

The Minister for Works: No; we should not be here if we did.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister for the North-West delivered a nice lecture.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes. Shark Bay is about 400 miles distant from Perth, and a question affecting pearl-shelling arises. Under the present system it is necessary to write to the Commissioner at Broome, whose private secretary sends the correspondence to the secretary of the department in Perth (Mr. Neville), who goes to Mr. Aldrich, who has a knowledge of fisheries. A letter is returned through the same channels and eventually it gravitates to Shark Bay. That is what we are getting from the North-West department. Would it not be better for the suburbs of the North-West to be able to go to Mr. Aldrich direct? We are entitled to have a Minister to say why this awful thing has been imposed upon us. The Minister for Works said he is prepared to do it.

The Minister for Works: I did not.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Minister is getting shy.

The Minister for Works: I said I would tell you what I knew about the road boards, and I do know about them.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I would not contradict the Minister, but I am doubtful. I regret that the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) is not in his seat. There is a tri-weekly mail service between Meekatharra and the head office, but anything affecting the road board at Meekatharra has to be sent north 700 or 800 miles to the Commissioner at Broome who, having considered it, forwards it to the North-West department in Perth, whence it is forwarded to the man who knows all about it. Would it not be better for the people of Meekatharra to be able to communicate direct with the man who knows all about it?

We have read in the papers about cotton growing. Among the representatives of the true North there is a cotton king. An attempt is now being made to grow cotton in Western Australia. There is some doubt as to which is the better plant to grow, that which grows continually or the annual plant. We have had an expert from Queensland who has had considerable experience with what is known as the ratoon, that is the plant which continues to grow for several years. He says it is the right plant to grow, but others say it is the wrong one. It has very recently been shown in America that the ratoon plant has developed a moth or bolls. We have to consider whether it is better to grow one plant or the other. We learn from the papers that Mr. Neville, the secretary for the North-West Department, who has been in the North-West twice, and would not know asbestos from cotton if it were carefully ruffled up, says, "I have always held that we should have the plant cotton. We have found that there is some deterrent grub coming to the ratoon cotton." All we know about Mr. Neville's knowledge of cotton we learn from the speech that was delivered this session, wherein it was stated on behalf of the Aborigines' Department, that we had planted half an acre of cotton.

Hon. P. Collier: I thought the newspaper had the only right to use "we."

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I thought only His Majesty or His Majesty's representative, and newspapers could write "we." Mr. Neville, however, says, "we" have found it. Where did he find it?

Hon. P. Collier: On that trip.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Recently the North-West Department sent 12 men to Derby. I give Mr. Jones the credit of acknowledging the best place he sees. Mr. Jones recommended Derby as the best place he had seen for the growing of cotton. I agree that there is a possibility of growing it there. Other circumstances, however, have to be considered. The 12 men arrived in Derby a day or two ago. The conditions are that they must clear 20 acres of land each, cultivate it, and sow it by the end of January. They have two months in which to do this. The worst two months of the year in that country are December and January. It is unreasonable to send men to Derby after having wintered down here in this cold climate, and start them straight off in a difficult summer. The land at Derby is covered with a fairly thick pindan. It is so thick that if cattle rush through it they break off their horns. It is acacia scrub as thick as one's wrist. It will not roll down but springs back, and every bit of it will have to be grubbed out. The men have to get together their equipment, their horses and plant, build their humpies to protect themselves from the rain, clear 20 acres of country, cultivate it, and sow it in two months.

The Minister for Works: Each man?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes. If there are not 10 inches of rain within these two months it will be a bad season in Derby. We should have a Minister for the North-West who can tell us about that part of the State, and tell us why these men have gone up there during the worst time of the year. Every man I have known says if there is anything like a light rainfall, slight irrigation is required for cotton growing. I spoke to the secretary, who knows all about ratoon cotton and plant cotton, and asked him if he had made any provision for irrigation under such conditions. He replied, "If it will not grow without irrigation it is not worth going on with." If we cannot grow cotton in the North without irrigation we cannot grow it at all. There must be light irrigation. And yet these men have gone up there under these conditions. They get a block of ground, and a solid sustenance allowance. If they live within their means they will make some slight profit. If it turns out to be no good they will leave the job, but if it turns out good they will stick to it. If one could not get men here under those conditions, Western Australia would be a peculiar country. That is one of the things the Great North-West Department are doing. What useful purpose have the department served? Speaking for my own electorate, I can say that we have been infinitely worse served latterly than we were before the creation of the department. The cost of the department amounts to three or four thousand pounds a year.

The Minister for Works: Did not you ask for the creation of the department?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No.

The Minister for Works: The other members must have done so.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Did they?

The Minister for Works: I do not know.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is the trouble with the Minister for Works—he does not know anything.

The Minister for Works: I cannot conceive how the department came to be created unless you people asked for it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: But the Minister does not know it. The department hooked themselves on to us. They are something like the stickfast flea. As a North-Wester, I desire to throw them off.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [10.47]: I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	10
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	8
				—

AYES.

Mr. Angwin
Mr. Collier
Mr. Durack
Mr. Heron
Mr. Hughes
Mr. Lambert
Mr. Latham
Mr. Lutey
Mr. Mann

Mr. Marshall
Mr. McCallum
Mr. Munsie
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Teasdale
Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Corboy
(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Carter
Mr. George
Mr. Gibson
Mr. Harrison
Mr. Johnston

Mr. C. C. Maley
Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Sampson
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Mullany
(Teller.)

Motion thus passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.50 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 5th December, 1922.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE—FISHING INDUSTRY.

Extension of time.

On motion by Hon. F. A. Baglin, the time for bringing up the report was extended until December 12th.

QUESTION—LAND SETTLEMENT.

Surveyor Lefroy's Report.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay on the Table of the House the report of the District Surveyor, Mr. J. H. M. Lefroy, dealing with land adjacent to railways in the agricultural areas?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Yes; files and illustrated plans herewith.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the undermentioned Bills:—

- 1, Light and Air Act Amendment.
- 2, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.

BILL—JARNADUP-DENMARK RAILWAY.

Received from the Assembly, and read a first time.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—DAIRY CATTLE IMPROVEMENT.

Read a third time, and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 3), £1,040,000.

Second reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: I had hoped there would be no necessity for a third Supply Bill this session, and that we would have had before us instead the Appropriation Bill. The Estimates have not yet been passed by another place, and consequently it is necessary for the Government to ask for Supply for November, which has expired, and for the present month. The whole of the Estimates have now been submitted to the Legislative Assembly, and I trust we shall have an opportunity of considering the Appropriation Bill with the Estimates next week. In the meantime the Supply now asked for is based on last year's expenditure, and covers the requirements for November and December. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [4.41]: I must compliment the Minister upon the brevity of his remarks, and his evident anxiety to get through the second reading