

come to the House and say, "These people are not treating the soldiers properly." They should not anticipate things, or want to write down the interest generally. It ought not to be done. Let the men be given a chance to make good. Let them have holdings on which they can make a decent living and on which they can pay the interest charged. It is no good saying to a settler, "I will not ask anything of you for the next 10 years. Here is a house and land; you can live rent free." That would be no good. Give him a holding on which he can live in comfort and pay his way, as we have striven to do, and, I think, have succeeded in doing. No doubt there are some few exceptions. They will be dealt with. Still, I hope hon. members will agree with me that the board dealing with soldier settlement are doing all that ought to be done, and that the House should not be asked to lay down hard and fast rules in this matter—rules which could be made to apply to many soldier settlers who are not in need of the assistance which would be given to them if the recommendations of the Royal Commission were adopted. For my part I should like to say to the soldier settlers, "It is all for you, and you need never pay a penny back." But we know that that cannot be done. We know that tens of thousands of our men enlisted; and those of them who upon their return settled on the land are getting an advantage. They are getting something most valuable at less than the worth of the property, and they ought to be prepared, as indeed they are prepared to pay what they can. I sincerely trust that the House will not agree to the motion. I have endeavoured to make clear that everything that ought to be done in this matter is being done; and I know that when the time comes for action, this House will see to it that the present Government, or any future Government, do their duty by the soldier settlers.

On motion by Mr. Corboy, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 6th September, 1923.

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

QUESTION—TAXATION, ASSESSMENTS AND COLLECTIONS.

Mr. HUGHES asked the Premier: 1, Have all income tax and dividend duties assessments for the year ended 30th June, 1923, been made? 2, If not, how many are outstanding? 3, If so, what was the amount of tax not collected at 30th June last in respect of (a) incomes, (b) dividend duties, under the assessments for the financial year 1922-1923?

The PREMIER replied: 1 (a) Income tax, No. (b) Dividend duties: Returns are not furnished in respect to a given financial year. Companies' books are balanced at different periods. Assessments are made as returns are received, and are up to date. 2 (a), Income tax, about 900; (b) dividend duty, nil. (3) (a), income tax, £147,500; (b) dividend duty, £12,821.

QUESTION—DRUNKENNESS, METROPOLITAN CONVICTIONS.

Mr. MANN asked the Premier: 1, What was the total number of convictions for drunkenness within the metropolitan police district for six months ended 30th June, 1922? 2, What was the total number of convictions for drunkenness within the metropolitan police district for six months ended 30th June, 1923?

The PREMIER replied: 1, 892. 2, 608.

QUESTION—BRICKS SHORTAGE.

Mr. LUTEY asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that there is a number of bricklayers out of work through shortage of bricks in the State? 2, Have the Government erected at the State brick works an additional Hoffman kiln which will turn out 40,000 or 50,000 more bricks per week? 3, If not, is it the intention of the Government to do so to relieve the present unemployment amongst bricklayers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, No. 3, It would take twelve months to erect a Hoffman kiln, and the Government do not propose to increase the brick-making works.

QUESTION—GROUP SETTLEMENTS, HOUSES.

Mr. MUNSIE asked the Premier: 1, How many dwelling-houses have been erected in connection with the group settlement scheme to the 30th of June, 1923? 2, What was the average cost per house?

The PREMIER replied: 1, 360. 2, £230.

QUESTION—STATE HOTELS, ADULTERATED LIQUOR.

Mr. MUNSIE asked the Colonial Secretary: Is it his intention to lay on the Table a full copy of the evidence and finding of the Board that inquired into adulterated liquor at State Hotels?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Not unless the papers are moved for in the usual way.

QUESTION—ARBITRATION COURT, CONGESTION.

Mr. McCALLUM asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that there is a greater congestion of cases awaiting the decision of the Arbitration Court than at any previous period of its history? 2, What action do the Government contemplate to expedite the work of the Court?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The Government are aware of congestion, but no comparison with previous periods has been made. 2, Proposals are now under consideration.

QUESTION—BASIC WAGE COMMISSION.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to appoint a Basic Wage Commission as authorised by Parliament during last session? 2, If so, is it the intention of the Government to appoint a direct labour representative on the commission?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The personnel of the Commission has not yet been decided.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL PROSECUTIONS.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Colonial Secretary: How many persons have been prosecuted throughout the State for non-compliance with the compulsory enrolment provisions of the Electoral Act since the general elections of March, 1921?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Eighty-eight.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Veterinary Surgeons' Act Amendment (No. 2).

2, Kojonup Racecourse.

Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture and read a first time.

BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Minister for Works, in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1, agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

Mr. McCALLUM: Will the definition of "place" include wells?

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. McCALLUM: Is it the intention to apply the Bill to wells?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not considered that the Bill should deal with wells. It was introduced with the object of controlling scaffolding for the erection of buildings. Wells are already dealt with under other Acts.

Mr. McCALLUM: There are men, including plumbers, who have to work in wells repairing pumps, and for whom scaffolding has to be erected. Is there to be no legislative protection for them? Engineers also have to go down wells to repair electrical appliances. With the extended use of electricity, motors are displacing windmills in the agricultural areas for pumping water. The unions concerned approached the Government some time ago with a request that workers engaged in this form of employment should be brought within the scope of the Mines Regulation Act. That request was refused because it was said that a well could not be classed as a mine.

The Minister for Mines: That was hardly the point. The Mines Regulation Act applies only in a proclaimed mining area.

Mr. McCALLUM: For that reason it was said the metropolitan area could not be classed as a mining district. These men run considerable risks. When working in wells they run not only the danger of injury, but of drowning as well. In some of the Eastern States legislation of this description is not confined to scaffolding for buildings, but lifts are also included. There should be no objection to including in the Bill provisions to deal with wells.

The Minister for Works: Don't you think you are doing well in getting a Bill like this?

Mr. McCALLUM: This State was supposed to be in the van of democratic progress, but we are drifting to the rear. We are at least a decade behind the Eastern

States regarding our industrial laws. A Bill of this description has been in operation for a quarter of a century in the East.

Mr. Fiesse: Will not the phrase "whether above or below ground," included in the definition of "place," cover wells?

Mr. McCALLUM: I thought so, but the Minister says it will not do so. I have an amendment on the Notice Paper to include wells in the definition of "scaffolding." I was under the impression that the phrase quoted would cover wells, so far as a "place" was concerned.

The Minister for Works: That refers to any man working below ground level in buildings.

Mr. McCALLUM: It applies to basements and I cannot see why it should not apply to wells. I appeal to the Minister to agree to the scope of the Bill being extended to cover wells. No logical argument can be advanced in opposition.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would not be thought either ignorant or indifferent. I am aware that many accidents have occurred in wells, and I agree that steps should be taken to prevent a repetition of those accidents; but I am advised that rather than introduce the provision in this Bill it would be better to have it inserted elsewhere. I am still awaiting certain papers which have a bearing on the question, and if the hon. member will allow the point to stand over, I will consult the Crown Law Department as to the best way of protecting men working in wells.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of the definition of "scaffolding," "eight" be struck out and "four" inserted in lieu.

When a small building is under repair, the practice is to build up a scaffolding by the simple expedient of placing a plank on a couple of cement barrels, or even with one end on a barrow and the other on a few bricks heaped together. All scaffolding 8ft. high should be under the supervision of the inspector. I am inclined to think such scaffolding could be better prescribed by regulation than by a provision in the Bill.

The Minister for Works: Do you think the Bill should apply to one-storied buildings?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, I do. We should provide against accidents, even on scaffolding only 8ft. high.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I hope the Committee will not accept the amendment. The example quoted by the mover is an absurd one. Cement barrels, if properly fixed, are very strong. To suggest that a scaffolding only 4ft. high should be under the supervision of an inspector, is nonsense.

Mr. PICKERING: I, too, am opposed to the amendment. If it were carried, nothing whatever could be done about a place, not even a little kalsomining, without notifying the inspector that scaffolding was being used. If the Bill is to be effective, it must not be absurd; we must not reduce

it to a farce. All protection must be given to the lives of the workmen, but it is carrying it too far to suggest there is danger when a man is working at a height of 8ft. above the ground. The mover of the amendment wants to make the Bill applicable to single-storied buildings. If he succeeds it will have the effect of greatly increasing the cost of building. Moreover, it will be rendering the Bill farcical.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment is not necessary. I am aware that when barrels or burrows or heaps of bricks are used in a low scaffolding there is the danger that the scaffolding will not be as firm as it should be, but I do not like the idea of making the Bill applicable to one-storied buildings. Of course, when it comes to the erection of the chimneys of even a one-storied building, the scaffolding rises above 8ft.; but then such scaffolding is erected by the man who is doing the work, and he takes good care to see that it is secure. I agree that the amendment would add considerably to the cost of small buildings, while it would not enhance the security of the workmen.

Mr. McCALLUM: Those members opposing the proposal are illogical. First they claim that the workmen are already sufficiently protected; then they say this provision is not necessary and will increase the cost of building one-storied places.

Mr. Latham: Both could be right.

Mr. McCALLUM: No, if the workmen are at present sufficiently protected, where will the increased cost come in?

Mr. Latham: Inspection.

Mr. McCALLUM: Builders do not have to pay for inspection.

Mr. A. Thomson: Yes, they do.

Mr. McCALLUM: No notice is required under the Bill.

Mr. A. Thomson: Read paragraph (c) of Clause 25. That requires written notice to be given to an inspector.

Mr. McCALLUM: That clause merely gives authority to make regulations.

Mr. Harrison: The measure could not be effective unless such a regulation were made.

Mr. McCALLUM: Where is the logic in the arguments of members opposite? Their arguments show they are aware that the scaffolding being used is not up to standard, that a lot of money will have to be spent on it, and that jerry-builders will not be able any longer to jeopardise men's lives and limbs as they do now. Members opposite are trying to protect that class of man instead of the workers engaged in the industry.

Mr. Pickering: We are not.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is discussing the quality of scaffolding. That has nothing to do with the height.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is the test. If this height be not struck out, all one-storied buildings will be outside the scope of the measure. In South Australia the Act of 1907 limited the height to 16ft. In 1908

that limit was repealed, and no height is now specified. Yet members here to-day are arguing for a height of 8ft., and urging that anything less will make the cost of building prohibitive. Those who have been prompting members opposite—

Mr. Pickering: I ask for a withdrawal of that statement. It is not fair comment.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not very offensive.

Mr. Pickering: It is very offensive.

Mr. McCALLUM: If the cap fits, wear it.

Mr. Pickering: I ask that the expression be withdrawn.

Mr. McCALLUM: I shall not withdraw it; do as you like.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot ask the hon. member to withdraw that.

Hon. T. Walker: There is nothing wrong in prompting.

The Minister for Works: It was the emphasis rather than the words.

Mr. A. Thomson: It was the ulterior motive.

Mr. Pickering: I move to disagree with your ruling, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I gave no ruling. I said in my opinion there was nothing to withdraw.

Mr. Pickering: I consider the hon. member's remark offensive and ask that it be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think it was offensive.

Mr. Pickering: Then I shall appeal against your decision.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for South Fremantle may proceed.

Mr. A. Thomson: On a point of order, only two members on this side of the House have spoken.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

Mr. A. Thomson: I am supporting the protest of the member for Sussex.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Mr. A. Thomson: I am supporting the hon. member in disagreeing with your ruling.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is not for you to say.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Katanning will resume his seat.

Mr. Pickering: I am not going to sit down under the imputation that the member for South Fremantle has cast on me. Only two members on this side of the House have spoken and he said we were prompted. I say we were not prompted.

The CHAIRMAN: In my opinion there is nothing to withdraw and I cannot listen to you any further.

Mr. McCALLUM: I am prepared to proceed.

Mr. Pickering: Cannot I disagree with your ruling?

Mr. McCALLUM: The Chairman gave no ruling.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is absurd.

Mr. McCALLUM: Of the arguments advanced, either the scaffolding is good and contractors will be put to no additional expense, or else the scaffolding is bad and new plant will involve expense. If the cost of building construction is going to be considerably increased, it is a clear admission that the scaffolding used has not been up to standard. If the scaffolding is all that it should be, there can be no argument about increased expenditure. A mere charge of 10s. a year—

Mr. A. Thomson: How do you know it will be 10s. a year?

Mr. McCALLUM: I know what is charged in the Eastern States.

Mr. A. Thomson: You do not know what will be charged here.

Mr. Pickering: What logic is there behind your reasoning?

Mr. McCALLUM: Unless the hon. member admits that he is assisting to keep in power a Government so incompetent that they cannot administer an Act as economically as can the South Australian Government, there is no force behind his interjection. It was stated that a fall from a scaffold on a one-storied building would not be likely to cause serious bodily injury. An employee of the Works Department named Maher, engaged in painting at the Claremont hospital, was standing on a plank resting on a kerosene case. The plank broke and he fell, fracturing several ribs.

Mr. A. Thomson: You had better reduce the height to one foot.

Mr. McCALLUM: I prefer that no height be specified.

The Minister for Works: I have known men to get their legs broken through slipping about 1½ in.

Mr. McCALLUM: These men should be protected.

The Minister for Works: We are all convinced they should be protected, but there is a difference of opinion as to whether the protection should start on the ground, or at a height of 8ft.

Mr. McCALLUM: The lives and limbs of the employees ought to be protected. If that principle is admitted why limit the height in this case to 8ft. or over? Apparently, if a man is killed through falling from a greater height than that, there will be an inquiry into the accident, but the whole thing will be passed over if he falls from a height of less than 8ft.

The Minister for Works: Nothing of the sort was said. Of course there would have to be a coroner's inquest.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Minister will not listen to any compromise.

The Colonial Secretary: Accidents may happen no matter what is put into the Bill.

The Minister for Works: And compensation would be paid in the event of an accident.

Mr. McCALLUM: What is compensation against the loss of a man's life? South Aus-

ralia in 1908 met the very situation over which we are now quibbling.

The Minister for Works: You are arguing that we are not concerned about the lives and limbs of the worker. That is not so.

Mr. McCALLUM: If I am wrong let the Bill be altered to indicate the Minister's sentiments.

The Minister for Works: It is right as it is. I am sorry I was not at the conference. Why should people attend a conference and say one thing there and deny having said it afterwards?

Mr. McCALLUM: There has never been any agreement on our part to a limitation of 3ft. The Bill as it is will not cover half the men engaged in the building trade.

The Minister for Works: It is a step forward.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is the best that can be said of it. We are a quarter of a century behind the other States.

The Minister for Works: What have you been doing all that time?

Mr. McCALLUM: I have been here only two years. What has the Minister been doing?

The CHAIRMAN: Let us stick to the eight feet.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is what I wish to alter.

The Minister for Works: We have just as much regard for the working man as you have.

Mr. McCALLUM: I want to see that interest shown in a concrete form. This Bill does not show it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Do you say that 50 per cent. of the accidents have occurred in the case of single storied buildings?

Mr. McCALLUM: No. The Bill leaves out 50 per cent. of the men concerned. I do not want any limitation at all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I did not think my amendment would cause so much consternation. My view is that the matter should be left entirely to regulations, and that it could be set out what kind of scaffolding should be erected for the different buildings. It would really be far better not to limit the height at all, though 4ft. is a fair compromise.

Mr. PICKERING: The history of buildings in this State supports my argument. This Bill will increase the cost of building, because of the number of inspectors who will have to be employed to see that its provisions are carried into effect. Is a building that is being erected in the far north to be hung up until the Government inspector has visited it? That would be absurd. I also object to motives being imputed when a member puts forth a certain line of argument, and to its being suggested that he is prompted by outside bodies. I am arguing this question as it appeals to me personally. I have just as much care and anxiety for the lives of workmen as has the member for South Fremantle. A contractor could not obtain insurance against his risks under the Employers' Liability and Workers' Compensation

Acts unless the insurance companies were thoroughly satisfied that he took every care with his scaffolding. The cost of administering this measure will fall upon the man who builds, and the cost of building is now excessively high in Western Australia. The amendment will tend to increase the cost still further.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I support the case which has been put forward by the member for Sussex. The amendment will involve extra cost. We are asked to stipulate that the inspectors of the Public Works Department shall be the judges of the sufficiency of scaffolding.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Do you think the officers of the Public Works Department are fools?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Not at all, but the only appeal is to the Minister. Clause 25, paragraph (c), provides that regulations may be made for—

The manner in which scaffolding and gear shall be set up, built, maintained, and used; the construction and placing of swinging stages or scaffolds, gantries, and gear so as to ensure safety; requiring written notice to be given to an inspector before the erection of scaffolding, which notice shall state the estimated cost of the work in connection with which scaffolding is intended to be used.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is to be fixed by regulation.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Quite so. The member for South Fremantle thinks the inspection fee will be 10s. My knowledge of building operations leads me to think that the inspection fee will be based on the value of the work to be constructed. Municipal councils now charge building fees on the basis of the value of the structure. Therefore this measure seems likely to involve considerable increase in building costs. With reference to the amendment, let me point out that the desk at which I am standing is 4ft. high. To suggest such a height for scaffolding under this Bill is ridiculous. No one has a right to say that members on this side of the Chamber are careless of the lives of men. Let us not intimate that this or that hon. member is out to save a few paltry pounds at the cost of men's lives. My forty years' experience of the building trade enables me to state that hon. members will be quite safe in adhering to the definition as printed.

Mr. CORBOY: I find it hard to understand the opposition to the amendment. Indeed, I consider that the amendment might well have cut out the height altogether. Any erection used as a scaffolding should be subject to inspection. Men have fallen as much as 20 feet and got out of it with a few scratches; other men, falling a few feet, have suffered serious injuries and even lost their lives.

Mr. DAVIES: It makes little difference whether the height in this definition is fixed at 4ft. or 5ft. What really does concern men employed in the building trade is that there

shall be decent material used for building scaffolding.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That can be dealt with by regulation.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes, and I have an amendment to that effect on the Notice Paper. The difficulty about the 4 feet is that one has to notify the department before proceeding to erect scaffolding. A regulation to that effect will undoubtedly be made. On a two-storied building while the men put in the foundation, there is time to notify the department of the intention to erect scaffolding, and an inspector can come along before the building exceeds four, six or eight feet. Otherwise, the work may be hung up until an inspector comes along.

The Minister for Works: You could not proceed with the work meantime.

Mr. DAVIES: On a division I would vote for fixing no height at all. The real base in this Bill is the horizontal one, from which a man may slip, and perhaps lose his life. What we should be concerned about is the quality of the material that is used. Go into most buildings in course of erection to-day and you will probably find that plasterers have a plank across a couple of step ladders, and are using that as scaffolding. Even with scaffolding under 8ft. there should be used approved material.

Mr. McCALLUM: The speakers who have taken exception to my statement that there was nothing in the Bill to say that permission had to be obtained before scaffolding was erected, have proved my case. They have stated that regulations may be framed to that end. I cannot understand the argument being seriously advanced that the obtaining of permission would mean delay in construction. How many applications must a contractor make before he starts operations? He must go to the local authorities, he has to approach the Water Supply Department, and he has to proceed in other directions before he can make a commencement with his work. If he attempts to make a start without getting permission from the various authorities, those authorities can stop in and tear down what he has done. The member for Guildford has given notice of an amendment which he says will cover the position. But what is the use of making provision by regulation to do something in connection with a scaffold under 8ft. in height when the Bill excludes all scaffolding up to 8ft.? Where is the sense in such a proposal? What is the use of carrying on like that? We will be passing a law which, by all appearances, will have very little effect and will not cover more than 50 per cent. of those engaged in the industry. While we are on the job, why cannot we do the thing properly, and reach the standard of the other States?

The Minister for Works: Do you accept everything that is adopted in the other States?

Mr. McCALLUM: I am not arguing in that way; I want to accept for our own employees everything that is of advantage to employees elsewhere. It am surprised that there is so much opposition to our desire to attain the standard of the other States. I hope that even now the Minister will agree to the amendment proposed.

Mr. DAVIES: I have always believed, and still believe, that before regulations can become law they must lie on the Table of this House for a period of three weeks and that there they can be perused by members.

Hon. P. Collier: All regulations have to be laid on the Table, but there is no compulsion on the part of Ministers to frame regulations. You may pass an Act which provides that regulations may be made, but the Government need not make them.

Mr. DAVIES: Is it not then competent for a member to draw attention to the fact that during the discussion on the Bill the intention was made clear that regulations would be framed, and that the Bill should not become law until such time as the wishes of members in respect of those regulations had been carried out? A man may proceed with the work of erecting scaffolding before obtaining permission to do so; an inspector may come along, and he can say that the scaffolding, whether it be 2ft. or even 1ft. in height, is not being erected in accordance with the regulations.

Mr. McCallum: But scaffolding under 8ft. will be exempt altogether if the definition is carried.

Mr. Munsie: The Government will not be able to make regulations to govern scaffolding under 8ft.

Mr. DAVIES: I am guided in this matter by the advice of the Solicitor General.

Hon. P. Collier: The Act will not be able to touch anything under 8ft.

Mr. DAVIES: Under the amendment we shall be going from the Act to the regulations.

Hon. P. Collier: The regulations cannot override the Act.

Mr. DAVIES: That is admitted. It is not a question of height but of the materials used.

Mr. A. Thomson: And you have the advice of the Solicitor General.

Hon. P. Collier: And the Solicitor General is never wrong!

Mr. DAVIES: I do not consider him infallible. I knew that opposition might arise to this proposal because I discussed it with men in the industry.

Mr. Hughes: Did the Solicitor General say the amendment was not in contravention of this clause?

Mr. DAVIES: No, he did not. The amendment seeks to give the Government power to prescribe by regulation that the timber used for structures less than 8ft. high shall be substantial. Experience only can show whether my suggestion will meet the posi-

tion. After all, it is a question of the materials to be used. I have seen laths $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $\frac{1}{4}$ in., nailed across doorways and a plank put across them. Men have done that and worked on the plank, without being required to do so by their employers. If provision were made as I suggest, the men could not do that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am afraid the Solicitor General has given another opinion.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not unusual.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot see how we can provide for regulations referring to structures under 8ft. high, because they will not be scaffolds within the meaning of the interpretation clause. When the member for Katanning was speaking, I interjected that departmental officials were not all fools. Every man in the architectural division of the Public Works Department knows that there is no necessity to provide special scaffolding for the country districts or for small buildings in the metropolitan area, because the joists are used to save expense. If regulations were drafted, the officials would see that joists were permitted. They are subsequently used under the floors and thus expense is saved. I do not believe that the Minister intended that this measure should be a means of building up expense.

Mr. Money: It should be a matter of strength every time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is so. There would not be such stringent regulations for a building 20 feet high as for one 70 feet high. I do not anticipate for a moment that the Minister, or the officials, would draft regulations making it necessary for a man to apply for permission every time he desires to kalsomine or paper a room. That would be absurd. On the other hand, if a man were to use cement casks and a plank, it would be safe; if he used kerosene cases on top of the casks, it would become dangerous. That shows the necessity for dealing with this matter by way of regulations.

Mr. HUGHES: The amendment suggested by the member for Guildford really supports the contention of the member for South Fremantle that there should be no limit as to height, and the Government should be permitted to make regulations to cover scaffolding generally. The definition of scaffolding excludes anything below 8ft. The amendment by the member for Guildford proposes to legislate for structures under 8ft. I do not see how regulations can be framed to deal with them, seeing that they are excluded under the interpretation clause.

Mr. Mann: If a man intends to run up a scaffolding to a height of 16ft., we should make sure of the strength of the first 4ft.

Mr. HUGHES: Surely the member for Perth does not suggest that inspections can be made only of scaffolding above 8ft. in height.

Hon. P. Collier: That is his idea all right.

Mr. HUGHES: The member for Guildford is in agreement with the member for South Fremantle that there should be no limit.

Mr. Davies: You need not argue that; I said so.

Hon. P. Collier: That is so. The amendment is not necessary if no limit is fixed.

Mr. Davies: The member for East Perth misses the point altogether. The point is that any structure not exceeding 8ft. in height "shall be of such material and of such substantial character as prescribed."

Mr. HUGHES: Regulations made to govern such structures would be inconsistent with the Bill, in view of the interpretation clause. They may lead to litigation on that point. I support the amendment by the member for North-East Fremantle.

Progress reported.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1923-24.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from 28th August on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £1,091:

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [7.33]: Having so recently on the Address-in-reply spoken at considerable length concerning the Government's policy and administration, I wish to assure members I have no intention of repeating the offence to-night. There is, in fact, very little that is new to be said regarding the affairs of the Government, and I do not wish to weary members with needless repetition. I think I can claim on behalf of the members of the present Opposition that we have never looked at the question of the public finances through party-coloured spectacles. Whilst exercising our right and performing what we regard as our duty to criticise the policy of the Administration where we believed it was necessary, we have endeavoured to do so free from any desire to make party capital out of the financial position of the State. I am pleased the Treasurer has been able to close the financial year with a considerably reduced deficit. Two or three years ago I expressed the opinion that if the Treasurer were to succeed in reducing the formidable annual deficits to which we have become accustomed by, say, from £100,000 to £200,000 per annum, it would not be long before we should reach the point where revenue and expenditure would balance, and that if he succeeded in doing that, he would do very well indeed. So I think we can all join in expressions of satisfaction that the deficit for the year has been considerably reduced. We hope, moreover, that the estimate of the shortage on revenue account which the Treasurer submitted to the Chamber with his Budget Speech, namely £298,000 for the present year, will be realised. By the way, I notice

the Treasurer has a trick, if I may so describe it, of always putting forward as an estimate, a sum just a little below the hundred thousand pounds. In a recent year his estimate was £398,000, and for the current year it is £298,000. I suppose it is done on the same principle as that which actuates the draper when he marks up his goods at 11½d.

The Premier: I cannot help the way it comes out.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The sum of £298,000 does not seem to be nearly so large as £301,000, although actually there is but little difference between them. However, I hope the Treasurer will realise his estimate and that we shall continue the improvement until, in the near future, we balance our ledger. But it is essential that there should be no relaxation of our efforts to balance the ledger. We must ever keep in mind the fact that for a population as small as ours we have, during the past 10 or 12 years, built up a deficit that is really enormous. The total deficit of £5,901,000 is indeed a very large one for our small population. As we all know, the deficit has to be funded, has to be met from trust funds and borrowed money upon which interest has to be paid. If we calculate the interest on the accumulated deficit at five per cent., we get a sum of £300,000 per annum; that is to say, we have added to our annual burden of expenditure—and probably for the next 25 or 30 years, during the currency of the loan—no less a sum than £300,000. So in the interests of the State and of future taxpayers, it is essential that that condition of things should be altered as speedily as possible. The Treasurer has been fortunate in that he has had an expanding revenue each year. In round figures, the total revenue for last year was £7,200,000, the largest in the history of the State. It exceeded the revenue of the previous year by £300,000, and was £2,630,000 greater than the revenue of six years ago, a very considerable increase.

Hon. W. C. Augwin: Nearly 50 per cent.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Unfortunately, side by side with the increased revenue there has been increased expenditure. We know how the war increased our expenditure in many directions. Still, as I have previously stated, there should be greater opportunity to adjust the finances on an expanding revenue than could be hoped for on one diminishing. As I have said, the revenue last year was £2,630,000 greater than that of six years ago. To some extent it was due to the fact that we have received largely increased sums from taxation. The receipts from direct taxation last year were £580,000 in excess of the sum so received six years ago. For the present financial year the Treasurer estimates to receive from this source £1,016,000. Last year the sum received was £987,000. All must recognise that the £1,016,000 which the Treasurer expects to receive this year is an enormous sum to be drawn by direct taxation from a community of 342,000 people. Under the heading of "Territorial," that is to say

mining, timber, and lands, there was received last year £403,000, while under the heading of "Commonwealth" the Treasurer received £583,000. Under those three headings, "Taxation," "Territorial" and "Commonwealth," the total amount received was £1,973,000. I mention these figures in order to compare them with our interest and sinking fund charges. Our interest charges last year were £2,561,246, and our sinking fund payments amounted to £242,000, or a total of interest and sinking fund of £2,803,000. In other words, we paid out in interest and sinking fund £829,000 in excess of the receipts under the three headings, "Taxation," "Territorial" and "Commonwealth." I mention these figures in order to bring home to members the importance of wisely expending borrowed money. We have certainly been expending considerable sums of borrowed money during recent years. I am not complaining of that, because I realise that a borrowing policy is inseparable from an active policy of development in a State like Western Australia. In 1919-20 we borrowed £2,663,320; in 1920-21, £2,586,404; 1921-22, £2,454,925, and in 1922-23, £3,380,290. Last year's expenditure of loan money was the second largest for any one year. The total expenditure for the four years was £11,093,000. During the same period the total population of the State has increased by only 18,000 persons, and I am afraid there is a possibility of our borrowing at a rate that is not in satisfactory ratio to the increase in population. In 1919 our net public debt amounted to £37,000,000—I am deducting the sinking fund which now exceeds £8,000,000—and at the present time it stands at £49,000,000. The debt per head of population four years ago was £117 and at present it is £142, an increase in four years of £25 per head of total population. That increase is enormous.

The Premier: To settle the soldiers cost us £5,500,000.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I admit this has been occasioned to a considerable extent by the expenditure of loan moneys necessary to repatriate our soldiers and place them on the land.

The Premier: Sixty-one per cent. of the total borrowings was lent to individuals for agricultural development.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is a good thing. We shall not reap the benefit of that expenditure immediately, but it should come to us in the near future. Unfortunately, a considerable portion of the £5,500,000 spent on soldier settlement was not devoted to bringing new land into production or cultivation. A considerable portion was expended to purchase estates, and I am afraid that with a great percentage of them it was a question of buying out some men and putting others in their places. Although we increased our loan indebtedness by so doing, we have not paved the way to a corresponding increase in production. This was due largely to the fact that the soldiers were disinclined to take up virgin country,

and the responsibility of the State was to do the best possible for them.

The Premier: The trouble was that preparations had not been made beforehand to place them on the land.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Preparation was not made ahead, and the soldiers were seeking ready-made farms in preference to virgin country. For that we cannot blame them. The reduced deficit last year was due largely, if not entirely, to the expenditure of these large sums of borrowed money. We know perfectly well that by expending £1,000,000 of loan money a year, we increase the flow of money through the various channels of Government activity, and it comes back to the Treasury in the form of revenue. The improved condition of the finances had been due almost entirely to the expenditure of loan moneys, and not to any inherent improvement in our economic conditions. More than half the deficit in recent years has been due to the loss on the working of our railway system.

The Premier: Five-sevenths of it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Two years ago the deficiency resulting from the working of our railways was £454,000.

The Premier: And the sinking fund amounts to £114,000.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am dealing with working expenses and interest only; I am not taking sinking fund into account. This is an enormous sum, relatively speaking, to lose on one public utility. In 1921-22 the loss was considerably reduced, the total then being £288,000, and in the year that has just closed, the shortage was not the amount published in the Press to-day, £62,000, but £92,000.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This represents a very considerable reduction upon the shortage of £454,000 of two years ago. Therefore the improvement in our finances is largely due to the improved position of the railways, and this in turn is attributable to the expenditure of borrowed money having created greater activity in the Railway Department. I commend the leading article in this morning's "West Australian" to the careful attention of members. I suppose I am entitled to say a friendly word regarding that journal, inasmuch as I occasionally indulge in criticism of it.

The Premier: You are not referring to the "Worker," are you?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No; the "Worker," like the "West Australian," I suppose, is generally right, but occasionally wrong.

The Premier: What about the "Primary Producer"?

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is always right; its record is 100 per cent. accuracy in policy and fact. The position as analysed in the leading article in this morning's "West Australian" is worthy of deep study. I hope that members will take it to heart and that as a consequence there may be a change of view by many members sitting on the Gov-

ernment side. The financial difficulties of the State in recent years have been largely due to our having been overbuilt in railway mileage proportionately to population. We have pursued a wrong policy, in that we have been opening up the lands in the outer areas and running railways thither at great expense when there was not sufficient traffic to warrant the outlay, and at the same time the lands nearer at hand are not developed to a reasonable extent. That is a bad policy, and I fear the Government are still intent on pursuing it. Parliament has already authorised the construction of a railway from Pemberton to Denmark, estimated to cost £800,000.

The Premier: No, £600,000, and do not forget that your friends have another railway too.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That railway is warranted. According to the testimony of the Minister for Agriculture, it should have been built 10 years ago.

Hon. T. Walker: It was promised over 20 years ago.

Mr. Pickering: And the Minister said it should have spur lines, too.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Not only should the direct connection be made, but spur lines also should be built.

Mr. Harrison: The Esperance line is not alone in that respect.

Hon. T. Walker: Sir John Forrest, in his day, promised that line.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In the old-settled rural districts of the State, which many of us years ago—knowing less of the State's agricultural possibilities than we now know—regarded as the garden of the State, the areas through York, along the Great Southern railway and through to Toodyay—

The Premier: Do not leave out Northam.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Northam, too, may be included—we had been led to believe that right down the Avon Valley was the garden of the State, or at any rate that this area contained some of our best agricultural land.

The Minister for Works: So far as it had then been discovered.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The pioneers who came here 80 or 90 years ago, the grandmother of the member for West Perth and others, were very shrewd folk because, although they knew nothing about the State, had no one to meet them on the wharf and take them to homes or institutions, no one to deliver flowery orations as to the fortune awaiting them in this golden country, although they had to face the scrub and the blacks and all the other disabilities that the member for Pilbara told us had resulted in the building up of a hardy, pioneering race—

Mr. Underwood: They had the advantage of not having to listen to the orations.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am pleased I have not inflicted any of those orations on the migrants, and I hope this sort of thing will be eliminated and that the new-comers will be allowed to make their own way without the aid of so much talk. The pioneers displayed a great knowledge of the State's agricultural possibilities, because they trekked to

the bush, selected land and made homes for themselves in spots that even after the lapse of 90 years are considered to be unsurpassed.

Hon. T. Walker: They picked the eyes out of the country all right.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They proved very good judges. Of course they were entitled to it and I am very pleased that things turned out so. It would be regrettable if they had been sufficiently unfortunate in their choice to select poorer country, because they might then have become disheartened, notwithstanding their indomitable spirit, and drifted back to the old country.

The Minister for Works: They could not return; they had burnt their bridges behind them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In these areas which we know contain good land, population has been for many years practically at a standstill. According to the census the population has decreased. The Premier has frequently denied that there were considerable areas of good land along existing railways that were not being utilised to their fullest capacity.

The Premier: I will take the House up there and we will see. We will have a trip.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know that many of us would be good judges.

The Premier: We will risk that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the House goes there in the spring when the wild flowers are out, and the bloom is on the trees, and the cattle are browsing on the hillside, we may think that everything is looking lovely in the farming areas. Travelling in a comfortable special train or in a motor car is different from rising at 6 o'clock in the morning year after year clearing, working, and carrying on the development of a farm.

The Colonial Secretary: That is late in those districts.

The Premier: We will take a walking tour.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We might gain more knowledge of the country if we walked than if we travelled by other means. We still have considerable areas of land in districts closer to Perth that ought to be utilised and brought into productive use, without the expenditure of loan moneys on public works. We are going to spend £800,000 on a railway in the South-West, and large sums of money in other districts. That is not a sound or wise policy, whilst we have land nearer to the capital and the port of shipment and to our markets, that can be brought into productive use without the expenditure of large sums of borrowed money. I am sorry the Government have not indicated that they intend to reintroduce a Closer Settlement Bill during this session. One is long overdue. No attempt is made to bring into use these large holdings, except those that are voluntarily offered to the Government for purchase. There is no power to compulsorily resume.

The Premier: We passed a Bill twice in this House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier ought to join with our policy at the next general elections for the removal of the obstruction. We ought to go to the country together on that policy, the policy of removing the obstruction that was responsible for the loss of the Closer Settlement Bill. If we did that, we might have something of value to go on when the new Parliament meets next year. No matter how the Upper House may stand in the way of progress or in the path of development, however, it must not be interfered with.

The Premier: You have a good many members there.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And we shall have another on Saturday next, I am pleased to say.

The Premier: Mr. Allen has not gone over to you, has he?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, but he will fail to get in.

The Minister for Works: He will go out to thank his constituents for putting him in.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We are the only State in the Commonwealth that does not possess legislation that provides for the compulsory resumption of large estates. The other States have found it necessary to make this provision. In New South Wales and Queensland there are to-day thriving agricultural towns situated in districts and areas that 25 or 30 years ago were merely sheep walks. The large holdings served their purpose in the early days. They were an inducement in those pioneering times to people to go out into the distant parts of the Commonwealth. To-day, owing to the pressure of population and the need for the utilisation of lands nearer to the ports, it has been found necessary to pass legislation in the other States to make it possible to compulsorily resume those areas and force them into use and settlement.

The Premier: I hope we shall get that power, too.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This session is an opportune one to seek that power, and to send the Bill back to another place. It would then be more likely to be made an issue at the coming elections.

The Premier: We have had it twice. There is an election for the Council in May.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The elections do not seem to have any effect upon another place. It is only when members of this House, and the electors who return them to this Chamber, take up a matter, and make it a live issue, that we are likely to have any chance.

Mrs. Cowan: Several members of the Council are going up for election next May.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The only way we are likely to bring about their defeat upon the issue of closer settlement is by liberalising the franchise. So long as it is a House of privilege, elected mainly by property interests, and representing property interests, so long will it continue to reject measures which attempt in any way to affect the welfare of property holders.

The Premier: The electors will not bother to go to the poll now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Even those who have the right to vote take but little interest in the Legislative Council. It is time we liberalised the franchise. We should find then that the electors who take a fairly live interest in the elections for the Legislative Assembly would take a similar interest in those for another place. It cannot be said that the people as a whole are indifferent to the privilege of the franchise. In my electorate there was polled at the last elections the highest percentage of votes cast in the State, namely 84 per cent. of the total enrolment. Many of the remaining 16 per cent. had left the district or the State. Of those who were entitled to vote, 96 per cent. or 97 per cent. voted.

The Premier: That is very unusual.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but it is not unusual for 65 to 70 per cent. of the people to vote in most of the constituencies. Having regard to the voting in the other States I should say this is not a bad percentage. It is time a move forward was made in the matter of land taxation. Our land tax has not been amended since it was originally introduced in 1906. The incidence of land taxation remains the same to-day as when it was passed many years ago. Notwithstanding that we have passed through extraordinary times during the intervening years, no change has been made, although it has been found necessary to amend, alter or increase every other form of taxation. The total amount brought to revenue to-day as a result of land taxation is only about £75,000.

The Minister for Works: The Federal people get a good slice of it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They do not get much of our land tax. There is an exemption of £5,000 under the Federal Act, and I notice that pastoral holders are to be exempt for the future. There has been an enormous accretion of land values during recent years. Values in the agricultural areas have not increased very much. Our agricultural lands to-day are the cheapest in the world. Land that is capable of production, in the way that our agricultural areas are, cannot be bought, I believe, in any other part of the world for the price that is asked for it here. The values are not high. To those who represent more particularly the country districts, and belong to the Country Party, I say they are entirely mistaken with regard to the effect of the incidence of a properly regulated or scientifically adjusted land values taxation. It is not upon the holder of broad acres in the agricultural areas, who is working and cultivating his land, that the increased taxation would fall. It would apply mainly to values in the city, where owners contribute very little to the increased value. For the man who works his land it must be said that no matter how the land may increase in value, it does so largely as a result of his own energy, work and enterprise, aided of course by the expendi-

ture of public funds on railways, water supplies and public facilities of that kind. It is different with the owner of city land. All the work of development in the country, all the expenditure of loan moneys on public works in the country, no matter in what remote part of the State, tends to increase the value of city land. It is through the city that all the produce of the country percolates. Although the landlord in the city does nothing to add to the value of his land, whilst he sleeps it is increasing in value as a result of the energy, enterprise and work of other citizens of the community, and as a result of the expenditure of public funds to which the general taxpayer has to contribute. All the time the landlord is growing in wealth. To-day our land tax, particularly as affecting city values, is an absurdity. The tax of 1-3d. in the pound for improved land is one of the smallest land taxes in Australia.

The Premier: I do not think they have any land tax in New South Wales.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Here they do not pay any.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course not. I once had a block of land in the city, and paid 7s. 8d. a year upon it. The time is overdue for a re-examination of the incidence of our land taxation. I do not know why the Government have not touched the question in recent years, especially when the need for increased revenue has been so great. Whilst we allow landlords, and particularly the city landlord, to reap the reward of other men's labour in developing the State, we are forced by the financial necessities of the State to levy increased tolls upon the producers by raising railway rates. Instead of increasing our railway rates, as in some cases we have done, to the point of retarding development and production in the outer areas, we should have kept those rates as low as possible, and obtained additional revenue by means of increased land taxation, particularly taxation on city lands.

Mr. Pickering: Have you ever worked out how much would be required from that source to relieve the railway rates?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have not; but I should say, roughly, that if we were to reduce railway rates to the extent of £100,000 annually and give that considerable relief to the producers, it would be a benefit to the State all round. We should get that money from those who ought to pay it, who have no claim whatever to consideration. High railway charges are to be avoided wherever possible.

The Premier: A hundred thousand would not make much difference.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It would have a pretty considerable effect, I think. High railway charges hamper development in every way. Persons who bought land a few years ago and sat down to do nothing with it are to-day in many cases reaping a reward of ten or twenty times their outlay. There is no

question that the Parliament and the people of Western Australia must devote themselves to the development of primary industries, seeing that we have so very little opportunity to establish secondary industries. A policy primarily of land settlement must be encouraged. I hope all is going well with the group settlements, but I would ask the Premier to give members a little more information than has been made available during the past few months. It is nearly two years since the first group settlement was established, and to-day we have 72 groups in various parts of the South-West, with 1,400 men upon them. Especially during the past 12 months there has been much activity. More than half a million pounds, I believe, has been expended upon group settlements during the past financial year.

The Premier: That is altogether.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes; but the work should now be far enough advanced to enable the Premier to give the House some information as to costs and results to date. The hon. gentleman should be in a position to tell us what the average cost of clearing has been so far, or say during the past six months. We all realise that the success or failure of these group settlements depends largely upon the capital cost of the work. Up to a certain capital expenditure, land can be occupied and worked profitably. But if the capital cost goes beyond a certain point, the land becomes an unprofitable proposition to the holder. I am rather sorry that the Premier has not given us any information whatever as to the actual results of the work performed during the past 12 months, and as to the actual costs incurred in doing that work. Such information would enable members to discuss the question more intelligently. I realise, and I suppose the Premier has realised from the beginning, that much of the expenditure on group settlements in the South-West will have to be written down. We cannot expect, having regard to the circumstances in which the work has been undertaken, to carry through year by year without incurring some losses. Indeed, the fact of losses having been made is disclosed already in the report of the Royal Commission which inquired into soldier settlement.

Mr. Pickering: But that experience of losses should be a decreasing factor.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. One can understand that at the beginning the cost was excessive. From one group to another, it should be a diminishing quantity. It is rather a pity that we have not been able to pursue the policy advocated by the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) at the primary producers' conference. But in the nature of things it would not be possible to do that. The member for Sussex suggested that the cheapest results in clearing would be obtained if the Government got a gang of qualified clearers and let them proceed from group to group, so that the experience gained in one group would be of benefit on the next. There are new settlers going on each group; and

although, of course, the foreman will have gained experience and will be able to pass that experience on to the new settlers, still, by the present process it is not possible to get the same results as would accrue if the work of clearing were all done by experienced gangs.

The Premier: It is not a wages job.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No; but if we have men clearing on the sustenance basis of 10s a day, and if they are inefficient, or unaccustomed to the work, it naturally follows that the clearing will cost much more; and the cost of clearing becomes a charge against the block.

Mr. Mann: Clearing is a necessary experience for the new settlers to gain.

Hon. P. COLLIER: To some extent it is. We have departed from the declared policy of giving the migrants 12 months' experience of farming before sending them on to blocks. Quite recently I read that we are taking migrants straight off the ships and sending them to group settlements. Men coming from the centres of population in the Old Country cannot have any idea of the work of clearing. Even if they were farm labourers in the Old Country, they would still have no knowledge of such work as clearing in our South-West. If we take raw new chums—let me put it that way—and put them down in the South-West to clear heavy timber, what is the cost going to be? I suppose the Government have been forced to depart from their declared policy of giving the settlers 12 months' experience, by the necessity for finding employment.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What would 12 months experience in the eastern districts be worth to the migrants in the South-West?

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so, except that they would become acclimatised, and hardened, and accustomed to bush work. An hon. member said clearing was a necessary experience for new settlers; but after all, experience gained in clearing land in the South-West would not be of very much value to a man when it comes to the actual work of farming.

Mr. Pickering: But the settler has got to clear more than his original 25 acres, if he is to make a success.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am sorry the Premier has not so far given the House the information as to cost. I think we should have it before the session closes. We need not be afraid of the position. We ought to know just where we stand. I hope also that an opportunity will be afforded to migrants to gain a little experience before being sent to the group settlements. Now on the question of immigration itself. From time to time we have heard complaints that we are getting an unduly large percentage of a type that is not suitable. At the annual meeting of the New Settlers' League held last year the president, in his opening address, made a complaint that altogether too many of the migrants arriving that year were not of the right kind. Similar statements have frequently been made, and

on every occasion the assertion has been met by such an announcement as "Yes, we admit that things have not been as good in the matter of selection at Home as they might be, but the method of selection has now been tightened up and there will be no cause for complaint in the future." That has been the reply. But rather than any improvement having taken place, all those who are in the position to offer an opinion of any value, agree that we are going the other way.

The Premier: You know 3,000 men paid their own way to this country the other year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course a percentage of those would be failures, and for those failures the Government cannot be held responsible. But nearly everyone who is in a position to judge, agrees that we are getting too many migrants of a type unsuitable for land settlement here.

Mr. Mann: I think the migrants have been much better this year, with the exception of the "Hobson's Bay" batch.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the reply which is always given. I do not know that that is so, though I am aware that the hon. member is familiar with the migrants to a great extent. We are always meeting with the reply, "You must accept a percentage of failures." That is admitted. The question is one of what is a reasonable percentage of the unsuitable? During the debate on the Address-in-reply members expressed themselves to the effect that they were satisfied because a majority of the migrants were all right and would make good. I have no doubt that a majority will make good, but a majority is not sufficient; and 30 per cent., or even 20 per cent., of failures would be altogether too great.

The Premier: I do not think the failures are 3 per cent.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think they are 20 per cent.

Mr. Mann: Out of some 11,000 migrants, 160 have been given up as complete failures. It is true that some of the migrants have had up to the fifth position found for them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: With a close method of selection in the Old Country, there ought to be practically no failures except failures arising from temperament or from want of will. The percentage due to character or physique should be very, very small, because it ought to be possible for those charged with the work of selection to make reasonably sure of character, and the doctors should be able to make fairly certain as to physique. Of course, one may get a man to whose character there is no objection whatever, and whose physique is all right, but who, because of temperament or lack of will, which naturally no selectors could foresee, proves a failure.

The Premier: You cannot get them all perfect.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier will not think I am arguing for perfection; it is a question of having a reasonable percentage

of failures only. During the past week—I do not like citing instances because one cannot argue from the particular to the general—we had four migrants sentenced to terms of imprisonment here.

The Premier: They were physically fit and right in every way except that they were not honest.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is something that can be guarded against.

Mr. Mann: There are many nominated migrants.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are supposed to be the best.

Mr. Mann: They are not always so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No member will deny that the method of passing migrants in the Old Country is unsatisfactory.

Mr. Mann: There must be something wrong, because we have found cases of people being "rung in."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Have you found that out definitely?

Mr. Mann: Yes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then the Government should institute a prosecution.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We know it is only a matter of going to a doctor and getting a certificate for half-a-guinea.

The Colonial Secretary: For half-a-crown very often.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The doctors will not concern themselves about our interests. In the medical profession we will find men carrying out their duties perfunctorily, and so long as they collect their half-guineas they will pass the migrant and issue the necessary certificates.

The Colonial Secretary: You are referring to the doctors in the Old Country?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, they do not concern themselves about the type of settler suitable for us.

The Colonial Secretary: They are more concerned about their half-crowns.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I mention this point because I urge the Premier to bring it before the notice of the Prime Minister, who will be here shortly on his way to London.

The Premier: We have already done so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier can urge the matter here. I know that General Sir Neville Howse, who is a medical man, is in London and I believe he has received instructions from the Federal Government to look into this matter. Judging by some of the arrivals recently—this applies particularly to those going to the Eastern States rather than to those arriving here—it is very necessary that the position should be overhauled. I am confident that the medical inspection will never be satisfactorily carried out until Australian doctors are sent Home to do the work. They will be charged with the responsibility, and if men who are physically unfit are sent out to Australia, then those doctors can be brought to book. Under the existing system, no matter how many physically unfit men arrive here, we have no redress whatever.

The Colonial Secretary: The position has been altered considerably during recent months.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There it is again! I have heard that sort of statement for the last two or three years. Why did not the Minister say that "the position was being tightened up"?

The Colonial Secretary: I was keeping that phrase in reserve.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister might also have added that while my complaint was justified, there would be "no cause for complaint in the future."

The Premier: Our own men are selecting the migrants.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But now our own doctors.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In any case, I do not know what some of these men are doing, because I have seen migrants so obviously unsuitable that one could recognise the fact from the other side of a street.

The Premier: They may have paid their own passage money.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, they were assisted migrants.

The Premier: I don't know.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In a report issued by the secretary of the New Settlers' League a few days ago, that official said he regretted that "the 'Hobson's Bay' quota of migrants, who arrived in this State on Monday last, were far below the standard of recent arrivals." I believe the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) saw a number of those migrants and concurs in that view.

Mr. Mann: That is the contingent I mentioned.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The lot for this State were all right.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In papers published in the Eastern States I read some alarming statements about the contingents for Melbourne and Sydney. I do not know whether our officers are more vigilant than those representing the Eastern States, but I believe the percentage of unsuitable migrants is greater where the Eastern States are concerned, than is the case with us.

Mr. Mann: That is quite true.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am pleased that the Government have been able to grant the mining districts a concession regarding water supplies. We are not asking too much, because the Premier has been relieved of annual payments towards the sinking fund, representing £80,000, but the concession granted by the Government, which amounts to £40,000, is a valuable one. I am sorry that relief did not come earlier, but, as it is, I believe the concession will have a beneficial influence on mining operations.

The Minister for Mines: Including the domestic supplies, the concession means £45,000.

Hon. P. COLLIER: While the additional amount represents considerable relief to indi-

vidual residents, it will not have so much influence on the mining industry. I hope no portion of this money will go into the pockets of other people. It was announced in the goldfields Press a few weeks ago that the firewood company intended to increase the price for firewood by 1s. per ton. On the total quantity taken by the mines in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder districts, that would mean an additional charge of about £12,000. That means that of the Premier's concession of £40,000, no less than £12,000 will go into the pockets of the firewood company.

The Premier: I hope not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: So do I. I protest against anything of the sort being done. I would go to any length to prevent it, but unfortunately no one has any power to intervene. The firewood supply is now a monopoly. Formerly there were two companies, although that did not mean competition, because they agreed as to prices and conditions to operate in the industry. Immediately there is only one company, the price, it is announced, is to be increased by 1s. per ton. I know of no reason whatever why that should be done. There has been no increased expenditure incurred by the company to justify such an increase in firewood prices. As a matter of fact, the mining companies now have a case cited in the Arbitration Court for a reduction of the wages paid to their employees on the grounds that the cost of living and prices of commodities have decreased during the past 12 months. When there is an effort made to reduce wages on those grounds, we see the firewood companies endeavouring to increase prices by 1s. per ton.

The Minister for Mines: The mining companies have informed the firewood company that they will not pay anything additional for the firewood. Thus they will place upon the company the responsibility of refusing supplies.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know nothing about it except what has appeared in the Press, and that was not contradicted. I was surprised that no opposition appeared to be offering, and that apparently the mining companies were accepting the increased price without demur.

The Minister for Mines: They did not do so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope they will not do so either.

The Minister for Mines: I made inquiries and the companies objected most strenuously.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Before I conclude, I wish to bring before the House a personal matter. It is not often that I adopt that course. I desire to complain against the discourtesy of the Minister for Mines in going to the goldfields to districts represented by members on the Opposition side of the House, and receiving deputations from public bodies in our districts, without any intimation being given to myself or my colleagues as to his intention. Twice during the last four or five weeks the Minister has gone to my district and the electorates represented by four mem-

bers on this side of the House, without our having any knowledge that he was to receive deputations and deal with public matters of great interest to the residents of our constituencies. In thus going behind the backs of members, it cannot be urged on behalf of the Minister that his action arose from want of experience. Only last week the Minister left Perth on Thursday evening and no member knew of his intention until we read the announcement in the following day's paper. He received a large deputation representative of all the local governing, industrial and other bodies of Kalgoorlie and Boulder.

The Minister for Mines: I did not go to Boulder.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so, but representatives of Boulder were there.

The Minister for Mines: I was not aware that they intended to wait on me as a deputation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister knew he was to receive a deputation.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I say the Minister did. He went there to receive a deputation. I can understand a Minister going there on business connected with water charges, merely dealing with the position as an act of administration, and then finding on arrival that a deputation is forced upon him. Ministers do find themselves placed in that position at times, but when the Minister went to the goldfields on this occasion he knew he was to receive a deputation. The Minister says he did not know. This is what appeared in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" of Monday last:—

Mr. Francis mentioned matters so far as they affected the mines at Hampton Plains and asked him to receive a deputation in Perth from the mines and representatives of the municipalities and road boards and the miners in order to discuss the position. He (the Minister) suggested that it would be infinitely simpler for him to come to Kalgoorlie.

I also read in the newspapers correspondence showing that the Minister was to receive a deputation from these bodies and knew he was going to Kalgoorlie for that purpose.

The Minister for Mines: They said nothing about a deputation. I said I would go and discuss matters on the spot.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But I have quoted from the Minister's speech. The report says that "Mr. Seaddan said in reply," and I have quoted part of what the Minister said. There can be no question but that the Minister knew about it. The Minister during the course of that speech said that the reduction in the price of water had no political significance. I do not know what he meant by that, for he who excuses, accuses. I know that there was present a representative of another political party, one of those to which the Minister has belonged in recent years, and that he introduced the deputation. I regard it as an insult and an act of discourtesy on the part of the Minister to receive a deputation from my district—

The Minister for Mines: I did not go to your district.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Kalgoorlie and Boulder represent one district in such a matter and the deputation was representative of all local interests. The Minister went there for the purpose of receiving that deputation but did not let members for the districts affected know of his visit, and he slipped away from here without having the courtesy to intimate his going to the member for Kalgoorlie, in whose district he received the deputation, to the member for Hannans, to the member for Brown Hill or to me. It is the second time he has done it within four weeks, for only a little while ago he went up and received a deputation of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund from my electorate.

The Minister for Mines: I did not receive a deputation from the Mine Workers' Relief Fund.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is the accepted rule for Ministers, before going into an electorate, to notify the member for that electorate. The Premier would never be guilty of ignoring that rule. Quite recently the Minister for Agriculture offended in the same way when he visited the Kanowna electorate and took with him a member of the Legislative Council, but did not notify the member for Kanowna.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is not true.

Hon. T. Walker: It is true.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister went through the district with a member of the Legislative Council, while the member for Kanowna knew nothing about it.

The Minister for Agriculture: The member for Kanowna excused his absence.

Hon. T. Walker: I did not know about it. I received no invitation whatever.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the Minister had merely overlooked the courtesy, it would be more honourable to plead guilty than try to shuffle out. The Minister for Mines says he did not go to receive a deputation. I say he did, and I can only conclude that he deliberately refrained from giving any intimation of his intention. He owes an apology to the people whom I represent, for it is due to them that they should have the services of their own member when a Minister visits the electorate. It is not that I care; I do not want to accompany Ministers; I would not care if I were never present at a deputation; but I must have regard for the people whom I represent. When a Minister visits a community the people are entitled to the services of their own member, and ought not to have to be introduced by another member. Yet when four members were interested in the same deputation they were all passed over and were told nothing about it. I hope it will not again be necessary for me to speak in this connection.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [8.48]: I have listened with close interest to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition. His remarks on the finances of the State are worthy of

the gravest consideration. I think further, that one should welcome such articles as that which appeared in this morning's "West Australian" if through a study of those articles some benefit will result to the deliberations of this Chamber. But I am afraid the people of Western Australia are more or less in a state of financial doped. We are in a period of huge deficits, huge loans, and huge per capita indebtedness, and we do not worry about the smaller items of finance that, however, are vital to the interests of the State. Therefore I welcome the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition on group settlement, for that question is one of the most important confronting the State to-day. Not only do hon. members on both sides of the House follow that development, but the eyes of all the people of the State are concentrated on it. In this respect the Premier should take with the utmost kindness and consideration the matured thoughts of hon. members, even though they be not on all fours with his own preconceived ideas of methods of development. Members representing the districts where the group settlements are should be afforded every opportunity of giving assistance and advice to the Ministry. Every phase of political thought is behind the group settlement. At the recent conference of primary producers, what appeared to be adverse criticism was directed at the movement, but not with the idea of injuring the group settlements; rather as a warning that every possible improvement should be developed, but that is all. The Country Party stands for group settlement in the South-West. There may be a divergence of views as to how the policy should be developed, but that is all. The Leader of the Opposition referred to certain remarks I made recently. I am satisfied that the more experienced men are in the problems of clearing the South-West, the more economically can that phase of development be effected. It is because I have been for over 20 years in the South-West and have been intimately associated with the clearing and development of that country, that I venture to make some comments now and then, when I think those comments may assist to reduce the capital cost of that development. The amount involved in that movement is very considerable. Already £6,000,000 has been forecasted. When we remember the remarks of the Premier that the ultimate movement is limited only by the available territory, it is conceivable that a very much larger amount than £6,000,000 is involved in this policy of settlement.

The Premier: Year by year, and bit by bit, more money will be necessary.

Mr. PICKERING: And so this movement will grow. The development, to be successful, must be carefully watched. When we arrive at that stage where the new settlers will be getting some return, we shall have to be sure they have the necessary pastures before we hand to them the valuable stock

they will require. It must be borne in mind that the average percentage of butter fat produced by Western Australian cows is not likely to be payable to the group settlers. Their cows must give them sufficient butter fat to ensure a profitable return.

Mr. Harrison: Where is your source of supply of ideal cows?

Mr. PICKERING: That has to be built up, and the time to start building it up is now. I commend the Minister for Agriculture on his efforts to improve our dairying industry. I agree with him in his policy of providing certain bulls for certain districts. But if we are to have proper bulls for the different breeds in various districts, we must be sure those animals are bred on better producing lines.

The Minister for Agriculture: From a high production strain.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes. The best breed is not too good to give the group settlers, if they are to be successful. The proper avenues for those settlers are the industries associated with dairying. We shall have to provide them with well bred cows, and in number as they are able to carry them, but not more. Years ago the Premier introduced valuable pure bred dairy stock into the State. The great majority of those animals did not succeed, because they came from the finest pastures in Victoria and were sent to the poor pastures of the South-West.

The Premier: No, they went all over the State.

Mr. PICKERING: Many of them went to the South-West, and I know something of their subsequent history. It has been demonstrated by the select committee that inquired into the agricultural industry in New South Wales that the most successful dairy farms were those fully equipped with silos. And in conversations I have had with leading dairymen in this State, that has been the chief point they emphasised. When the Overseas Settlement Delegation were here I endeavoured to point out to some of the delegates that if the group settlements were cleared at moderate cost, fenced and put into proper condition, all the settlers could make good with first-class dairy stock. If the groups are not over-capitalised, and if the settlers have the necessary feed before being furnished with dairy stock, there is no reason why they should not be successful. No matter what differences of view there may be as to the form of settlement, or the shape it takes under the Premier, it is the duty of the primary producers to get well and truly behind it. That is my attitude towards group settlement. We must have a proper system of herd testing, for only by that can we hope to make dairying successful. I am well aware that the Minister for Agriculture has this system in his mind, and that we have in Mr. Hampshire a very capable officer who is doing his best to educate the dairymen of the State. The immediate future of group settlement in the South-West depends on the proper development of the dairying industry,

associated with which, of course, will come pig-raising.

Mr. HARRISON: Why not pigs first?

Mr. PICKERING: I prefer them to come coincidentally with dairying, because then the skimmed milk, which otherwise will be wasted, can be converted into a profit. So I say the settlers should be equipped with a sufficient number of breeding sows. Then there are the side-lines of condensed milk and cheese making. It will be necessary to see that proper provision is made in the way of factories. We have in Busselton a State butter factory. Strange to say, among the groups which belong to my electorate and that of the member for Collie, a movement is afoot to establish a co-operative butter factory. I went very carefully into this question with Mr. Hampshire, the dairy expert, and I think we have evolved a scheme that will enable the group settlers and dairymen throughout my district to take over the State butter factory at Busselton on a co-operative basis and interest all the group settlers immediately in the venture. The basis of the scheme is that the group settler should take a £1 share to start with and, for every two cows he requires, take up another £1 share until reaching the maximum of £5. By these means we shall secure a capital of something like £4,000 immediately, and if the dairymen take up the shares co-operatively, there will be no difficulty in taking over the factory and running it on proper lines. At present we are up against opposition from a co-operative factory that is gradually taking away the subscribers of the State factory. The means by which this is being done are legitimate enough, but they are means that a State-owned factory cannot adopt. I refer to the giving of a bonus to subscribers. If we make a co-operative factory of the Busselton factory, it will have a directorate of its own that will adopt similar tactics, and so we hope to be able to regain our subscribers from the Bunbury factory.

Mr. Money: You do not object to that?

Mr. PICKERING: No, because it is quite legitimate in a co-operative concern, but a State-owned factory operating on present lines cannot adopt similar tactics. The sooner the Busselton factory is put on a co-operative basis, the better it will be for the institution and the dairymen in the district.

The Minister for Agriculture: Busselton's should be the biggest factory in the State.

Mr. PICKERING: The centre of dairying must eventually be at Busselton. Behind Busselton is a district eminently suited for dairying, and Busselton should in time attain the same position in this State that the Tweed River holds in New South Wales. If the Busselton factory is taken over co-operatively, I feel sure it will rapidly advance and attain this position.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You do not think the Bunbury people were a little too smart for you?

Mr. PICKERING: Not for the member for Sussex. I am quite as alert to their prac-

tices as is anyone, and if I can do anything to retain to my district that which belongs to it, I shall not spare any effort. The Busselton people are not so slow as the hon. member infers.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Bunbury factory has paid back all the money that was borrowed.

Mr. PICKERING: Another very important factor regarding group settlement is that of finance. The members of group settlements are looking at the financial aspect pretty closely. A proper system of accounts should be kept.

The Premier: There is a proper system.

Mr. PICKERING: I am glad to hear it. Unless a proper system is established, there will be the utmost difficulty in allocating the costs. The Leader of the Opposition said truly that when a group started, it started with greenhands. None of them know anything about the art of clearing, fencing or other work incidental to development. All of them have to learn it. Each group starts afresh, and the first lot of land to be cleared is naturally the most expensive. If these blocks are to be debited with a heavier cost, it will be unfair to those settlers who draw the blocks. To allocate the costs to a group is not the easy matter the Premier would lead us to believe. There are many phases of expenditure that, unless minutely watched, will cause considerable anxiety and trouble to the settlers when the time comes to allot the costs. Therefore I impress upon the Premier the urgent necessity for seeing that every item is carefully watched, so that there shall be no disagreement to occasion unrest or discontent amongst the settlers when the time for allocation comes. This is such an important point that I make no apology for emphasising it.

Mr. Marshall: Can you offer any suggestion to overcome the difficulty of greenhands continually starting on new groups?

Mr. PICKERING: I offered a suggestion, which I considered a good one, to continue certain men at clearing in order that the experience they acquired might be available for the benefit of later groups.

The Premier: There are not 20 such men available in your district.

Mr. PICKERING: I thought the Premier had an intimate acquaintance with the State he represents.

The Premier: So I have.

Mr. PICKERING: Considerably more than 20 are prepared to take on clearing contracts.

The Premier: But you were contending that we ought to have men who have been clearing for years.

Mr. PICKERING: I can introduce to the Premier quite a large number of such men at any time.

The Premier: I would like to be informed of them now.

Mr. PICKERING: I might mention myself to start with.

The Minister for Mines: You want to start your clearing here.

Mr. PICKERING: I would soon make a start if I had the opportunity; I would start ringbarking there very soon.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Will not the Premier's scheme of averaging the cost over the whole of a group meet the situation?

Mr. PICKERING: No, not any two blocks cost the same for clearing, and if the cost is averaged over the whole of a group, some of the blocks will be unduly handicapped.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Cast lots for the blocks.

Mr. PICKERING: That will not make it any more just. The variation in the timber may make a considerable difference in the quality of the land. In the wheat belt or the heavily timbered South-West where the red gums prevail, the land is better. Yet a man who gets poorer land that cost less to clear will be loaded up equally with the man who gets better land that cost more to clear.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not see how else it can be done.

Mr. PICKERING: With a good system of accounts, it should be possible to get very near to the mark.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A deputation pointed out to us that the men were without experience when they started on the first blocks, and the Premier agreed to their request.

Mr. PICKERING: That phase must be given consideration. Another question affecting group settlement is the urgent need for hospital accommodation. I have already waited upon the Colonial Secretary on several occasions regarding it. I understand the duty of providing hospital accommodation rests with the Minister for Works. It is extremely urgent that finality be reached quickly. It is absurd and ridiculous to expect the people of Busselton to bear the cost of providing hospital accommodation for the whole of the group settlers in the surrounding district. When I brought this matter under the notice of the responsible Minister, I was asked what the people of Busselton were prepared to do. It is with the utmost difficulty that the people of Busselton are carrying on their hospital to-day. The institution has been overcrowded ever since the inception of group settlement there, and only through the generosity of the trades people in providing stores six months in advance of payment has it been possible to finance it. It is unfair to put the hospital committee in that position. It is time the Premier afforded some relief. The people on the group settlements are prepared to do their share if the Premier will provide a hospital in the Margaret district to deal with that section. They have put up a scheme to the Colonial Secretary, laying down the lines on which they propose to collect funds to assist the movement. This is an urgent matter that should not be dilly-dallied with. I should like an assurance from the Government that some definite policy will be decided upon immediately. Any hospital in the Margaret district cannot cater for the groups lying in other directions nearer to Busselton and more remote from the Margaret,

and it is not fair to expect the people of Busselton to provide extra wards for people from the groups. The people of Busselton have done all that is possible; they have not spared themselves, and they have contributed considerable sums of money to meet the position, but it is impossible for them to provide what is necessary to properly equip the hospital. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) knows the difficulties under which we are labouring; he knows that the people of Busselton have done their best to meet the situation. He suggested that relief might be afforded by providing temporary accommodation, but something of a permanent nature is needed. A new ward should be erected at once. The Government should consider the position of the resident medical officer who has been called upon to do a very much larger volume of work than was contemplated when he was granted the munificent salary of £150 or £200 a year. No increase has been granted him in consideration of the extra work he has been called upon to do. These matters are urgent, and should receive immediate attention. Regarding the Licensing Act, a very serious difficulty has arisen, and seeing that the Licensing Board have just been appointed, it is opportune to bring the matter under the notice of the Government. The Act provides that a new license shall be put up to tender. I do not think members realise the true significance of that provision. A petition must be circulated within a certain radius of a certain site, and the site, of course, is the property of a private individual. The petition is sent to the Licenses Reduction Board, and if they consider it bona fide, they pass it on to the Governor who has the particulars published in the "Government Gazette" and in newspapers circulating in the district. At this stage, the Licenses Reduction Board decide upon the accommodation to be provided and call for tenders. What is to be the basis of such a tender? The House should have fixed the basis, which should bear some relation to the capital cost of the hotel. That seems to be the only basis possible, because otherwise it would become a question as to who had the most money to boost the proposal. The site in connection with which this petition is put up is a private site. It does not matter who puts in a tender, the owner alone has a right to that site. That anomaly will have to be rectified. It is an urgent question. I trust some effort will be made to solve the problem and that the difficulty will be overcome. I regret the Premier did not see fit to make any reference to forestry upon the Estimates. It is a very important phase of the business of the State. I have placed a motion on the Notice Paper to the effect that the recommendations of the Royal Commission on forestry be carried out. I trust members will give some consideration to the report of the Commission so that, when the matter is discussed, they will realise the urgency of giving effect to the recommendations which, in all cases except one, were agreed to unanimously. I join with the Leader of the Opposition in congratulat-

ing the Premier upon carrying through last year with so small a deficit. I also join with him in the hope that the Premier's forecast for the ensuing year will be attained.

Mr. Mann: Will you help him to carry it through?

Mr. PICKERING: I do not intend to express any party views on this occasion. I must, however, pay this tribute of praise to the Government for giving effect to a policy of economy.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You do not say that better work could have been done.

Mr. PICKERING: I would not say that. That would be too much to ask. I might think that better work could have been done.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And I would agree with you.

Mr. PICKERING: I must give praise where it is due. It is the bounden duty of members to co-operate with the Premier in his endeavour to balance the ledger at as early a date as possible. We could assist him to that end by imposing restrictions on the railway development policy and keeping it within reasonable limits. Certain promises of railways, however, have been made with which I would not interfere, whether or not we realise the deficit promised. If people have developed their holdings in anticipation of a railway, I see no reason to interfere with the construction of that railway so long as the Commissioner of Railways thinks the route along which it will travel will bring in sufficient revenue to justify the construction. I hope at the close of the present financial year we shall find ourselves in the happy position the Premier has forecasted for us.

General debate concluded; Votes and items discussed as follows:—

Votes—Legislative Council, £1,091; Legislative Assembly, £1,913; Joint House Committee, £4,618; Joint Printing Committee, £3,575; Joint Library Committee, £475; Premier's Department, £10,333; Governor's Establishment, £2,278; Executive Council, £5—agreed to.

Vote—London Agency, £11,744.

Item, Agent General, £1,500:

Mr. MARSHALL: What are the Agent General and his staff doing in England? Last session the Premier, after his return from the Old Country, stated that the people of England did not know that Western Australia was on the map?

The Premier: I did not say that; I said Australia.

Mr. MARSHALL: He said he was surprised at the ignorance of the English people.

The Premier: I did not use those words.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am giving the substance of his statement. We pass large sums of money each year for the upkeep of the Agent General's Office. The Premier used words to the effect that the people of England did not know that they were wear-

ing pearls discovered in this State, and gold the product of this State, and eating commodities which had been produced in abundance in Western Australia. He said most people in England knew no more about Western Australia than that it was part of the universe.

The Premier: You cannot find that in "Hansard."

Mr. MARSHALL: He said, "I found that the people knew very little about this State and hardly realised where it was on the map."

The Premier: Those were my words.

Mr. MARSHALL: He went on to say that the people of England hardly knew that Western Australia was on the map.

The Premier: There are 45 million people in England.

Mr. MARSHALL: We are paying the Agent General £1,500 a year, and the whole outfit is costing £11,000 a year.

The Premier: He has a great deal of work to do.

Mr. MARSHALL: He cannot be very attentive to it, seeing that the people of England know nothing about this State. Unless we get some results from this expenditure we could well cut it out. I object to this large sum of money being spent on keeping up a fashionable resort in London. We know that as much as £80 was paid for a mat for the Agent General's parlour, and that a considerable amount was spent on wine glasses for the Agent General. All we get in return is the ignorance of people in England as to anything appertaining to Western Australia.

Mr. A. Thomson: The present Agent General is the best we have had.

Mr. MARSHALL: The taxpayers of this country must be as badly off with their representation in London as the electors of Katanning are with their representation in Parliament. This vote might have been passed to-night without any comment, although we are getting no results from our expenditure.

The Premier: Yes, we are.

Mr. MARSHALL: The member for Claremont visited England and knows this is correct. If the Agent General is worth his salary, it is a remarkable thing that the Premier could return from England last year and tell us that the people of England are ignorant about this State. I dare say, if we knew exactly what the Agent General and his court in England were costing the taxpayers, we would be greatly surprised.

Mr. J. Thomson: It is money well spent. He is doing good work.

Mr. MARSHALL: It will relieve the taxpayers to know that they are getting something for this huge sum of money. A duty is cast upon members to see that this outlay is economically used. If the case is still as the Premier last session told us it was, supplies to the Agent General should be cut off. However, I know it is useless to move for a reduction.

The PREMIER: I am sorry the hon. member is so disturbed by reason of the remarks I made on my return from the Old Country.

Mr. Marshall: I took you for a truthful, honourable gentleman.

The PREMIER: I am much obliged to the hon. member. The Agent General's office has a great deal of work. Sometimes we want to raise money in London, and sometimes we have indents there, our purchases at Home being made by the Agent General's office. Further, the Agent General has a great deal to do in the official representation of this State in the Old Country. The salary of £1,500 is by no means too large. I do not know that any member of this Chamber would care to take the position at that salary.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The secretary's salary of £636 is too small compared with what is paid to under secretaries in Western Australia.

The PREMIER: The people in the Old Land know very little about Australia.

Mr. Underwood: That is their fault for not studying geography.

The PREMIER: Australia is a long way from England. We know a great deal about the Old Country because the English papers come out here, and because a great many of our people are from Britain. Our Agent-General has done his best to make Western Australia known. When making the observations to which the hon. member alluded, I was speaking of the whole of Australia. The salary is very low for the position.

Mr. Marshall: It is not too great a salary for a good man.

The PREMIER: Every British dominion has a representative in the Old Land, and in most cases he is better paid and in all cases better housed.

Mr. ANGELO: From the manner in which this division is presented, it would appear that there is a net decrease of £2,445. In fact, however, there is an increase on last year's expenditure of nearly £3,000. Almost the whole of the increase appears to be under contingencies, which last year rose from £6,483 to £9,347.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: On a point of order, the hon. member is referring to item 18. I am on item 26.

Mr. Underwood: In dealing with item 1, Agent General £1,500, one can take a survey of the London agency's work.

The CHAIRMAN: The proper course for Mr. Angelo is to ask leave to withdraw item 26 and go back to item 18.

Mr. A. Thomson: There are one or two items I wish to speak on prior to item 18.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You called the division, Mr. Chairman, and no one spoke to the division. Then I called item 26.

The CHAIRMAN: Any item can be spoken to now, but I cannot allow any discussion on the vote. Mr. Angelo, do you want item 18?

Mr. Angelo: No; I was on item 1.

The CHAIRMAN: The general discussion on the division has ceased. We are on items.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: On the first item we can take a survey of the London agency, to see whether we are getting value for our money. The office expenditure, being for ordinary clerical work, has risen by £414, while the expenditure for actual work has fallen by £2,000 odd. This shows that the State's money is being expended in London on clerical work and not on actual work. There is no reason for the increase in office expenditure, as costs have, if anything, decreased during the year.

Mr. A. THOMSON: In reply to the criticism of the member for Murchison, let me say, as one who has been at Home and has seen the excellent work done for Western Australia by Sir James Connolly, that our present Agent General ranks as one of the best this country has ever had, and certainly higher than some representatives of British dominions in the Old Country. Lack of publicity is certainly something from which Western Australia, in common with the other Australian States, suffers at Home. Therefore I regret that the Agent General has not made provision for an up-to-date Press agent. The Agent General himself is a very busy man, with more duties thrust upon him than possibly many members of this Chamber realise. The present occupant of the position receives every visitor from Western Australia, and extends to him every courtesy and assistance he can. However, a publicity agent is essential. A population of 350,000 does not cut very much ice in Great Britain. For the purposes of publicity, such as is secured by various business firms in this State, an expenditure of £500 or £600 for an up to date Australian journalist to act as Press agent in London would be well worth while.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What can you expect to get for £500 or £600 a year in London? It would hardly pay the man's board.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Make it £1,000 a year, then. I commend the Agent General for following up as far as possible all charges made against Western Australia. I agree with the Premier that £1,500 is not too much for the man who is representing Western Australia in London. Living is expensive there, and our Agent General has to associate with people who receive considerably more than he does.

Item, *Cables, postages, telephone, stationery, £546; travelling, £295; entertainment, other, £484:*

Mr. ANGELO: Will the Premier explain why this vote, which totalled £1,900 last year, was exceeded by £1,273?

The PREMIER: I have not all the details of last year's expenditure under this heading. The expenditure was incurred and had to be paid.

Mr. Hughes: Yet you provide for £1,948 less this year!

Item, *Cost of living allowances to staff*, £1,454:

Mr. MARSHALL: I cannot understand this item, which seems to me peculiar.

The PREMIER: Salaries paid in London are fairly low considering the cost of living there, which is still much above pre-war rates. All the employees of the various Governments as well as the officers of the Imperial service, get a cost of living allowance to make up for it.

Mr. Marshall: Is this allowance similar to that granted to State employees in the goldfields areas?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Lutey: Do all share it?

The PREMIER: All except the Agent General.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It would be advisable to cut out the item and pay the officers salaries that will cover the cost of living.

The Minister for Mines: When the cost of living comes down, what then?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Reduce salaries.

The Premier: You cannot do that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not think the cost of living will come down to any extent.

Item, *Upkeep of Savoy House*, £2,100:

Mr. TEESDALE: This is an extraordinary item. The vote was exceeded last year and yet this year £1,270 less is provided.

The Premier: The amount includes ground rent, rates and taxes, and so forth.

Mr. TEESDALE: But Savoy House belongs to the State, and the ground rent surely cannot approach anything like that.

The PREMIER: The item covers the charges I have referred to. In addition, a good deal refers to expenditure involved in alterations and repairs, including the installation of a new lift, and upkeep.

Mr. Hughes: That expenditure is not likely to recur this year?

The PREMIER: No.

Item, *Exhibits for Savoy House*, £50:

Mr. A. THOMSON: The provision of such a small amount is a penny wise and pound foolish policy.

The Minister for Mines: They will get any number of exhibits after the Empire exhibition.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That may be so, but the provision of such a small amount is not the way to advertise the wares of Western Australia. At the office of the Agent General for Queensland there is a magnificent exhibit of the products of that State. The Canadian agency also has an excellent exhibit. It is not good business on our part to provide a paltry £50. Throughout Scotland and England there are Canadian agencies and exhibits in all the principal towns. When I booked my passage back to Western Australia in Edinburgh, I had not the slightest idea that the shipping office where I booked represented Australia, and Western Australia in particular. The office had plenty of information about Canada and America, but, unless things have improved

since I was there, I would defy anyone to go there and learn that that office was representing us. Unfortunately we are not permitted to increase votes, but only to decrease them. I hope the Government will see that, in addition to proper supplies of exhibits going to Savoy House, a good exhibit goes to Australia House.

Item, *Upkeep of Agent General's residence*, £225:

Mr. PICKERING: The item seems somewhat high.

The Premier: It covers ground rents, taxes and so on.

Mr. PICKERING: It seems a peculiar coincidence that all these estimates were so much exceeded last year when the Premier was at Home. I should think he would be familiar with the reasons why the increases were necessary.

The PREMIER: Hon. members cannot expect that the ground rent and rates and taxes for these premises, together with upkeep, can be met without some expenditure. I do not think the expenditure has been too high.

Mr. Marshall: How do you account for the big reduction?

The PREMIER: Rates and taxes and rents are very high in England. In Savoy House we lease a very small shop for £800 per annum, and the local authorities' taxes on it amount to £400.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: In Perth one could get that shop for £4 a week.

The PREMIER: Easily. This item covers rates and taxes, ground rent, maintenance and insurance. It is not too high.

Mr. McCALLUM: Previously we were told that the purchase of this house for the Agent General would save expense. Apparently it is adding to the expense, for we now have to pay the rent.

The Premier: Previously he got an allowance in lieu of rent.

Mr. McCALLUM: We have already passed items totalling £2,500. Yet a little while ago the Premier suggested the Agent General was underpaid at £1,500 per annum. I suppose we should deem ourselves fortunate in having been let off without having to pay for the new motor garage, or for putting down new carpets. Why should the country pay £5 weekly for the upkeep of the Agent General's house? People should know that the purchase of that house has meant no saving whatever, that it has saddled us with a permanent charge of £5 weekly, and that over £2,500 per annum is going out for the maintenance of the Agent General.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not think the sum involved is excessive, for I have come to the conclusion that nothing but heavy taxation will awaken the people of the State. The Premier should add a few thousand to this vote.

Mr. Hughes: If you can awaken the Premier, you are the best call-boy I know.

Mr. MARSHALL: The item shows a reduction of £198. Does the Premier imply

that rates and taxes and ground rent in England have been reduced to that extent?

The Premier: No.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then there are some other items.

The Premier: Of course there are.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then let us have them.

The PREMIER: It does not often happen that a member protests against a reduction in an item.

Mr. Marshall: But why the reduction?

Mr. Teesdale: The Agent General did not buy a new lawn mower this year.

Mr. Pickering: Is there any lighting included in the item?

The PREMIER: No. We cannot pay rent and taxes in London without expending money. Moreover, there were repairs and renovations.

Mr. J. THOMSON: The member for East Perth is interested in the question of fair rents. I draw his attention to the fact that the Government are collecting £800 per annum for a tiny little shop in the basement of the Agent General's office in London.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: As long as we have an Agent General in England, he must fittingly maintain his position. He must be appropriately housed in the proper quarter and must in every way maintain the dignity of the State. Except he do this he cannot move amongst men of authority and power as he should do, for the advantage of Western Australia. I do not believe in saving £5 at the cost of throwing away £10.

Item, Grant to Hon. H. P. Colebatch to cover expenses to assume office as Agent-General £600:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Why is it necessary to provide this large amount, since the highest first-class fare to England is £134? When we are sending an officer to England I do not see why we should call upon the taxpayers to bear the cost of his travelling round the world.

Mr. Underwood: And reporting for the Press.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I admit it is necessary that we should pay the fare of his wife as well. Still, the first item of £265 would cover the lot.

Mr. Money: Then there is his family.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They are all grown up. I could make a trip to England, pay my expenses there and return for less than £600.

Mr. J. Thomson: Where would you live, in Cornwall?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not all the time.

Mr. J. Thomson: You would have to live there nearly all the time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I could live in some very nice places in London for part of the time and not require any more money.

The Premier: You might have a flat in London.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If I did, I should not expect the State to pay for it.

Mr. Underwood: The "flats" are here.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The sum of £600 is too much for the expenses of the Agent General to London, and I hope we are not paying the cost of his trip around the world.

Mr. Teesdale: I think the previous Agent General received about the same amount.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He, too, went around the world.

Mr. Teesdale: The trouble is that they take their families with them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This sort of thing will continue unless an objection is raised. All we should be called upon to pay is the fare and reasonable travelling expenses for the trip to London.

Mr. Teesdale: His going to Queensland was a good idea.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But he also went to Java and India.

Mr. J. Thomson: What travelling expenses would you allow?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The usual expenses allowed to Ministers travelling overseas.

Mr. J. Thomson: Two pounds a day?

Hon. P. Collier: What would he do with the money?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: While I was a Minister, I never received £2 a day. I protest against the voting of £600.

The PREMIER: This is roughly the amount drawn by each Agent General. Mr. Colebatch went to Queensland at the request of the Government to look into the cotton question. That was necessary.

Mr. Teesdale: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: He went to Java and Singapore to inquire regarding markets for meat from the Wyndham Meat Works, and at our request he went to India—unfortunately he has fallen ill there and has had to undergo an operation—to endeavour to induce retired Indian officers with capital to settle in Western Australia. Victoria sent over a representative, and I asked Mr. Colebatch to break his journey there and endeavour to get into touch with the military authorities with a view to getting some of these men to come here. I think we should have had a representative in India before.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A retired colonel came here and could not get land.

The PREMIER: He could not have tried very hard.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I went to you about him and also to the Lands Department.

The PREMIER: I do not remember it. Of course he could have got land; plenty of people have since obtained land.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Public Service Commissioner, £2,647:

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.21 p.m.