

admit unregistered men as suggested by the amendment by the member for Kanowna. I am trying as far as my knowledge serves me and my ability goes to give the facts to the House and I hope I have made the information distinct, fair and clear. There are 14 what may be called students studying at the present time and they have to be considered. There are men who have gone to other portions of the world to study dentistry for a certain number of years and have been admitted as registered dental surgeons. As was pointed out by the Attorney General, if any one of those men will just pass the preliminary examination and apply for registration as a student, he can then go anywhere among the hospitals, and any of the honorary surgeons will give him every assistance and tuition.

Mr. Holman: Tell us how he is to pass the preliminary examination.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is not so very hard. It is for the House to say if the preliminary is too hard. Originally in Victoria the educational standard was the ordinary civil service examination. In this State it is practically a junior University examination. While there are not here the facilities for gaining the necessary knowledge the House would be justified in very earnestly considering some of the details in connection with the working of the present Act. I have some knowledge of the working of that Act, and to be fair to the Dental Board I must say they have tried to administer the Act in a thoroughly impartial manner. In examining students they have given them every possible latitude; in many instances have extended sheer generosity in allowing them to become registered as dentists. The fact remains that they have never yet failed one student in Western Australia. At present we have 64 dentists on the register. If the House thinks there are not sufficient dentists in the State, I do not say that we should open the door to unqualified men, but I say there is a way to get over the difficulty. In Victoria and New South Wales there are dozens of licentiates in dental surgery, thoroughly capable men.

Mr. Brown: They are wanted over there.

Mr. LAMBERT: Possibly they are, but the member for Kalgoorlie seems to think we might get some of them over here.

Mr. Holman: Why cannot the unregistered men start for themselves?

Mr. LAMBERT: They can do so to-morrow. If the member for Kalgoorlie wants to start in his own constituency I will be very pleased to sell him a practice. If the member for Kalgoorlie can convince us that by an amendment of the Dental Act we can get one more dentist in the State or improve the efficiency, or lower the fees, or provide for the 18 lads in the dental corps, there would be some excuse for his amendment. It would be an absolute disgrace if the Bill went through excluding those 18 lads serving with the dental corps.

Mr. Green: You wish to keep those soldiers out for ever.

Mr. LAMBERT: Nothing of the sort. Every man that was eligible to serve in any capacity was liberated when he expressed a desire to go to the war. The suggestion put forward in the hon. member's amendment is altogether unfair. To ask the House to amend the Act in a direction affecting only half a dozen men in Perth, and then to close the door in the manner suggested by the operatives, is positively comical. If we are to have an amendment of the Dental

Act I hope the Attorney General will take note of the men who are serving at the Front and who have been entirely overlooked by the member for Kalgoorlie and others clamouring to have the Dental Act immediately amended.

The Attorney General: Are those 18 men students, or registered dentists?

Mr. LAMBERT: There are 12 registered dentists away at the Front. Then there are 18 dental mechanics, half of whom are away at the Front while the remainder are serving either at the Base Hospital or at Blackboy Camp.

Mr. Green: You would keep them out for ever.

Mr. LAMBERT: Nothing of the sort. From the personal point of view I do not care a rap one way or the other. I urge that if there is to be any amendment of the Dental Act, it should be in the direction of the educational facilities, allowing students to be recorded as students. We have this clamour for the registration of the few men who have stayed behind and are profiting to a much greater extent than the member for Kalgoorlie would care to admit. There are others to be considered before those men. I will support the appointment of a select committee. If that is not agreed to I will vote against the second reading, in the hope that the Attorney General will introduce an amendment to the Dental Act, giving the greatest possible freedom to those who desire to join the ranks of dentists in this State.

Mr. Green: On a point of explanation. During the course of my remarks, by a slip of the tongue, I used the word "Metropolitan Dental Company," when I should have said "metropolitan dental companies" who, I declared, were exploiting the unregistered dentists. I do not wish the impression to go forth that I was singling out the "Metropolitan Dental Company." Mr. Kaufman runs his business in an admirable manner, and I do not wish it to be thought that I was making a personal attack upon him.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10-14 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 14th March, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

SELECT COMMITTEE, RABBIT PEST.

Extension of Time.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [4.40]: I have again, on behalf of this select committee, to ask the indulgence of the House for a further extension, to this day week. The committee

have now finished taking evidence; they have taken rather more than they intended. It is expected that the committee will have their report ready for presentation to the House on Wednesday next, or else on Thursday. I move—

“That the time for bringing up the report of the select committee be extended by one week.”

Question put and passed.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER and MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [4.42] in moving the second reading said: This is a small measure to amend the last Land Act Amendment Act. It is important that the House should have the opportunity of dealing with this Bill at once, and therefore I have had the measure brought forward at this stage, so that the matter may be expedited as much as possible. Copies were distributed to hon. members yesterday, and it will have been gathered that the Bill affects only Sub-section 4 of Section 30 of the Land Act Amendment Act, 1917, passed in March of last year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This proves that we were right in contending that there was no urgency for that measure.

The PREMIER: The object of Section 30 is to enable pastoral lessees to obtain a renewal of their leases, which expire in 1928, until 1948. Hon. members will recollect that it was considered the time had arrived when the lessees should be placed in a position to know what their future was likely to be. Unless they are placed in such a position, the progress of the pastoral industry will be stayed to a considerable extent, since lessees will be uncertain whether it is to their advantage to spend money in increasing the carrying capacity of their holdings. Obviously, the more stock our pastoral country is enabled to carry, the better for the State. It was therefore deemed advisable to let the lessees know their future position, with a view to the giving of an impetus to pastoral pursuits and to the encouraging of improvements which will lead to increase of flocks and herds. To the same end it is thought necessary that some further security of tenure should be given to pastoral lessees. Consequently that section in the Act was passed to enable lessees to obtain a renewal of their leases until 1948 under certain conditions laid down in the Act, provided that within 12 months from the passing of the Act, namely, the 28th March, 1917—the Act received the Governor's assent on the 28th March, 1917—they made their applications. Hon. members are aware that the Act of last year provided that no pastoral lessee would be allowed to apply for more than one million acres in any one division. There are pastoral lessees in Western Australia, as there are in other parts of Australia, who have acquired holdings comprising more than a million acres, and the Act of 1917 was passed to enable the leases to be renewed but to limit the area to be applied for to a million acres and no more.

It has been a difficult matter for pastoral lessees to exactly lay down which portion of their leases they desire to hold and which portion they desire to dispose of, and moreover, at the present time during the progress of the war, it is very difficult to make sales or to obtain money. Consequently many of the lessees, although anxious to dispose of their properties, have not been able to put them on the market on that account. It is desired, therefore, to give the lessees a further opportunity of applying for a renewal until 1948 of their leases up to a million acres only. The Bill provides for an extension of time within which applications may be made until one year after the declaration of peace, but it will only have effect in favour of those lessees who have paid, as from the 28th March, 1918, rent in respect of all pastoral leases held by them at the rate of double the amount of the annual rate. If any lessee desires to take advantage of the proposed new law, he must pay double rental on all his holdings, not only on the one million acres he may propose to take up in the future, but if he holds $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions or two million acres, he must pay double rental on the lot. He will then be allowed to have the option of applying for a renewal of his lease up to one million acres until 12 months after the termination of the war. When the application is eventually made, all the machinery provided in Section 30 of the Act of 1917 will apply. If the lessee does not apply within 12 months after the termination of the war for a renewal of his leases, he will have no portion of the double rent refunded to him. Under the amending Act of last year, it was provided that a lessee could up to 12 months after the passing of the Act apply for a renewal of a million acres, or a renewal of a portion of his lease if it were more than a million acres, but that the application should not be for more than a million acres. Under the Act of 1917, if after appraisalment, the lease is appraised at an amount lower than the double rent which the lessee had been paying, he must have returned to him the difference between the appraised rent and the amount he had already paid, but under the Bill he would have nothing returned. It is only a reasonable thing that the pastoralists should be given a further opportunity of making such arrangements as they may desire with regard to their leases. The pastoral industry is a very important one to Western Australia and although many of those who have engaged in pastoral pursuits, have made a considerable amount of money, at the same time no one in the community should grudge those people their good fortune. Many of those who are now in comfortable circumstances have had great hardships to contend with in the early days, and it is right that those pioneers who have opened up the great North-West should be allowed to reap some benefit from their industry and enterprise of years gone by. The area of pastoral leases existing in June, 1917, not including the areas in the South-

West Division—the South-West division is excluded from the Act assented to last year—totalled 182,825,704 acres. The amount of rental now fixed on these leases is approximately £61,000. If every one of the leaseholders takes advantage of the Bill, the rental will be doubled, and instead of the State receiving £61,000 annually, it will receive £122,000 annually. Members will very likely ask what were the number of applications for leave to surrender under the Act of last year. Section 30 of that Act provides not that the lessee should surrender, but that he should ask for leave to surrender for the purpose of taking up new leases. In the various divisions, up to the present time, applications have been made to surrender and to take up new leases as follows:—In the North-West division 45 applications have been received for 4,500,000 acres; in the Eastern division 19 applications for 3,200,000 acres; in the Kimberley division five applications for 2,900,000 acres and in the Eucla division seven applications for 774,000 acres. There have also been during this period 180 applications for new pastoral leases under the amending Act for an area of, approximately, 12,000,000 acres, of which already 170 have been approved, representing altogether 11,000,000 acres. Under the circumstances the House would do well to grant the further option provided for in the Bill, because it will give leaseholders, those who hold more than one million acres, an opportunity of disposing of their holdings. If a man holds a million and a half acres it is not easy to dispose at once of half a million acres. He has to go into the matter very carefully, study the best way of dividing up the lease, and then seek a buyer. In these days it is not only difficult to find buyers, but it is difficult for those buyers to find the money with which to purchase the property and also the money necessary to stock the land, and perhaps further improve it in order to enable it to carry more stock. The statistical return shows that at the end of 1916 there were in Western Australia 5,529,960 sheep, distributed not merely in the North, but in the South-West and the settled districts lying between Geraldton and Albany. At the same date there were in the State 863,930 head of cattle. Since 1907 the sheep had increased by 2,000,000, that is to say, from three and a half millions to four and a half millions. That is a very good record, especially when we remember that during that period the pastoral areas were subjected to a very severe drought. It shows that we have in the North-West a very large area eminently suited to the raising of sheep and cattle. We know that that country will grow some of the finest wool in the world, and that the very best class of sheep will thrive up there. During the last 10 or 20 years the sheep throughout Western Australia have improved out of all recognition. Pastoralists and others interested in this great industry have spent a considerable amount in the importation of stud stock. We are no longer obliged to go out of the State to get the best

blood. We have in Western Australia stock raisers who have been sufficiently enterprising to engage in the rearing of stud stock and in consequence those following past pursuits can now obtain within the State rams as good as can be purchased for money in any part of Australia. Unfortunately that does not apply to cattle, at least not to the same extent, nor to horses.

Hon. P. Collier: We have in the State some blood stock in horses which have won championship prizes in Great Britain.

The PREMIER: That is so, but it can be said that stock-owners can readily obtain within the State stock which they require for the improvement of their animals. There are in Western Australia those who make a study of breeding the best stock in all classes, and so our pastoralists are able to draw to a large extent from the bred in the State. At one time we could get a decent ram in Western Australia, had to go outside for him. I am pleased to think that the pastoral industry, not only in the North, but in the South-West and Eastern districts is making such solid progress, for I consider that the raising of sheep is the most important factor in the successful settlement of wheat-growing areas. I only hope that those engaged in wheat growing will come to realise that wheat alone cannot be made to pay, that to obtain a competency and independence they must combine wheat-growing with sheep. Properly looked after, sheep will return a hundred fold to their owners. Since the end of 1916, when the last statistical return was compiled, the sheep have been further increasing in Western Australia. I do not think there is in the State any industry on a better foundation at the present time than the stock-raising industry. There is a great future before it. A considerable proportion of the increase that has taken place in the number of our sheep during the last six years is due to the increase in the southern part of the State, from Geraldton to Albany. The increase is very satisfactory indeed. I think it will be wise to give this further extension of leaseholdings for the reasons I have mentioned. The State cannot possibly surrender its land, and the extension will give leaseholders a further time to look to their affairs. They will pay double for their leases during the extended period, and they will have a further option of taking up their holdings until 12 months after the war. In the meantime they will be in a position to make arrangements for the disposal of the balance of their leases, which they are prohibited from renewing by the provisions of the Act of last year. Anything we can do to assist the pastoral industry must result in advantage to the State. I hope the House will pass the Bill, for it is perhaps, even more in the interests of the State than of those directly concerned in the pastoral industry itself. The Bill is a simple one and easily understandable, and I trust it will meet with the approval of hon. members. I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

On motion by Hon. P. Collier debate adjourned.

BILL—GENERAL LOAN AND INSCRIBED STOCK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin) [5.10] in moving the second reading said: I have the second readings of the Bills to move this afternoon, and I am going to try to follow the admirable suggestion of the member for Roebourne (Mr. Trebble) and use as few words as I can in giving the House full information concerning those Bills. The one I am now dealing with is to amend the General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act, 1910. It may be of interest to the House to learn the several classes of security the State owes to the lender. There are three classes. The first is Treasury bills. These can only have a currency of five years, and according to the amending Act, No. 10 of 1916, they can be issued up to any loan authorisation at such a rate of interest as the Treasurer may think fit. The second class is provided in the Treasury Bonds Deficiency Act of 1917. Under this Act the Treasurer may issue bonds for a currency not exceeding 30 years at a rate of interest not exceeding six per cent. Then we have the General Loan Inscribed Stock Act, with which we are dealing now. Under this we can issue Inscribed Stock domiciled in London. Local Inscribed Stock domiciled in Australia, or we can issue debentures without any domicile. This stock can have a currency to be determined when issuing. The rate of interest fixed in the original Act was four per cent. There was an amendment of that in No. 49 of 1915, which raised the interest to five per cent. That is the reason why this Bill is here to-day. Now we propose altering the rate of interest from five per cent. to six and a half per cent. It does not necessarily follow that because we make provision to pay six and a half per cent. we are going to pay that amount if we can avoid it.

The immediate necessity for the alteration of the rate of interest is due to this fact: in 1907 we floated a loan of £250,000 with a ten years' currency, carrying a sinking fund of six and a half per cent. We renewed £120,000 of this by debentures—they asked for debentures—at five per cent., and we are renewing £130,000 remaining also by debentures which probably will be at five and a half per cent. It is necessary, therefore, to increase the rate provided in the Act to enable us to put this transaction in order. The mere fact that there is a sinking fund and that we must carry on the continuity of that sinking fund provides us from issuing Treasury Bills for the purpose. This is merely a formal Bill, and that is the reason why I am asking the House to pass the word "five" in paragraph (a) of the proviso to be struck out and the words "six and a half" inserted in lieu. I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.16]: I have no objection to the passage of the Bill, as the Colonial Treasurer has intimated, it is purely a formal measure. As a matter of fact, it may be described as a war measure.

The Act which was passed in 1915 was largely necessitated by the war. The rate of interest had increased, and we had to take the power to pay a higher rate of interest. We find now that the war has continued and that we shall, in all probability, have to go beyond the five per cent., and possibly to six and a half per cent. Of course we all hope that we shall not have to pay that amount of interest. In these times of financial stringency, the Treasurer must have power to pay up to the 6½ per cent. if he finds it necessary to do so.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—TREASURY BONDS DEFICIENCY.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin) [5.19] in moving the second reading said: In view of the fact that there is a fair number of new members in the House, it might be just as well to place a little information before them in regard to this Bill. The deficit is financed upon Trust and Loan Funds, but we have no authority to use such funds without an appropriation. Consequently, in 1916 the present Act was introduced in order that an appropriation, as opportunity occurred, might permit us to issue bonds, or float bonds, and recoup these accounts, Trust and Loan, from which funds had been taken for the purpose of financing the deficit. An authorisation was given in 1916 for £1,500,000. It was only necessary to utilise £1,360,965 of this amount, leaving a balance to the credit of the appropriation of £139,035. There was a debit adjustment of £18,885, thus leaving a credit to the appropriation of £121,150. As the deficit matures it has to be transferred to this account. The deficit for last year was £699,757. After deducting the balance that we had to the credit of appropriation, £121,150, there was left an appropriation which we would require of £578,607. We then thought that the flotation expenses would take up probably about £70,000 and we added it to this amount, which accounts for a total of £648,607. In this Bill, therefore, we are asking the House to pass an appropriation of £650,000, making a total authorisation under this Act of £2,150,000. I would like to point out that so far as this transaction is concerned, it does not leave the State one penny richer or poorer. The Bill is merely to enable us to put the account from which we have been taking the money to finance the deficit in such a state that we can recoup it. As the loans that we are obtaining from the Commonwealth are being floated, we will issue bonds from this particular authorisation to recoup them. Already we have floated £958,265. I do not think we have fixed up yet for the money the Commonwealth have given us to carry us on till June. Probably the whole of the £2,150,000 will be issued between now and the end of the financial year, and that will recoup the

amount that we have taken from the other account. Under the Act we provide a sinking fund of 2 per cent. to redeem this deficit. It would be a very good thing if we had the money with which to redeem it, but it would be bad business to go on borrowing money with which to redeem it. There is no obligation which commits us to anyone outside of ourselves, and it is not like our other stock in this case. This was a provision which we ourselves inserted in the Act, in the hope that our revenue would be such that we could put that sinking fund to the credit of, and thus in time wipe out the deficit.

Hon. P. Collier: We are paying 2 per cent. to redeem our own debt to ourselves.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is so. As we would have to borrow money, which would mean something between £30,000 and £35,000 a year, it would be idle for us to borrow money for a sinking fund for our own debt, and pay $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest upon it.

Hon. P. Collier: The same argument applies to this sinking fund as to the other, only more so, because ours is higher.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: There is no doubt that we are doing bad business for the bondholder in borrowing money to pay the big sinking fund, because we are paying interest upon it and if there is depreciation of security, it is also depreciated to the amount that we are paying for interest.

Mr. Harrison: Will there not be some cost in getting all these new amounts?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have made provision for the flotation costs.

Mr. Harrison: That must mean further expense.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have made provision for that. We have to pay for flotation, no matter whether we float the bonds out of loan or out of this appropriation. When we float we have to have pay roughly £3 to £4 per £100. We have to effect this transfer by law and I hope the House will agree that we should suspend the sinking fund. The Bill says "for such time as the Governor may think fit," and this means if we can, by any possibility, balance our ledger. There is no doubt it would be a very good thing if we could get rid of our deficit. I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to draw the attention of the Colonial Treasurer to the remark he made that the Bill was an authorisation Bill. If that be so, does the Treasurer think it would be necessary to have a Message from His Excellency the Governor?

The Colonial Treasurer: I was told that this was not necessary.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not an authorisation for the raising of new money.

The Colonial Treasurer: It is not for the purpose of creating new money.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Sinking fund appropriation may be suspended:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I notice that the clause is to suspend the sinking fund now being paid on loans already authorised under the original Act.

The Colonial Treasurer: The sinking fund has been suspended; I suspended it when I came in.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The sinking fund has not been kept going on these loans for the past eight months?

The Colonial Treasurer: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Colonial Treasurer says that in paying the sinking fund on this amount we are really paying it to ourselves, but I would point out that the money is borrowed and that the sinking fund is held to redeem the debentures.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not borrowed for this specific purpose.

The Colonial Treasurer: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The sinking fund is set aside to redeem the bonds. I understand that all the money is raised in Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a transaction between ourselves.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is hardly that. The Colonial Treasurer may have to raise money to replace the fund.

The Colonial Treasurer: We are paying a sinking fund on the bonds we have issued.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Colonial Treasurer must be in a position to raise money to restore the sinking fund to a proper position if the necessity arises. If we exhaust the sinking fund we shall have to borrow money outside. Under the Act we may issue bonds for a considerable time, and redeem that security. Notwithstanding that the Treasurer says it is bad business to borrow, it is better than repudiation.

The Colonial Treasurer: We are only replacing the money.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If we exhaust the sinking fund we shall have to go outside for money. When we have to find a sinking fund of £300,000 something must be done to relieve the situation, and I think we should borrow for that purpose. When the leader of the Opposition was in office he wanted to refuse to pay the sinking fund.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not a nice way of putting it. It is statements like that which damage the credit of the State.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, we will put it in other words—suspend the sinking fund.

The Colonial Treasurer: New South Wales has done the same thing.

Hon. P. Collier: And other States.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We ought to keep faith if we are going to build up the sinking fund. As far as the trust funds go, the contention is all right, but when we get beyond that it is different. We are now setting aside the sinking fund, which we deliberately agreed to years ago. We thought when we raised money it ought to be covered by a sinking fund, and two per cent. was fixed. That has been done to cover the deficit. The Committee must take the Treasurer's assurance that he is not setting aside the sinking fund for ordinary loans.

Clause put and passed.
Title—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL — TOTALISATOR DUTY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin) [5.38] in moving the second reading said: Hitherto the Government have received $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the totalisator receipts. This was on a 10 per cent. deduction from the investor. The 10 per cent. is to be raised to $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The Government are taking that extra $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. plus one per cent. for clubs. The clubs will then be receiving $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and retain all fractions and unclaimed dividends, and the Government six per cent.; the six per cent. we are going to charge in addition to all dividends unclaimed after the expiration of three months. The proprietary clubs objected to the extra one per cent. They said they could not pay it. The member for North Perth, my colleague, and myself met the racing clubs to discuss this matter. Their suggestion then was that we should only take five per cent. I looked into the matter myself, and I thought if they are getting an extra $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. the public are being penalised to that extent. And I thought it a fair thing to add an extra one per cent. Whilst the proprietary clubs objected, the W.A. Turf Club said that under the circumstances they thought the extra one per cent. was quite a fair tax. I have had no objection either from the Kalgoorlie club or the Boulder club, or the Turf Club, so I have come to the conclusion that, after all, I have not done anything which is particularly unfair. In taxing one cannot be a moralist, and a lot of people seem to lose sight of that fact. If we have to get revenue we have to tax whatever it may be, so that we can get the money and still keep going. In fixing six per cent. for the Government and $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the clubs, allowing them to retain the fractions and unclaimed dividends—and we received advice from men of high standing—as we are ourselves, I hope—we have done a fair thing and the clubs can keep going. Last year this tax brought us in £14,000, and for the full year it is estimated the new tax will bring in £28,000, while for the balance of this year I reckon to get £3,000 extra. It is rather a strange thing that, with the reduction of the racing dates, we have got more from the totalisator than we did before. I do not know what the reason is, but that is the position. That is all I have to say with regard to the Bill; those are the salient facts. There are certain necessary alterations in the Bill. We put the Commissioner in place of the Treasurer. I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

On motion by Mr. Lambert debate
journed.

BILL—DIVIDEND DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Gardiner—Irwin) [5.43]: In moving second reading of this Bill, these are salient points. There are a number of alterations, and a majority of these alterations are to insert Commissioner of Taxation for Treasurer. The dividend duty is to be increased from 1s. in the pound to 1s. 3d., this is going to operate as from the 1st January, 1917. It will put companies on the footing as we put the ordinary taxpayer when we raise the super tax for 1917. The rate to be increased by 3d. in the pound. As regards shipping companies, there is an existing agreement. At present we charge five per cent. of five per cent. on the inward and outward traffic to shipping companies, and are going to make it $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. of five per cent. instead. That will practically be 1s. and it places shipping companies in the position as other companies. We are assuming that five per cent. is their net profit. I now pay 5 per cent. on the profits of the oil, and that rate will be increased to 6 per cent. Unfortunately, the existing agreement provides for 12 months' notice of termination. The Bill also contains provision for the matter of escape from payment of dividend duty by means of payment of excessive fees to directors and other officers of companies. In the Taxation office, one learns a wondrous deal of human nature. It is curious to note how devices are used, under the guise of honesty, to defeat the demands of the State for what is honestly the State's due, and when in most instances reasonable men are compared to recognise as the State's due. A say, provision is made to put an end to that practice. Now I come to the insurance companies. At present the duty payable by them is at the rate of 20s. on every £100 of the premiums. That rate is being doubled, and will in future be 40s. In addition, provision is made to recover payment of duty from institutions which do insurance business, but not exclusively insurance enterprises. There are in this State large firms and banks do the insurance business of Western Australia, with, probably, Lloyd's in London. They compete with the insurance companies, and therefore in this respect they ought to be on the same basis. We provide, accordingly, that they shall make the same returns and pay the same duty as insurance companies. Then the Bill contains a clause intended to protect the State as regards subsidiary companies. It is often found that companies operating in the State have “pups,” a term which will be understood by hon. members versed in finance. By the “pup” system, we have in the past been deprived of revenue which was just ours. Under this Bill we are going to see whether we cannot put an end to that system. I have now mentioned the salient features of the measure. Dividend duty is to be increased.

by 3d. in the pound, starting from the 1st January, 1917, and the insurance companies have to pay double duty as from the same date. I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

Order Postponed.

Order of the Day read for the second reading of the Stamp Act Amendment Bill.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin) [5.45]: I move—

“That this Order of the Day be postponed till the next sitting of the House.” I consider that before the second reading of a Bill is moved by a Minister, copies of the measure should be on hon. members' files, so that they can at any rate follow intelligently the statements of the Minister in moving the second reading. Unfortunately, this particular Bill reached Parliament House only a few minutes ago. For that reason I have moved the postponement of the Order of the Day.

Motion put and passed; the Order of the Day postponed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1917-18.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 11th March; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Education Department (Hon. H. P. Colabatch, Minister)—the Premier (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) in charge of the votes:

Vote—Education, £360,048:

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.50]: Every credit is due to the Education Department for the standard of education which has been maintained in this State. I believe it is one of the highest standards attained as yet in Australia. It has been suggested by various members that an alteration should be made raising the age at which children may begin to attend school. Whilst I am in accord with that suggestion, which emanated from the leader of the Opposition, I must point out that grave injury may be done if the age is raised, as regards small country schools, in which it is difficult to maintain the minimum average attendance. I therefore suggest for the favourable consideration of the Minister that, if the minimum age is raised, the number of children required for a country school should be reduced. Otherwise, numerous country schools will have to be closed; and I can illustrate this from my own electorate. Endeavours are now being made to establish a school at a small place called Jalbarracup, and it is extremely difficult to obtain a sufficient number of children to meet the minimum requirements of the Education Department. The settlement

is a new one, and the people are struggling hard to make a living on the land. Many of them have one or two children, but the total number is not sufficient to enable the Minister for Education to provide an every-day school. These settlers may be forced to leave their holdings unless some special provision is made for the schooling of their children. One item in which I think savings can be brought about is that of transfers of school teachers. There is a small school close to my residence, and I have had the opportunity of observing that school for the past 14 years. To my knowledge, during that period the school has had at least 20 different masters and mistresses. Each transfer costs the State a considerable amount, and to me it seems strange that such a number of changes should have been made by the department in so short a period. Not only are these changes bad from an economical point of view, but from the point of view of education they are bad because they preclude the possibility of continuity of training. Whilst I favour certain reductions in the Education Vote, I am certainly opposed to any measures which would adversely affect the high grade we have established in primary education. Any reductions which are made should, I think, apply to secondary education and the University. During this time of war, it would be a fair thing to expect the parents of children receiving secondary education or University training to pay for that tuition. I would support any movement directed towards that end. During the discussion of the Estimates some reference has been made to the Fairbridge Farm School, in connection with which a State school is established. I desire to place on record one or two facts bearing on the Fairbridge School. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) made a disparaging reference to Mr. Fairbridge in connection with the caning of inmates of the farm school. I have to-day interviewed Mr. Fairbridge in this regard. He informs me that the incident referred to arose as follows: When the first batch of boys came out from England, four of them were accompanied by their mother in the capacity of matron for the remainder. Upon their arrival at the farm, this woman took the place of cook for the institution. Mr. Fairbridge, when inspecting the kitchen, noticed a mess on the floor, and drew this woman's attention to it, requesting her to have it cleaned up. She declined to do this, as not being part of her duty, and gave notice to leave. Mr. Fairbridge placed no obstacle in her road. Before leaving, her boys gave considerable trouble, and one of them had to be punished.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think we are discussing anything connected with the Fairbridge Farm School under this vote.

Mr. PICKERING: We are discussing an institution which is connected with education.

The CHAIRMAN: I have no desire to check the hon. member, but he is out of order.

Mr. PICKERING: There is an item in the vote which covers State schools, and there is a State school in connection with this farm.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. PICKERING: I regret very much, Sir, your ruling in this connection.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can take an opportunity of bringing the matter before the House in possibly another way than this. I cannot allow the hon. member to take this opportunity of clearing up something which took place at a previous sitting of the House. I must ask him to keep to the question before the Chair.

Mr. Foley: On a point of order. In the Estimates of the Minister for Education a certain sum of money is set down for payment of the salary of a State school teacher appointed to the Fairbridge Farm School. That being so, I contend that members are entitled to discuss the educational portion of the Fairbridge Farm School, and also anything incidental to the education of the children there.

The CHAIRMAN: I have ruled the member for Sussex out of order for discussing a matter which occurred in this Chamber under another vote. That matter related to something which had happened at the Fairbridge Farm School. Mr. Pickering now desires to bring it in under Education. I consider that he is out of order, and I have ruled accordingly.

Mr. PICKERING: I regret that you have ruled me out of order but of course I must obey the ruling. I had not intended speaking at any length on this vote, and I merely desire to add that the only way by which Western Australia can advance is by giving the young people of the State a good education. At the same time I shall be glad to support any suggestion which is made with a view of reducing expenditure in the Education Department, always having efficiency in view, and to support any proposal having for its object the imposition of fees which should be paid for higher education by those who are in the position to pay.

Mr. DURACK (Kimberley) [6.3]: It is with some hesitation that I venture to speak on this vote. I listened attentively to the Premier when he introduced the Estimates of the Education Department the other night. I realise, of course, that a country or nation fully equipped with all the advantages of education will come out foremost. The Premier spoke of the large grants made for educational purposes in other countries of the world, and he instanced England and America. Our circumstances, however, are entirely different, and what applies in older and more developed countries cannot possibly apply to a young State like ours, where we are living, as it were, under essentially primary conditions. In looking over the Education votes of past years I find that in 1915 Western Australia practically cut out the medical examination of school children. I was surprised to find that the pruning knife had been used in that direction. I do not object so much to over education as I do to

the principles upon which we are working. I contend that to a certain extent they are unsound. If the first condition or necessity of our creation is to live, then we must be provided with the means of doing so. To my mind the preservation of the individual is indispensable to the species, but how are we going to secure that preservation unless we have some proper form of hygiene? I contend that the first principle of our education should be in the direction of the development and energy of physical life, for upon it depends the future and vigour of our race. I cannot understand how this State should have so forgotten its duty to the extent of cutting out the medical expenditure from the Education vote. In New South Wales a great deal of attention is given to this very important question. They have numerous medical officers employed there, no fewer than 14 being on full time and three on half time. These medical officers give close and regular attention to the students in the various districts. In addition that State employs a number of dentists, nurses, and assistants, who travel throughout the State and carry on their good work, lectures being delivered to parents on the care of their children, cleanliness, and home hygiene.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That does not come under the Education vote here.

Mr. DURACK: I am endeavouring to point out that in Western Australia we are working on unsound lines, and that it is an unsound policy to stop the work of medical examination in schools. The first principle of education should be a sound mind and a sound body, the *sine qua non*, as it were, of our primary education, and it would be better to cut out secondary and other forms of higher education rather than neglect this first principle. The national health is much more important than national wealth and higher education, and we would be much more justified in granting a subsidy to bring that about than to subsidise in some other directions. Speaking the other evening I ventured to remark that higher education did not have all the advantages that were claimed for it. I referred more particularly to those branches of secondary education which include mathematics and physics. The education that we should be most concerned about is that to which the member for York referred the other night, namely, the "humanities." What we should be concerned about is not so much heads "well filled" as heads well formed, with the heart in the right place. I admit that knowledge is very useful, and I suppose a certain amount of knowledge is required in all professions, but it is not necessary that a student should remain at school until such time as he is fully equipped with all the advantages of education. If we taught our boys something about civic life, their rights as citizens—and in this State we are lacking in that as compared with other countries—and if we taught them the true value of a well trained mind, if we taught them their moral rights and the knowledge that fits a man for the duties of the world, the State would be fulfilling its great-

est obligation to its youth of this generation. We should teach them to look at things from a broad point of view, and not be bounded by the narrow view of "individualism." We seem to have grown up with some kind of a superstitious belief in intellectual instruction. It has become with us a kind of fetish, something fashionable as it were, and this is probably due to the supposition that we are an intellectual people, or due probably to the practice of following the customs of supposed intellectual people, but the sooner we get away from that superstitious belief the better it will be for us. What we must realise, or what we most particularly want is the robust and productive man, he is a much more important factor to the race, much more useful, than a man who has crammed his mind with a mass of mostly useless knowledge. We want in these days the common sense practical man. He is a factor in the community, and is much more important to us than the higher trained academic student, whose head is often filled with a great deal of knowledge which is of no use to him in after life. We must realise, too, that higher education is very often acquired at the cost or expense of the species with a tendency to in many cases perpetuate to a greater extent a race of malcontents and degenerates.

Hon. T. Walker: So that is the secret?

Mr. DURACK: I have no doubt that my views are not altogether orthodox.

Hon. T. Walker: You are behind the age.

Mr. DURACK: Those are the conclusions, looking at facts and circumstances that surround us, that I have arrived at. Looking around to-day, what do we see? There seems to be nothing but discontent. Of course many would hold that this is only the natural order of evolution or that social regeneration, out of which the toiling masses will come into their own. That may be so; I do not know whether it is or not, but if that is the path into which our present system of education is leading us, it is not the right one, because it is leading us on to a state of anarchy and disruption, and we are developing a type of garrulous malcontent, imbued with certain ideas of socialism run mad.

Hon. P. Collier: And in order to avoid that unrest you would keep the people in ignorance?

Mr. DURACK: I am not speaking so much against over education, as I am of the system which is adopted. The member for Leovora the other night said that he was not satisfied we were getting value for the money expended in connection with education. I agree with the hon. member, and when the time arrives I intend to move in the direction of reducing the vote.

Mr. JONES (Fremantle) [6.12]: I consider that the Education Department is one at which a certain measure of criticism should be levelled. Unfortunately for the efficiency of our education system, education has been regarded as a subject which has always been surrounded by a hedge of sanctity, being in a certain degree unassailable by criticism, and as in other institutions, abuses have crept in.

So sacrosanct has this vote been regarded that very few members have dared to attack it. Probably the leader of the Opposition is the only member in this House who has so far come forward with a constructive idea of reducing the expenditure.

Hon. T. Walker: Destructive, not constructive.

Mr. JONES: In this case it was a constructive idea because his idea was to prevent young children from being crammed at an age when the mentality was not sufficiently developed to stand the cramming. With regard to the great authority on education in this House, I refer to the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington), we have so far had nothing from him but a purely destructive policy, and, so far as the great subject of education is concerned, he has done no more than to lay upon it the cold and uninspiring hand of the iconoclast. Veiled hints have come from one or two members, notably the member for Beverley (Mr. Brown) that they would make education a class privilege. I intend to range myself beside those who will oppose such proposals with all the vehemence they can possibly muster. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack) just now blamed education for the industrial unrest. To imagine that in this age there is a member in this House so blind to the dynamic forces which are swaying the affairs of the people, as to believe that the system of education, which is only one cog in the wheel, is responsible, passes my understanding.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. JONES: Before tea I was dealing with the endeavour of the member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack) to put back the onward march of evolution. I was inclined to blame the hon. member for the view he took of education, but when one considers that the hon. member resides in the far North, amongst stone age aborigines who have no conception of education, one may perhaps forgive him for his views on this important subject. I am opposed to any attempt to cut down in any way the efficiency of our educational system. Hon. members must recognise that the future, not merely of the State but of the race itself, depends on the effective education of the children. When we hear hon. members say that it is education which is responsible for the spread of unrest, we must remember that it is only the dead things which keep quiet, which feel no unrest, and that it is the live things of the world which are pushing upwards and onwards and causing this industrial unrest, this divine discontent, which the member for Kimberley is disposed to deprecate. But whilst we realise that we cannot in any way impair the efficiency of our educational system, we must consider whether we are obtaining the best kind of efficiency which it is possible to get. Let us examine for a moment the finalisation of the work of this department, as it is seen in our University. We in this State have made the proud boast that we have a system of free education from the kindergarten right up to the University. I do not wish to quarrel with that. But if we take what is, perhaps, the

most important branch of education in this State, namely, that of agriculture, we have only to turn to the University itself to see that there is gross inefficiency somewhere in the department. In replying to a question recently as to how many students had attended the agricultural classes at the University, the Premier said there were two the first year and three last year. I submit that the department would have realised the necessity for making some preparations in order that there should be agricultural students, made ready through the schools, for the University when it was established. I think we can put our finger on the head of the department. I do not wish to disparage that gentleman, either as a man or as a schoolmaster. The present Director of Education, I understand, was first appointed to the position of head of the training college in this State. I believe he filled that position well. But to say that from the training college he was able to take up the direction of the whole educational system of the State is to make a statement not easily substantiated. The fact of the matter is that he is too much concerned with the cultivation and maintenance of an Oxford accent to have any idea of what is required in a young country like Western Australia.

Hon. T. Walker: He is a very able man.

Mr. JONES: I am speaking only as one judging by results. Like other hon. members, I am not in a position to study the departmental files. The Premier will agree that I have done my best, per medium of questions, to obtain as much information as I can. Judging only by the finalised results of the University, we must agree that the important subject of agriculture has been neglected; and neglected, not only in the University, but in the Modern School. When that school was first established, a gentleman who is undoubtedly an authority on agriculture was appointed to teach agriculture at that institution. Not only was this competent authority on agriculture engaged for the Modern School, but large sums of money were expended in providing plant and procuring the tools necessary to the practical study of agriculture. To-day we find that this plant at the Modern School has become a white elephant, and this agricultural expert, who undoubtedly has great ability in his line, has found it more profitable to take up the teaching of modern languages at the school. All this points to the fact that the department has not endeavoured to develop this most important branch of education, agriculture. As far back as 1898, experiments were being made by country schoolteachers in training their children in agriculture. I believe that at that time Mr. Turvey—afterwards elected a member of this House—down at the Narrogin State school, was experimenting continuously in this training of children in agriculture. But unfortunately, not only at Narrogin but at other centres which I will not name, as the teachers concerned may still be in the department, no encouragement was given from the department itself, and consequently the important study of agriculture was allowed to drop. Had the department fully realised that

was required of this young State that study would not have been allowed to drop. From the subject of agriculture to country schools is not a far cry. Under our educational training system there are two kinds of training given to the teachers. There is the six months training, and there is the two years training. Looking at this matter from a lay point of view, one would think that the better trained teacher, he with the benefit of two years training, would be the one selected to go out into the country districts, where there is so much less supervision than obtains in the towns. But, under the present Director of Education, the man or woman selected to go and train the country children is the man or woman with six months training. The two year trainee is kept in Perth, where he can have the supervision of an army of inspectors. And if the teacher in the country shows exceptional promise, he is brought back into the town, while, on the other hand, if the teacher in the town does not show much promise, he is sent out into a country district. Under a system like that, which deliberately starves the country schools, while fostering the schools of the town, we cannot hope to have a proper development of the mentality of the children in the country.

Hon. T. Walker: The best teachers will not stay in the country; that is the trouble.

Mr. JONES: If sufficient inducement were offered, they would. I am quite aware that a teacher's salary is not enough to encourage a good man. If, as I think the member for Knowlton will agree, it were not for the fact that the teachers have a genuine love of their work, we would not get them to remain in the Education Department at all for the paltry pittance they receive. At present the country schools are languishing for want of more teachers and greater supervision of those teachers who are there. We find there are three senior inspectors doing nothing but inspecting the schools of the metropolitan area, while, on the other hand, the whole of the country schools on the Great Southern line are in the hands of one inspector. Thus we have a teacher, probably a six months' trainee, sent out into a remote farming district, and fortunate if he is visited by the inspector more than once a year. This position reflects seriously on the efficiency of the Education Department. If we take, for instance, the James-street school, we find there four separate schools with four head masters. In the Perth Boys' School, 450 boys collected, contrary to the regulations of the Education Department, from the surrounding districts, have 13 picked teachers, all men. At present in the Fremantle Boys' school a larger number of pupils is being taught by only the same number of teachers, five of whom happen to be female teachers. Here is a direct instance of the pampering of metropolitan schools at the expense of the country districts. I submit that the Director of Education should have his hand more upon the pulse of the country. I know that he has given the high-sounding name of "high school" to the schools at Bunbury, Albany, Geraldton, and Northam. This is an empty title which has

absolutely no meaning. We are told that these schools to-day are training children in agricultural science. The present science teacher at the Bunbury high school, if you please, is, I believe, a girl who has had something like 12 months' training in biology, and she presumes to teach the future Australian agriculturist in this particular science. With regard to the James-street school, it should undoubtedly be possible instead of having four schools with four head masters, and three inspectors practically living on the doorstep, to dispense with at least two of the heads, not from the service, because they are good and capable teachers, but removed to the country districts where their assistance is most needed in the training of young children. I submit that the present elaborate system of the inspectorate in the metropolitan area is not necessary at present. The head of the James-street school is generally the next teacher to be appointed to any vacancy on the inspectorate, and should therefore be capable of inspecting his own teachers, especially as they are picked teachers. A more rigid inspection, not to be used so much as an inspection as for the purpose of training the teachers in the country, many of whom are only six months' trainees, should be adopted in connection with our country schools, and I think that with an improved system of inspection of this kind in the country much benefit would result. Not only is this kind of thing happening at James-street school, but the same thing is going on at the Subiaco school. We have there dual schools, for there is an intermediate school, which can easily be supervised by the head of the main school, and the head of the intermediate school could be released to take up duty somewhere in the agricultural areas. No doubt there are many cases like this on the goldfields, and probably the member for Perth will be able to point out many more cases when it comes to the time for him to attempt to cut down this vote. I submit these few instances, however, to hon. members to show that this sacred vote for education, which so far has been hedged about and encompassed to the exclusion of the critic, provides, after all, some examples which show that the efficiency of the system can be impaired. I am absolutely opposed to any attempt at cutting down the Education vote such as in any way to impair the efficiency of the system. That efficiency must be extended as far as possible to the country districts, for these at present are languishing and should receive more attention from the head of the Education Department. Until that is done we cannot pride ourselves that we have anything approaching a truly efficient educational system in this State.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [7.50]: It is an unfortunate fact that the war has played a great part in regard to our educational system. In many of our country districts, as the member for Fremantle has pointed out, more attention should be directed to the education of the children. Undoubtedly these districts are faced with difficulties which were not facing them before. I am not in

favour of reducing this vote to any large extent if by so doing the education of our children in any part of the State loses in efficiency. We need at this juncture in our history, more than we have needed at any other time, educational facilities for the development of the mental abilities of our rising generation, and this development should be brought to a greater degree than ever before on account of the obligations which the rising generation will be called upon to meet. Upon the shoulders of the rising generation will rest the burden of paying the interest and sinking fund of the large amount of this military expenditure, which in sight to date is bound to be over 300 millions. This interest and sinking fund will constitute a vast burden for the rising generation to meet. In view of this circumstance, it is our bounden duty, next to providing for the well-being of those men who have gone to fight for us at the Front, to give our rising generation every facility to enable them to meet these obligations. Not only will they have to find this interest and sinking fund, but they will have to keep the industries of our Commonwealth going. By the time the war is over many of us will be getting on in life, and will be unable to carry the whole of this weight, and, in addition, our soldiers who will have returned, will, because their strength and energy must be impaired, be unable to carry the weight as they would otherwise have done. Everything depends on us as to the legacy we are going to leave behind for the coming generation, and if there is anything we can do to stimulate and help these children forward in the matter of educational facilities, it is our bounden duty to do it. The member for Fremantle has spoken in quite a different strain from that which I had expected. I am pleased with the manner in which he spoke about our country schools. He has shown that when teachers have had six months' tuition they are the people who are generally sent out into the country districts. I believe that under the regulations of the Education Department, uncertificated teachers cannot be employed in the metropolitan area, but that they are drafted out of the metropolitan area. As a matter of fact those who possess some qualifications should be the ones to go into the country. I maintain that if the education of comparatively a few children from the first standard up to the highest depends upon the ability to teach of one individual, that individual should be of high quality, because if the quality is not good it is not fair to the children under the care of these teachers, no matter what standard they may be in. A good deal of reference has been made to the statement of the member for Perth in regard to deducting at least £150,000 from this vote. The Minister in charge of the vote told us that if we cut out all the secondary education and the technical education we would not reduce the vote by more than £80,000; and there would still be left £70,000 to be reduced which would have to come out of primary education. The nation cannot afford to deprive these youngsters of their proper tuition, especially in the primary schools. It is our bounden duty to give these children that efficiency which will enable them

to meet their future obligations. I said in my speech on the general discussion of the Estimates that I could not see anything which would be more effective and less costly to the State or more helpful in the development of the Commonwealth, or indeed of the nation, than the introduction of the metric system and that of decimal coinage. I firmly believe that this will be adopted throughout the British Empire after the war is over, for something will have to be done in connection with the whole of our development. I think with regard to the metric tables, which are very simple, and that of decimal coinage should be adopted in the curriculum of our schools. I feel positive that this must come about, if we are to take our position in the world's markets. When we consider the number of commodities that we export and import to and from various countries of the world, how much more simple and how much cheaper could the business be conducted if we jumped at once into this particular system. Even in our own Estimates and in our civil service, a great saving could be effected by this means. Instead of having compound work to do, everything would be based on simple lines. We know, when we were at school ourselves, how much more easy it became when we got past the compound work and reached the decimals. In all business matters and matters of finance we talk of percentages, and this is really a matter of the decimal system. We at once grasp what it means when we talk of one per cent. or 20 per cent., whereas if we have to go through the whole system of pounds, shillings and pence, everything becomes much more complicated. I am satisfied that nothing would confer greater benefit upon the Empire, the Commonwealth and this State than the adoption of these systems. I do not think this can be brought about until the war is over, but in order to make that progress which I believe we shall make, we should do what we can in this State to prepare for post-war conditions. I wish to stress this particular point because I feel that the introduction of this system would be found most effective, and would very largely assist in the progress of the country.

Mr. HICKMOTT (Pingelly) [7.57]: It is not my intention to speak at any length on the important matter of education. While I think it is highly necessary that we should knock off something in the way of expenditure, and I believe the present Government have made an honest attempt to retrench in many ways, we should be very chary about cutting down the education vote. I sympathise very much with the Government in the position in which they find themselves, because they have been faced with many difficulties since they assumed office. Many of their savings have been swept away as the result of unforeseen expenditure. The floods which visited this State swamped up nearly all their savings in one instance, and this necessitated a large expenditure in repairs owing to the washaways on the railways. Since then there has been increased pay in the railway and police services, and this circumstance and others have swallowed up the rest of their savings. While I agree with a

great deal that has been said with reference to the education of our young children, I think our children are going to school too young: I believe children under six should not go to school. That matter has been dealt with previously, and now very few children are attending school under six years of age, but there are differences in children, the same as in adults. One of my own boys, for instance, obtained his ordinary school certificate when he was eight years of age, which shows that children are capable of learning when young, and I believe he did not go to school until he was six years of age, so that children do make progress from six years of age upwards.

Mr. O'Loughlin: He was speeding up some in those two years.

Mr. HICKMOTT: It is a fact that I am telling members.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He cannot have gone through the six standards in two years.

Mr. HICKMOTT: He got his school certificate when he was eight years of age. I cannot say positively that he started when he was six. There are a number of small matters in which savings can be effected. Ex-teachers and teachers at the present time in charge of schools have told me that many thousands of pounds can be saved in small matters. There is the manual system in vogue in the schools all over the State, which is expensive. Many years ago cardboard was used which at present costs 3d. a sheet, ordinary brown paper was used and has answered as well. That shows that a large amount of money can be saved in the aggregate in that matter. Then in regard to sewing classes, I was talking to an ex-teacher during my election campaign and she said that many thousands of pounds could be saved by not using new material in the sewing classes. New material is used in schools for children to hack about when old material could be used and will suit the purpose just as well. There would be a large saving in this direction. I do not know whether members think these economies are worthy of attention.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: One would have to be careful where the old material came from.

Mr. HICKMOTT: I do not know so much about that. I have heard a lot of these fads and the different things which we do in the present day but I do not take much notice of them. There are many things in vogue at the present time with reference to hygiene and sanitary arrangements that are not so important as many people think, and people are no better off for them. There is no less disease or sickness. Years ago many of the practices now in vogue were not resorted to. Therefore, I do not take so much notice of fads of this kind. When I was going to school there was no free education, no State schools. Parents had to pay for their children's education at private schools, and there are many things used to-day which were not used in my school days and I think I am a fair sample of health and robustness. I have taken no harm from the practices in use in the old days. Many of these practices are mere fads which are costly. It is not my intention to speak at any length, but I may say I quite

agree that there is no need at the present time to reduce education in country districts. Unfortunately, as I have said before, people have been settled indiscriminately in various parts of the State which has added much to the cost of education. If people had been settled in groups or colonies and nearer to each other, it would have saved a great deal to the State, not only in regard to education, but in many other matters that are costing the country a great deal to-day. But we must lop off somewhere if we are to make the ledger balance. In looking over the report of the last month's transactions I notice the revenue compared very favourably with the revenue for February of last year. In fact, there was an improvement, but our expenditure had increased considerably and the indebtedness for the month was over £70,000, showing it is the expenditure that is running away with the State's money. I say we must start somewhere and while agreeing with those who have spoken as to primary education, I cannot support a reduction in that direction. I think there are many people in a position to pay for the education of their children attending the higher schools. They should pay something towards the expenses of higher education; I think that those who can afford to pay should pay. Some remarks have been made by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) and the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) as to the class of teachers sent to country districts. In my own electorate or in a great portion of it, we have been very fortunate in getting first class teachers. Both in Brookton and Pingelly we have large schools. There are considerably over 100 children at the Brookton school and 200 at Pingelly and good teachers are found in both these schools. In these schools children have obtained scholarships which entitle them to be sent down to the City to the Christian Brothers College and other schools to receive higher education. The class of teachers in my electorate are spoken well of and I have been well pleased with the quality of the teachers we have in my immediate district.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They have good material to work on.

Mr. HICKMOTT: No doubt they have very good material and that assists them. I do not propose to detain the Committee longer, but I make the suggestion as to small savings in various departments of the schools and I trust the Government will see their way clear to adopt some of the economies that I have pointed out.

Stranger in the lobbies.

Mr. Munsie: I do not wish to discuss the Education vote, but I desire to ask your opinion, Mr. Chairman, whether any person who is a candidate for Parliament and not a member of Parliament has the right to loiter in the lobbies of the House? There is one person who is the owner of an alleged newspaper who is continually loitering in the corridors of this building.

The Chairman: I am not the Speaker, but I may say I do not think it is within the province of any person to be in the lobbies while Parliament is sitting.

Mr. Johnston: He is adopting a member's privileges very early.

Mr. Jones: A bit too early.

Mr. Munsie: He is getting information from his gutter Press, the boulder. He ought to be chucked out on his head.

Debate resumed.

Mr. STEWART (Claremont) [7.42]: On a former occasion I expressed the opinion that there was needless waste at both ends of our education system and I am more firmly convinced than ever that it is in that direction we must look for any possible reduction in the Education Vote combined with ensuring efficiency. I yield to no man in my admiration for the education system that has been in vogue and established in this State. I think it will compare more than favourably with systems co-existent in any part of Australia, but there is one matter I should like to refer to first of one that has already been touched on by previous speakers, and I hold and ve firmly too, that no child under the age of seven years, with very rare exception, should be sent to school.

Hon. T. Walker: Seven now you have got to.

Mr. STEWART: I say I hold that a child, with rare exceptions, should be sent to school under seven years of age.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They could not get the certificate then at eight.

Mr. STEWART: We are not all A. Hickmotts. I think that a child of seven years and under is too young to be sent away from home. It ought to be regarded as a very considerable asset in the domestic economy of the home. Our educational system too seems to some extent to be about the detachment of the child from the home. A child leaves early in the morning and returns late in the afternoon, bringing home homework to be done for presentation on the following day. It is the intellectual training of the child that is being aimed at only that is right. Children even of such tender years should be capable of assisting in the work of the home. To a certain extent it may be said and with some truth that the restriction in the size of families is becoming more and more due to the fact that very little help is obtained for the mother in the home.

Hon. T. Walker: There is not enough fill their mouths.

Mr. STEWART: If it is possible to have an educational system to confer the same advantages now enjoyed by children attending schools, the hour for sending the children in the day should be later, say 11.12 o'clock, or such an hour as would suit the convenience and the work of the home. In restricting school hours in this way, we should be affording very considerable help in the home, and—what is of more advantage—the morning hours, during which the mind of the child is fresh, would be available for the inculcation of home training, that home training of which a good deal

at present being altogether lost. Next, regard the waste which occurs at the her end of our educational system. I am minded of what we are spending on continuation classes and on the University, and we followed the example of Queensland in the establishment of a University, we should have had three professors and one lecturer. However, we were somewhat more ambitious; and in all sincerity I say it is a good thing to be ambitious as regards education. However, here we started with one professor and three lecturers; and our resources have proved inadequate for the upkeep of such an expensive staff. I take this Education vote would not be receiving so much consideration as it is receiving now but for the straitened condition of our finances. My belief is that, had our finances been buoyant, no attempt would have been made to interfere with, or to interrupt, the progress of the Education Department. Still, we must not be led away by mere sentiment, by a mere vague belief that it is not possible for us in some manner to introduce economies into the educational service. As an example of the demand for continuation and technical classes and so forth,

I have in my mind's eye a request from a certain neighbourhood or the establishment of carpentry and domestic economy and other continuation classes in that particular neighbourhood. Within one or two miles by rail already here are in existence classes in those special subjects; and one of the reasons advanced for the demand that such classes should be established in this particular centre is that the parents object to paying the nominal sum of 3d. per week in the shape of railway fare in order that their children may attend the classes already established. Where a spirit of that kind exists, the adults are surely taking very little interest in the education of their children. While mentioning this incident, I may inform the Committee that I am introducing to-morrow to the Minister for Education a deputation to ask for the establishment of classes at that centre. I may say further that I have intimated to those in my electorate who desire to have the classes established, that I cannot support their request if it means additional expenditure.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You will be quite popular with that little crowd.

Mr. STEWART: That remains to be seen. I am not looking for the consequences, as perhaps some hon. members are inclined to do. Again, the technical classes are to some extent attended by adults who are in a position, if they wish to follow these studies, to pay for the tuition.

Hon. T. Walker: They often do pay. The technical school is self supporting.

Mr. STEWART: Herein lies an instance where economy can be effected. I am sorry that in our own University—with the exception of the Chair of Agriculture, which was endowed by the late Sir Winthrop Mackintosh, and with the further exception of the Chair of Engineering—there is no course

which offers the slightest prospect of enabling the student who follows it to make his living in Western Australia. As regards the other chairs in the University, we are largely educating students who will ultimately leave this State to confer on other communities the benefit of the training which they have received gratuitously at the hands of Western Australia. Even a student of engineering who completes his course and then hangs out in St. George's-terrace a brass plate proclaiming that he is a graduate in engineering, would probably have to wait a long time before he obtained any practice. Our population is as yet too restricted to offer the needful scope to University graduates.

Mr. Johnston: One benefit which will be derived from the University will be that the professional men in our Government service will be Western Australians instead of imported men.

Mr. STEWART: That is, assuming that there will be positions to absorb them; otherwise they will eventually have to leave Western Australia for a wider field. In course of time the State will expand, and then there will be opportunities for students who are successful in their course.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The degrees obtained at the Western Australian University will help the students in other parts of the world.

Mr. STEWART: Quite so. But we are looking for the greatest possible advantage to this State. We do not set out to educate our young men to go to other parts of the world, though this, of course, they have an undoubted right to do. We have been somewhat too ambitious in the establishment of our University. Then take the continuation classes, which are attended by children over 14 years of age who have left day school and are in employment during the day. I feel sure those children are frequently not in a fit state to attend the continuation classes and receive instruction. Moreover, the teachers at the continuation classes have been at work during the day, and they, like the children, are tired. The result is that the State does not receive value for the expenditure incurred. That that is so has been impressed on the educational authorities in England, who have begun to question the desirability of evening continuation classes. The consensus of the best opinion is that children should remain at school compulsorily until they are 16 years of age. The leaving age in Western Australia is, of course, 14 years. As I have previously indicated, one of the last things the Committee would think, in normal times, of doing would be to reduce the Education vote; for we are accustomed to believe, and we believe in all sincerity, that an educated people is the best asset a State can have. But when we are faced, as we now are, with a shortage of funds, it is not the function of the Education Department still to insist on increased expenditure. There is no reason why the Education Department any more than any other department should put forward increased demands during times such as we are passing through.

Mr. Griffiths: But do not you think that education is just as important as war service at the present juncture?

Mr. STEWART: Education is equally important, but I do not hold, with the hon. member interjecting, that at the present juncture education is all essential in the sense that it is co-equal in importance with war service. We could suspend our education for a year or two and still successfully finish the war. Parents could take upon themselves the exercise of those functions which properly belong to the home, and then I think comparatively little would eventually be lost to the children from the curtailment of our educational service. Perhaps, what would be lost in the way of the intellect might be made up by the larger moral training—and that is the best training—which the children would receive at home.

Mr. Foley: Do you mean to infer that if we suspend the educational system the children would all sit at home with their fingers in their mouths to receive moral training?

Mr. STEWART: I believe that in such circumstances parents would wake up, and would be alive to the necessity of setting their children an example, and of imparting to them such instruction as they, the parents, themselves could give. I do not suppose things are coming to that, but I contend that by raising the minimum school age to seven, and by discontinuing the technical and continuation classes to some extent, we shall be doing no wrong, but shall be accomplishing, and without any harmful results, what we have set out to do—that is, to cut our coat according to our cloth.

Mr. Harrison: Do not you think knowledge is the best weapon to defend ourselves with?

Mr. STEWART: While I would not designate that interjection as a catch phrase, I say that the school is not the only place where knowledge can be acquired.

Mr. Harrison: What are schools established for?

Mr. STEWART: I know that schools are primarily established for the imparting of knowledge. But in the past many of our best and most brilliant men did not receive any schooling at all. No doubt our Education Department are prone to give of their best in the way of knowledge of what is going on in other lands. But in a community such as ours there is no cogent reason why what is done in England or America should immediately be attempted here. If we have money to spend in education, let us spend it; but if we have not the money, let us honestly face the position and see where and how we can effect economies with the least loss of efficiency. That is all I am pleading for. I sincerely hold the belief that all education beyond the primary stage should be self supporting. There is a very considerable sum of money spent by parents on secondary schools in this State. With regard to the Modern School, to my way of thinking—as I hold that all education beyond primary education should be paid for by those who receive it—the intention of its promoters is to a certain extent being

abused. In my opinion, it is a shame that parents who are perfectly well able to pay for the education of their children, should send them to the Modern School to be educated gratuitously. To make any distinction as regards payment or non-payment at the schools would be highly invidious; but, still, I stand for the principle that all education beyond the primary should be self supporting. And I do not think that ultimately the State would lose anything by adopting that principle. I hope that the State will still encourage advanced education by means of exhibitions, which should always be awarded to those who prove themselves specially worthy of them.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They would cost money also.

Mr. STEWART: They would be less costly. I may be pardoned for being personal, but I would like to say that a boy of mine won an exhibition, but owing to the fact that there was no corresponding Chair at the University, he had to go elsewhere.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He was lucky to have a wealthy father.

Mr. STEWART: He was lucky in being able to make use of the choice he had, and it would have been wrong of me to have prevented him from exercising that choice of profession.

Mr. Foley: How do you fit in that argument with the opinion that engineering is of no value?

Mr. STEWART: I say that an engineering diploma, or degree, for a youth who has spent a considerable time in studying engineering would not be compensated in Western Australia, to any extent at any rate, because, as my friend knows, there is not a wide field here for members of that profession.

Mr. Johnston: Before the war we could not get professional men of that kind in Western Australia.

Mr. STEWART: I am surprised to hear that.

Mr. Johnston: Surveyors also.

Mr. STEWART: That would probably be the result of departmental economy, which perhaps compelled those who were here to seek fresh fields. I believe that all those who take up a professional career should receive a salary commensurate with the importance of that profession. It takes a good deal of money to complete an education for a profession, and its reward should be a good salary. I have a serious complaint to make against the Education Department because of the poor salaries paid to school teachers. They perform most important work in the formation of character.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You could not get a surveyor or draughtsman for £2 10s. a week.

Mr. STEWART: The teachers are the most poorly paid people in the community and it is an anomaly, in a democratic country like ours, that a school teacher should receive £110 a year while barmaids, who are members of trade unions, engaged in occupations where no special education is needed, should receive a minimum wage of £3 10s. and £4 a week.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If a barmaid can improve her position, a teacher can do so as well.

Mr. STEWART: I do not intend to labour the matter any further. I am pleased with the debate so far as it has gone, and it is

satisfactory to note that the condition of the State finances has awakened members to a greater sense of their responsibility in regard to their own personal views so far as education is concerned.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [\$35]: The member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) dealt with the position so far as the head teachers at the James-street school are concerned; therefore I do not propose to touch on that particular subject. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack) implied that education tends to foster discontent. In reply to that I would say that the spirit of unrest which is so manifest is undoubtedly the spirit of progress. I have had some experience of industrial matters, and so far as that experience goes, it is the uneducated man, with narrow views, who causes trouble. The educated man who views things broadly will always look at matters from the common sense point of view. I really rose to speak for the purpose of making a suggestion to the Minister for Education, and it is that the State should undertake to supply all books required in the schools, to the children or their parents. I do not mean that they should be supplied free of cost. I realise that this is not an opportune time to make an innovation of that description.

Mr. Smith: They might well be printed in the State.

Mr. WILLCOCK: We say that we have a free system of education, yet parents with four or five children are obliged to pay 30s. a year for books for those children. I would suggest that the Education Department should purchase the books and sell them to the parents at cost price. That would considerably improve things so far as the domestic finances of the people were concerned. The Government could import the books, or, as the member for North Perth suggested, they might be printed in the State. If the books were imported they could be retailed at cost price, instead of, as is the case at the present time, being retailed at an advance of about 50 per cent. on the cost price.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [\$40] When I was returned to Parliament a promise I made was that I would do all I could to advance the interests of the State, and it is my intention to fulfil that promise. I would not be doing that if I were to vote in favour of the huge expenditure on education which is proposed. This is no time for sentiment. We are facing a very serious crisis in the history of the State, and although one would be very loth in any way to retard the progress of education in normal times, the times at present are not normal. We have reached a period when we should be cutting down expenses in every shape and form. Although it is laudable on the part of members to speak in favour of maintaining the high pitch of excellence which education has reached in this State, the existing position has to be faced. I may be accused of being pessimistic and of looking at things from the worst point of view, but it is quite possible that the children of Western Australia may want food for their bodies before long, and it will not be mental food that will trouble them. It is, perhaps, a hard thing to

say, but it will be a much harder thing to experience. If I thought the State was in a position to maintain this huge scheme which already exists, I would not hesitate to support it, but, bad as things are, the Director of Education is not satisfied. It is positively indecent at the present time to see huge placards on our hoardings advertising free tuition; it is a business concern and we are over-doing it. It is a disgraceful thing that the State should be doing this when it can scarcely pay its way. There is no one in this House who can say how long we will be in that position.

Mr. Griffiths: Let us save the 2½ millions which is being spent on drink every year.

Mr. TEESDALE: What a position to occupy! What an advertisement for Western Australia if what we are doing becomes known to other nations; if it should become known that we are trying to out-Herod Herod in the matter of education, we who cannot pay the interest on our loans.

Hon. P. Collier: We are paying the interest on our loans.

Mr. TEESDALE: We do not know how long it will be before we shall have to discontinue paying interest on our loans. I would not interfere with the primary schools in any shape or form, and if we have any surplus money we should give it to the unfortunate teachers, who are not paid a fair wage. I have seen teachers in the country practically living the life of black gins, so far as comfort and environment are concerned, even though the people with whom they were living were doing their best for them. By force of circumstances these young women teachers, in some instances, have to live in wretched tin huts, without comfort, and they are girls who have been brought up in decent homes, and have known the meaning of comfort. It is a shame that the department should send young girls to live this kind of life in the country; and then pay them wretched salaries.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you know what the salaries were six years ago?

Mr. TEESDALE: I know what they are now. It is disgraceful to think that those girls should be paid such trumpery salaries when we have persons in good positions, squatters' daughters, amongst others, receiving education at the expense of the State. I know a business man in Perth who made a boast to me the other morning that he was saving £60 a year on the education of his children by reason of the fact that they were being educated in the State schools, and this man's income would be anything between £1,500 and £2,000 a year. He gloated over the fact that he was making this saving. Should we allow that man to say that he could educate his children at the expense of a State which was practically insolvent? I want to know what is to become of all these wonderful creations we are turning out from the technical and advanced schools? Are we to make typists and bank clerks of them; are we to have no manual labour? I would like a little of this educa-

tion money spent in teaching trades to boys, who would eventually be fifty times better off than if they had been allowed to become bank clerks.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If a man is equipped with training, he will not be prevented from taking on manual work.

Mr. TEESDALE: I would not deny any boy a good training, but this is no time—to use the expression of an old inspector, Inspector Miles—to try to place a pyramid upon its apex. There is too much superfluousness in connection with the Education Department. Some of the inspectors put in a tremendous lot of time in the metropolitan area. If those men went out into the back country a little more it would be altogether better for the department, and probably for the results achieved by the department.

Hon. T. Walker: Do you know the work an inspector has to do?

Mr. TEESDALE: I know what some of them do, but I do not know what they have to do. After listening for a time to the wonderful speech made by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones), I thought we were going to hear some solution of the difficulty; but the hon. member contented himself with blackguarding the department and everybody in it. What he had to say was not worth a wax match, and when he sat down I had not discovered anything at all original in his speech.

Mr. Jones: I can supply you with the information, but not with the brains to assimilate it.

Mr. TEESDALE: Western Australia at present is trying to build up big schemes in every department, trying to be a pattern to the world. It will be quite time to do that when we can pay for it. We have the finest water scheme in the world, we have the finest railway in the world, and we are going to have the finest education system in the world. I think it would be a fair thing to go slow for a bit and see if we cannot pay for the things we have before we reach out for more.

Mr. Griffiths: What sacrifices are we making?

Mr. TEESDALE: I am trying to look ahead. Possibly we do not as yet realise that we are making any sacrifice, but I think very many of us will recognise it within the next couple of years. Some of our departmental officials appear to have no other object in life than to build up colossal schemes which will rebound to their glorification and perpetuate their names. Then when, at the expense of the State, they have completed their schemes, receiving offers from some other part of the world carrying salaries a little in advance of what we have paid them, they accept those offers and go off, leaving us with the aftermath, to reflect what fools we have been to allow them to build up reputations at our expense. I contend that it is better to employ men of moderate views who will be reasonable and adapt their ideas to the money available. I will not stress the question any further, but at the proper time I will record my vote as a

protest against the increase in the expenditure on education.

Mr. ROCKE (South Fremantle) [8.50]: I agree that if we are to go on the rocks we had better go on as an educated people, because then we shall have an opportunity of getting off the rocks and making another start. I am of opinion that education is the greatest factor in national success. I do not approve of our schools being made nurseries. When our institutions are turned into nurseries it is not good for the very young child, for the teacher, or for the country. We might perhaps be able to make a small reduction in our expenditure if we pay attention to that phase of the question. The educated race is the race which is going to win through. Bearing that in mind I think it would pay us handsomely to make a sacrifice, if necessary, in order to keep up our standard of education as it is now. I believe our system is second to none in Australia, and I believe that our officers, from the Director downwards, have as fine a record as is to be found in Australia. The immense size of our State certainly increases our educational vote through the necessarily high administrative costs; but I believe that if the attention of the officers was directed to that, and every officer was instructed to keep down administrative expenses, considerable saving might be effected. I am opposed to any system of payment being introduced into our educational system in respect of primary, or, to a large extent, secondary education. If we once introduce a system of payment we raise a class barrier, which is not desirable in any democracy. Boys and girls at present being instructed in our technical school will be so many assets to the State, but when we find taking various courses in our technical schools the wives of men in good positions, I think they might reasonably be asked to pay for their tuition.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: At Fremantle we have 100 students paying.

Mr. Stewart: A merely nominal sum.

Mr. ROCKE: I am opposed to the idea of any general payment. The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) again referred to the liquor question. I have determined that if the people of the State will not reduce the liquor bill no vote of mine shall be cast to reduce our educational facilities.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanoona) [8.55]: I must congratulate the Premier on the excellent speech he made in introducing these Estimates. I think he sounded the correct note. Practically he said this, "Can we afford to cut down our education vote? It is a costly thing indeed, but it is a paying thing. It is an asset to the State in its ultimate result, which we cannot afford to sacrifice." That was the spirit and the meaning of the Premier's speech. I say to hon. members now, whatever money we can save, or wherever money is to be saved, this is not the place for it. At the present juncture there is no part of the Empire being so heavily struck by the misfortunes of war, no part of the British world has had to suffer more, than Great Britain herself. Her people have had to go short of food. Her people have had to deprive themselves of actual necessities.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Not for want of money.

Hon. T. WALKER: In a sense that is true; yet, for want of revenue Great Britain, like all other nations engaged in the war, is going back in her finances. She is mortgaging her future, even more than we are, more even in proportion than we are. And yet Great Britain at the present juncture has said, "Whatever other avenues we curtail in we cannot afford to curtail in education." And she has actually, as the Premier's figures quoted show, increased, given an actual bonus, if I may so say, of no less a sum than four millions of money to increase her educational seed and facilities in a time of war. If Great Britain can afford to do that, surely we can afford to keep up the pace we have been travelling all along, to carry on. I am struck with the want of logic of some of our speakers. Some have said, "We must cut down this education vote." The member for Rochbourne (Mr. Teesdale) said, "We cannot afford to keep up the rate at which we are going." Yet he went on to say that our teachers were underpaid. He complained of the accommodation they had at the outposts of this great State. He said they were living in tin huts, that their habitations and surroundings were those of gins, aborigines, rather than of civilised human beings—inferring that we require to spend more money to do justice to our teachers, and enable us to be really proud of our educational system. That was the natural inference. We could not give all those teachers better accommodation and higher salaries if we cut down the educational vote by £150,000 or any less a sum. Yet he wants that done. And then there are some of my friends who think we can do an enormous lot by saying that children shall not go to school until they are at least six years of age. It is a trivial thing, and I do not know that it is worth much consideration. I do not think we have much to complain of. Our age for admitting children in Western Australia is six years. There have been a few exceptions, mostly in up-country schools, in outback districts, where the population is so sparse that only a few children have been got together. If we had literally to confine it to children of six years of age we might not get the requisite number with which to establish a school. There are places in which education is entirely neglected, because we have not the requisite number of the standard of school age for the formation of the nucleus of a school.

Mr. Johnston: But the department will not let these young children make up the requisite number.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes, it does.

Mr. Johnston: No, you have to get eight of the proper age.

Hon. T. WALKER: Often schools are kept going because there are one or two children under six who keep up the average attendance, so that the school is not closed on that account. I have no desire to see Western Australia behind other parts of the Commonwealth. Either in war time or peace time I want this State to take the lead in every respect. Let us see what is done in other parts of Australia. In Victoria child-

ren are admitted to the schools at $4\frac{1}{2}$ years of age.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): They are very precocious there.

Hon. T. WALKER: That may be so. In Queensland they are admitted at four years of age.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Is that in the general schools, or at the kindergarten?

Hon. T. WALKER: That is the school age at which children can legitimately be admitted, and claim the right of free and secular education. In New South Wales the general rule is five, but in a few special cases even there they are admitted at four years of age. In Western Australia our school age is six. I should not quarrel if a reform were made. I should like the Committee to say that sometimes and in some places it would be a distinct advantage to our future citizens to admit children at five years of age. Hon. members may call these schools nurseries if they like. They are the best kind of nursery wherein the first little glimpse of education is received and a tendency to character is given. We can understand hon. members like the member for Claremont saying we ought not to send our children to school until they are seven, that they ought to be surrounded by all the educational and refining influences of home life until they go to school.

Mr. Lutey: In one room.

Hon. T. WALKER: All the homes are not of the character of the home which the member for Claremont can afford to give to his children. There are no slums in our midst in the strict sense of the word, I admit, either in Perth, Fremantle, or any other of our large towns, but there are the homes of the poor, of those who have no comforts. There are mothers of four or five children of ages ranging from the baby in arms to one who is just about of school age. She cannot give them home comforts. She has none to give. There is nothing artistic, refining, uplifting, or improving in the couple or three rooms that are occupied by the family. She sends them, and is obliged to send them, out of the way, out into the streets, out to play. Anyone walking in almost any of our streets at any hour of the day can see these young children who have not attained the school age playing about there.

Hon. P. Collier: Making mud pies.

Hon. T. WALKER: Not necessarily doing that. We know that this association is possibly not of the best. It has no tendency to the formation and refinement of character, and to the preparation for citizenship which was alluded to by a previous speaker to-night. I ask which is better, to give the children a sort of kindergarten education, an education fit for childhood which begins to train their senses and their powers of vision and observation in these early days, or to leave them entirely free to form their own characters in groups about the streets?

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): What is the compulsory age of these children?

Hon. T. WALKER: Sir.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Although they are admitted younger?

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes. Six is the compulsory age. I do not think if we could afford it there can be any question as to which course is the better. It is of immense benefit to these children to have the character forming training of school life, rather than that they should have to play as they do, without any moral or mental direction, in our streets. Then, again, in some of our outlying mining townships we find miserable homes, hessian huts or tin huts. These places are not places wherein to crowd children, or wherein to give them those luxuries that they may call home life. They get far better and more refined surroundings and better training in the schools in these places. It may be all right for the rich, and for those who can afford comfortable homes, to give their young children this form of home training, but there are instances where it would be far better for the children and ultimately better for the whole State that their training should be gently pursued and their senses directed in our public schools, especially if our schools are adapted and our teaching is fitted for that purpose. If we knock off this we have saved but little even if we are going to save £150,000. Some have suggested that a saving could be effected by attacking the salaries and the positions of the inspectors and the administrative staff. I know nothing which costs so little in that way as our Education Department. If all our departments cost as little to run administratively as the Education Department costs, the State would be very much better off financially.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Works Department costs less.

Hon. T. WALKER: Possibly that is so, but let me tell hon. members the proportions in the cost of administration. The cost of administration of the Education Department, as distinct from the payment of salaries for teachers and of what is absolutely necessary in connection with teaching pure and simple, is 4 per cent.

Mr. Nairn: About 5½ per cent.

Hon. T. WALKER: No.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Works Department comes out at a shade less if you take everything in.

Hon. T. WALKER: Possibly.

Mr. Foley: Who prompted the hon. member in that statement?

Hon. T. WALKER: Can anyone say that this is excessive, or out of all proportion, or out of all rhyme or reason, however rich or poor we may be? We do not pay for our director or our inspectors according to the importance of the work they perform, or as compared with the payment of similar grades of officers in other parts of the educational world. Under these circumstances, are we going to set an example by making our administrative staff less important and of less value than is the case in other parts of the Commonwealth or the educational world? Surely to goodness, if we have good men, we can afford to recognise their abilities by pay-

ing them something like a reasonable income! As a matter of fact, we do not pay them up to their standard of work. As to the suggestions which have been made for saving money by driving some of our inspectors out of the town into the country, these comments could only have been made by those who are unaware of what is demanded.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They do not know the zeal or the energy of these country inspectors.

Hon. T. WALKER: No.

Mr. Foley: The system of country inspection is bad in many places.

Hon. T. WALKER: If hon. members want a better system, let them spend more money on it.

Mr. Foley: The administration is not getting the best of what the inspectors could do.

Hon. T. WALKER: The department is getting the best it can afford to have.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How many miles do they have to travel?

Mr. Foley: The trouble is they travel too many miles.

Hon. T. WALKER: Unfortunately in this State we have these immense distances, and the inspectors are obliged to travel over them. It is impossible to keep the whole of the inspectorial staff in the country unless we treble this educational vote for administrative purposes.

Mr. Foley: When they travel 400 miles to inspect one school in a town and then travel back 800 miles to inspect the other, they are not doing their work.

Hon. T. WALKER: I cannot follow the hon. member. They go to a school and must return to it, if they have gone to it for the purpose of inspecting it.

Mr. Foley: If they go to a town they should inspect all the schools in it.

Hon. T. WALKER: So they ought. They have their programme, and I take it in that programme they do the utmost work that is possible in the time available.

Mr. Foley: The hon. member takes the word of the administrative head who is prompting him all the time, and does not know himself what the conditions are.

Hon. T. WALKER: There may be one school which is taken before another, or two schools which are taken in immediate succession, but that is not a matter for the administration.

Mr. Foley: It is all administrative.

Hon. T. WALKER: It is not the rule, at any rate. The work is done very well, and the inspectors in the country are really hard working and continuously kept at their task. They are always doing their duty. A better class of man one could not find in any other part of the Commonwealth than the inspectors we have in this State. This is not the point to which I desire to direct the attention of the Committee. The point is that we are obliged to have more inspectors in the metropolitan area than can be offered to the country because the population is bigger. Every child must come under observation, and must be tested and

examined by the inspectors of the metropolitan districts.

Mr. Griffiths: Do you not think that the inspection is a little over done in the metropolitan districts?

Hon. T. WALKER: I do not think so. We get the results, and they can only be obtained by that amount of attention.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They want as much attention in the metropolitan areas as elsewhere.

Hon. T. WALKER: Undoubtedly. There are also the school teachers who have to be examined. Then there has to be taken into consideration the manner in which a school is conducted and how it is to be classified. Everything falls upon the inspectors. Some questions were asked in this Chamber the other day with regard to Inspector Clubb, as to how many schools he had to inspect in the metropolitan district, and what work he did. I do not know the object for which this question was asked. As a matter of fact, though he has not so many schools to inspect as some of the country inspectors, he has more scholars, and every school boy and school girl requires his inspection. In addition to his work of inspection he has to do his share of the head office work, the administrative work. I can speak of Mr. Clubb from an constant contact with him of something like five years. I know what he is. Let he give hon. members an idea of how a man may be wrongly attacked by those who are not directly acquainted with the facts. Whilst I happened to enjoy the privilege and honour of being Minister for Education, Mr. Clubb took possession of the continuation classes. How they were worked up, everybody in this State knows. Their value no one will underestimate. But those continuation classes meant constant night work for Mr. Clubb. He had his head office work and his inspector's work, and he attended to the additional work of the continuation classes without receiving any increase of salary, or asking for it.

Mr. Griffiths: And to the detriment of his health.

Hon. T. WALKER: I am coming to that. It so happened that whilst he was doing this excessive work, Mr. Robertson, the Chief Inspector, had, under medical advice, to go away for the recovery of his health. Mr. Clubb did Mr. Robertson's work in addition; and then, still further misfortune following, Mr. Andrews, the respected Director, fell seriously ill, and Mr. Clubb had to do the work of Mr. Andrews as well. He did that work, working from morning till night. The result was a break-down, an absolute break-down, in health. Mr. Clubb is not the same man to-day as he was before this excessive strain was put upon him. And yet there are those who can sneer at Mr. Clubb as if he were trying to get a lazy billet! Mr. Clubb is of that character that he could not be lazy—his energy is too large. Certainly he is the type of man we need for our educational system—full of a spirit which gives inspiration to everyone who comes in contact with him. I instance Mr. Clubb's case as only one of how a man who is the head of a department may be attacked, and his value

lessened, owing to sheer lack of knowledge of the work that is done and of the need there is for that work. We cannot afford to cut down our expenditure there, because we cannot do with fewer inspectors if we are to give attention to every child in the community and to every teacher in the department.

Mr. Foley: But the inspectors do not give individual attention to every child in the metropolitan area.

Hon. T. WALKER: Individual attention is given to every child by the inspectors, but not continuously. The latter is the duty of the teachers.

Mr. Foley: How can the hon. member say that the inspectors give individual attention to the children?

Hon. T. WALKER: Every child is looked to by the inspectors, and his or her standard and general attainments are ascertained. But the inspectors cannot spend their time in the schools teaching. That, the teachers have to do. The value of the inspector is that he sees the teachers do the duty expected of them. Our staff of inspectors are of that quality, of all men I have ever met, that they inspire the teachers. They instil such zeal and enthusiasm into the teachers as is to be found in the parents for the bringing up of children. The inspectors love the work; they give life to it; they breathe, as it were, the spirit of education, the evolution of mind. That is the value of having good men, and our staff of inspectors are of that class. We cannot cut down expenditure there. Some members have said, "Cut down the driving allowance." It is an extraordinary feature of our system that not only do we give free education throughout the State as far as ever it is possible, but that in scattered districts—especially in the farming districts, where families may be four or five miles away from the school—rather than let the children go without education, we pay for their being driven to school.

Mr. Griffiths: The Perth Chamber of Commerce objected to that.

Hon. T. WALKER: Naturally. But even there we cannot afford to neglect the education of these children. Though it is a growing item, we must provide the means for every child to become educated.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The free driving is abused in some instances.

Hon. T. WALKER: True. But one object of the free driving to school is to encourage settlement.

Hon. J. Mitchell: And to save opening more schools.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes; and in that there may be ample compensation. However, the object is to ensure that every child has the chance to get an education. Therefore I fail to see how we can cut out the driving allowance. In every other branch of the Education Department, where does the money go? A good deal of it goes towards the building and equipment of the schools, although not all of that expenditure is shown on this Education Vote. But the great bulk of it, the mass of it, goes in the payment of our teachers. We are obliged to have teachers scattered over the length and breadth of this great State of ours.

Mr. Foley: Where would you expect the bulk of the Education Vote to go if not to the teachers?

Hon. T. WALKER: Certainly I expect the bulk of the vote to go to the teachers. We can cut down this expenditure only by lessening the number of teachers. The result of raising the minimum school age for children might dispense with a few teachers. But we cannot afford to lose many. If we are to give education throughout Western Australia, we must keep up our staff of teachers.

Mr. Griffiths: We have not been able to give them their legal increments.

Hon. T. WALKER: That is so. Undoubtedly, the teachers have shown themselves a patriotic class of people. They have gone without the increments which have been given in other departments of the Civil Service. They have been kept on the same pay for years past with this exception, that when the Labour Government came into office one of their first acts was to increase the pay of the teachers. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Durack) growls at what they receive now. What did they get before the Labour Government came in?

Hon. J. Mitchell: Not much less.

Hon. T. WALKER: Sixty to seventy pounds per annum some of them were getting. And the lowest rate of pay after we took office was £110. The rest of the increase in Education expenditure has been caused by the natural increment of children growing up to the school age. By reason of that increment we have to provide more teachers and additional schools. That is where the increase lies; that represents the bulk of the increase. Now I come to the point raised by most of the speakers who objected to this vote—that the time has come when we should stop primary education. We saw the reason for that suggestion in the speech delivered by the member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack). He told us that this education which we were spreading abroad, and the spirit of it, were causing unrest. Unrest! He told us that we are having industrial troubles, and all kinds of misfortune in the labour world, because we have had higher education.

Mr. Durack: No, no!

Hon. T. WALKER: I can understand people honestly holding that view. There are in this world some people who would keep their fellowman in ignorance so that they may drive him, so that he may tremble at the crack of a whip. I know there are those who conscientiously believe that a few of the people are born into the world to rule and to get the life-blood and the energies of their fellow beings. It is a convenient condition of things for the few. There are those who would introduce black labour for the same reason, who would use the native, and do away with white labour, if they could get out of the native anything like the work the white man does. They would introduce Japanese and Chinese and Malays—any race who would do the work they were told and driven to do, and do it without a murmur at the lowest possible subsistence price. I firmly believe that there are those who think that this is legitimate. But the object of higher education is to teach

all people that they are men born equal, and that they have the same right to better their lot and to improve their condition in this world as those who were born with silver spoons in their mouths.

Mr. Durack: I rise to a point of order. I did not remark that education created unrest. I have my speech here, and what I said was that I did not know whether education created unrest or not.

Hon. T. WALKER: If you, Mr. Chairman, will permit the hon. member to read that portion of his speech, it will be seen that he not merely inferred, but said straight out, that industrial unrest is due to the spread of higher education. He discourages, therefore, the spread of higher education, because we shall have a rest if we discontinue higher education. You, Sir, with your extensive knowledge of the world, know that it is unrest which designates movement, movement action, action progress; that the whole world's development has been brought about by unrest. A man never gets out of the stagnation of dull, stupid, hard ignorance until he becomes restless. Then he wants to go higher. Then he wants to achieve something more. There was a time when only two classes existed in society—the lords and the peasants. The lords owned everything—even the bodies of their liege subjects. The lords could command life and death, and had under their control the whole happiness and misery of their slaves, their serfs. Was it a better condition of things when the great bulk of the population were serfs, than exists now? The member for Kimberley has had some higher education, and he has read history and has observed the development of human society from the time of slavery under the old lords up to the time when it was claimed that all men were free. The hon. member knows that the greatest war of America was fought to set the black man free, to take the black man from beneath the lash of flogging Legree. The hon. member knows that. And yet he is concerned because education causes unrest. Education does produce two things. First of all it causes that spirit of unrest which I translate into a desire for betterment, a desire for advancement. It does also increase in the possession of knowledge the sense of dignity. The man ceases to kneel, but stands upright, when he gets knowledge. His mind expands when he begins to recognise that he is a human being equal, if not in actual fortune, yet in chance and opportunities and rights, with every other citizen. And the moment the man becomes dignified, he is going to talk pretty plainly to our hon. friend who desires to quiet this unrest. Our friend is going to be told that John Smith is as good as Bill Jones.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Better. Smith says.

Hon. T. WALKER: Sometimes he is. I know of stupid, vulgar, uncouth, uncultivated and absolutely ignorant employers of labour who were not fit, in an intellectual or even moral sense, to clean the boots of some of the men who were working for them, and yet who claimed to lord it over those men because they were workers, because they were only labourers. It seems to be a peculiarity of the North-West, because the same sentiment

as voiced as well by the member for Rotherham (Mr. Teesdale), "Who is going to carry the bricks?" he asked. So that we may have brick and mortar carriers, and manual labourers, and in order to have the man who will not growl at the task set him, we are to blot out our educational system beyond the primary learning, beyond the three Rs. Not one step further. We must not have that learning which makes men equal to each other. That is the attack of the great bulk of those who are quarrelling with the Education vote. I am going to submit that only those nations who recognise the value of higher and general education will have a chance of surviving when his great war is over. It is the knowledge of the fact that problems are going to come upon the British people that has caused Great Britain to make a huge grant for education purposes. Great Britain recognises the fact that it is the educated worker who can do the best work, and who is of the greatest benefit to the State. Let me submit that, whatever we may say of Germany, we are bound to admit that her wonderful power of organisation, and her technical skill, have made her almost unconquerable. Nothing but higher education has done that.

Mr. Stewart: No, militarism.

Hon. T. WALKER: That has been one factor, I admit. But in preparing to meet the demands of militarism, there must first be the intellectual spirit in the world. All subjects could not be made to do what those of Germany have done. We could not do that with the aborigines of this country.

Mr. Stewart: But the German militarists have made them do it.

Hon. T. WALKER: We cannot possibly take an untrained, undisciplined, and non-intellectual person and make him a fit instrument, even for military despotism. There must be the texture, the fine nervous development, the actual textile and intellectual grip of all matters necessary for the performance of work. All that has made Germany what it is. Much as I detest that spirit of militarism, I am not blind to the fact that it is the intelligent organisation of the nation that has made the resistance of Government so formidable to the Allies. We shall have to compete with that nation, too, when the war is over, in an industrial sense. As soon as the war ends a keener war, affecting our well being as citizens, will take place. It will be a war for the possession of markets, for the manufacture of all that the world needs for its utilities and its comforts, for the distribution of the wealth of the earth and its utilisation in every respect. We shall then require skill and brains, and we shall need a trained and disciplined community. All of this implies education, not primary education, but the education which enlarges the mind and fits people for the performance of those duties associated with the mysteries of science, which will turn the secrets of nature to the service of man. The nation that will neglect its children, that will remain content because it is going through a period of adversity, that will let things drop back into lethargy and ignorance, the nation that will do all that will rue it.

It only needs a casual glance to show that the world has become very small under our modern knowledge. To allow a nation to sink back, to have no comforts, to make no strides, will mean that it will soon go back to the position of its ancestors centuries ago. Where are the nations to-day that do not understand the blessings of education, that are ignorant of those blessings? Wherever attention has been paid to the higher cultivation of the mind, to the discipline of its subjects in all arts and sciences, and in general utilities, wherever that has been done the nations are the strongest and the people of those nations are able to hold their heads the highest at the present time. I have only to quote one nation to carry out my illustration almost to conviction point. That nation is Japan, a feudal nation not very long ago, and to-day standing abreast of the civilised nations of the Western world. What has done it? Her first step, when she resolved to get rid of her feudalism and enter into the spirit of the West, was to establish schools and universities, to import teachers, and to train her own teachers and to send her children to the furthest limits of the civilised world, in order to obtain that light and instruction which she regarded as valuable assets for her children. Japan is undoubtedly reaping the reward to-day. Let our population here, in our so-called White Australia, give up its schools, go back to the three Rs, and be satisfied to make us all brick-carriers and hod-lifters, and where shall we stand against a nation such as Japan where every child is educated from the earliest stage right up to his or her entrance into the more active duties of life? It is only brains that win the battles of this world. Physical force and mere animal strength go nowhere in the presence of that electric spark we call the mind. And it is the cultivation of that mind that is the function of education. We are doing it as steadily in this State as it is being done in most parts of the world. I am not saying that we are not excelled in some portions of the globe, but we are doing it as steadily as possible. We take the child through the primary school and we carry him on to the secondary school, and if he has to enter on the duties of life, and if the parents cannot afford to keep him at school, and still want to enlarge his mind and increase the capacities of the brain, there are the Continuation Classes. I am thankful to say that here we are showing an example to the rest of the Commonwealth. In other parts of Australia there are Continuation Schools, but a slight charge is made. Here we look upon it as a duty to give a child all the education that is possible, so that there may be no excuse for declining. Then there are the Modern School and the High School, and there the mind can be fitted for the calling that may be ahead. Then the students can go to the University. The opinion has been expressed that the students who attend the University should be made to pay. But they cannot all afford to pay. I want hon. members to remember that, if there are those who drop out from the high schools and the University, it is not because

the parents of the children do not want those children to receive the education, but because they cannot spare the child to go through the course he may have chosen. It is sometimes a sacrifice for parents to allow their children to attend the University classes. To hand over the higher schools and the University to the well-to-do, to those who can afford not only to spare their children whilst they are receiving that education to keep them out of industrial paths—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And they send them into industrial paths when there is a disturbance.

Hon. T. WALKER: I will tell those people who talk about cutting down the expenses of education generally how they can do it. The State is not too proud to receive an endowment for its University. Let some of our wealthy men assist the University, so that the poorer section of the community may receive education right up to the highest standard, just as is done in other parts of the world. In many other parts of the world vast sums are left to endow universities and schools. True, we have had one endowment from Sir Winthrop Hackett, but we are not sure of even that, because that late gentleman thought he was richer than he really was. Still, there is the example of a public-minded citizen; and I say to the wealthy of Western Australia that no nobler benefit can be conferred upon this community than to leave accumulated wealth for educational purposes.

Mr. Stewart: It is a great reproach to many that it has not been done.

Hon. T. WALKER: It should have been done. If we had a proper zeal for education amongst our wealthy citizens there would not be the nervous fear that we are running on the rocks because we will not cut down the education vote. That is the way in which the deficiency can be met, namely, by the generosity of our public-minded citizens. At all events I, for one, object to our higher education being handed over to the wealthy or well-to-do classes of this community. The poorest child in the community has the right to obtain the highest and widest education possible, and be he brick carrier or shoemaker, it is to his and the community's ultimate advantage that he shall receive this education. As John Stuart Mills said when appointed Chancellor of one of the Scottish Universities, the bootmaker will make better boots if he is educated. Again, how true were the remarks of Colonel Ingersol when he gave expression to the great thought "Man advances in proportion as he mixes his thoughts with his labours." It is the mixing of thought with what we are doing that has built up the wealth of Empire. Every great leviathan that ploughs the waves is the product of thought mixed with labour. Mere physical thought without brains behind it is absolutely valueless in the service of mankind. It is the intellect that goes with our toil which differentiates us from barbarous and savage peoples.

Mr. Durack: We get a lot of the intellect, but not much of the toil.

Hon. T. WALKER: Perhaps some of that intellect which is possessed by Toil might be taught to the hon. member. It is time he did a little toil himself.

Mr. Durack: I have done a good deal.

Hon. T. WALKER: If the hon. member has done a good deal of toil, surely he has stopped now; he is all intellect now. But that is by the way. Whatever we have to do we do it better if we have brains or intellect, thought to commune over the work we are doing. All the inventions, all the improvements, all the better systems we adopt, displace the old order of things, and give us the new. What is education for but to train the mind to do these things, to awaken the mind, to let even the humblest toiler know that he has a mind? The humblest toiler in time, when he does get the mind, will be able to see more clearly that he stands on an equality with those hon. members who would like to say that he does no work. He will have perhaps a clearer value of his work. Work is the only thing he has to sell, and he will begin to understand a little commerce, and will say, "I am not going to sell my labour for a mere pittance. I am going to sell it at a price that will enable me to enjoy all the rights and comforts of full manhood." And that is what is called unrest. They are beginning to feel that the children of the poor have a right to boots and stockings, have a right to a comfortable bed in which to sleep, and even to a clean floor to step upon; that the children of the poor have the right to enjoy a little library and books, and a little leisure in which to cultivate the mind. Once there were only the lords and the slaves. The slaves are no longer slaves. They became the lower working classes, then they became the middle classes, and from the middle classes they cry "The lords must go!" One of the results of this great war, by the uplifting, the disturbing of the elements and forces in existence, will be the democratising of the whole globe, the humbling of the mighty, the bringing of the mighty from their seats, and the exaltation of the humble and meek who have suffered through the centuries.

Mr. Stewart: That will be the millenium.

Hon. T. WALKER: Whatever it be, it will be good. The hon. member when addressing the electors, no longer talks to a lot of men who can be driven this way or that. He addresses them as men and women, knowing that he stands intellectually upon his level among them. What but education has brought it all about? We cannot afford to drop education, to cut it, to lessen it. It is the only asset that will enable us to meet the future boldly and fearlessly.

Mr. Hickmott: You are going to extremes now; we do not wish to drop education.

Hon. T. WALKER: Can we drop any portion of it? Every ray of light that dissipates ignorance is an eternal benefit. No child educated can have that education wholly for himself or herself. That education is a lamp carried in the dark places wherever the child afterwards goes. Every

educated citizen we have adds to the light, and enables us to see our relationship with the Nature about us, to see the future, the needs there are for adaptations in society that will build us strongly and firmly in a more sure development.

Mr. Durack: Those who can use it put it to very bad use.

Hon. T. WALKER: Did the hon. member ever know anything that was not capable of being put to a bad use? The blessings of Nature can always become the evils of Nature. I know of nothing in this world but can be a disaster of wrongly applied and wrongly used. Let not the hon. member talk. There are classes which have been educated from generation to generation, which have learnt the blessings and uses of education, and have turned that education to the enslavement of their fellow-men. Now the education is coming from below, and those who have been kept in subjection during the past ages, those latest representatives of that long period of subjection, when they begin to know how much they have been wronged and robbed and injured, insulted and enslaved for so long, are likely to say "It is our turn now." They have found their power, but they do not always use it wisely. It is a new toy, a new blessing to them. Give them a century or two of the blessings of education, and the world will feel the benefit of it. There are other great things that can be used wrongly. The science of the world is being used for destruction to-day. The light of the ages, the achievements of savants, of students, philosophers, teachers and research men, are being used to destroy the art of the ages, the building up of centuries, the beauties, the noblest aspirations of mankind, the revelations of dreams, of the greatest poets, of the greatest architects, of the greatest philanthropists. Cities the pride of nations lie in heaps of perishing ruins.

Mr. Stewart: The result of German education.

Hon. T. WALKER: The abuse, the wrong use, of education. One can use, one can abuse, everything. My arm, which I use just now to wave a thought, I might use to break the hon. member's jaw.

Mr. Stewart: Would that be the use or the abuse?

Hon. T. WALKER: Undoubtedly it would be the abuse, because the hon. member's jaw at times is very valuable to this Assembly. I say there is no good thing that cannot be turned at times to a bad thing. The question is, is it a good thing in itself? and I submit that education is. What is this talk about "We cannot afford it?" Why all these tears? There is a lot of what I might vulgarly call rot talked about the condition of the State. We are no worse off than are the other States.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not so badly off.

Hon. T. WALKER: I think it was the hon. member himself who the other night gave us the benefit of his education by saying that the area of our lands alone, without counting the forests, if assessed at 1s. 2d. per acre would cover more than our national debt. And he said that if any of us possessed those broad acres we would consider ourselves rich, even though we had that national debt to pay.

When we remember that we have not only this vast area in acres of land but all our wealth in minerals, in forests, in farms, public buildings, and cities, and in every other direction, we see that we have not touched the fringe of our possibilities. We are in a stage where we must run into debt. England is running into debt. Every nation of the world is running into debt. The Commonwealth is running into debt. In these times we must expect debt. But it is our duty to keep going, and not to resolve ourselves back into sloughs of ignorance because the times are hard. We are but commencing, we are on the threshold, we are only beginning the building up of a great nation. We have all the initial expenses to meet, but the nation in future shall overtake all this, and shall be wealthy and great. But if we are to be wealthy and great, if we are to turn everything Nature gives us to good account, we must above all things attend to the cultivation of the mind, the extension of thought, the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. We must become an energetic, capable and brainy people. We can then snap our fingers at the future, and the little debts that we owe now will be something to smile at. If we are to take our part in the race of life and the competition of nations, it is our absolute duty to preserve our Education Vote intact, to make it still larger, if possible, so that no one child is neglected and no one mind left uncultivated.

Vote put and passed.

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

Mr. Johnston: Is the whole vote finished with?

The CHAIRMAN: I have just put the general vote.

Mr. DURACK: I stood up, Mr. Chairman, to speak on this matter.

Mr. Johnston: You only passed item 1, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Angelo: I claim that the member for Kimberley stood up to speak.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not see the hon. member rise.

Mr. ANGELO: The hon. member stood up before you called out the full amount of the vote. We have been waiting here all the evening to speak on this vote.

Mr. PICKERING: I rise to a point of order. Is it not customary for the Minister in charge of a vote to reply upon the general discussion?

Hon. P. Collier: That is a matter of choice.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Minister actually in charge of this department is not in the House.

Mr. PICKERING: There is a Minister in charge of the vote here. I contend that the member for Kimberley was on his feet when the vote was put.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You could not see him.

Mr. ANGELO: I beg to disagree with your ruling, Mr. Chairman, and would ask the Committee to consider it.

The Premier: The Government have no desire to hurry this matter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I was refused permission to speak the other night when I wanted to talk on the medical vote.

Hon. P. Collier: This is not a matter for the opinion of the Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Under the Standing Orders I will allow the Committee to decide this point. I did not see the member for Kimberley rise in his place, but will not say that he was not on his feet. I will leave it in the hands of the Committee to say whether they wish the discussion on the general vote to be re-opened. I will put the question. Is it the wish of the Committee to re-open the discussion on the Education vote?

Question put and passed.

Mr. DURACK: Are we now on item No. 1, or on the general vote?

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member desires to discuss any particular item, he may do so.

Mr. DURACK: I feel that it is not within our province to discuss any particular item on the Education vote.

The CHAIRMAN: The general discussion on the Education vote is finished.

Mr. DURACK: Then to test the feeling of the Committee I will move—

“That the Education vote, £360,048, be reduced by £500.”

Mr. Munzie: I would like to deal with some of the items before the total vote is taken.

The CHAIRMAN: We are now dealing with item No. 1. Is there any discussion upon this item.

Item, Director of Education and Under Secretary, £750.

Mr. JONES: I submit that it would be good policy for the department to separate these two offices. The office of Under Secretary covers the work of securing all supplies. If a man with some business training was put in charge of the acquirement and distribution of all stocks for the schools, it would be an advantage. I hope the Government will take this point into consideration, as it should mean greater efficiency in the department.

The PREMIER: The present system has been in vogue for 20 years. There was formerly a Secretary for Education, but when the Director of Education was appointed he also took up the duties of Under Secretary. There are officers in the department who are specially provided to attend to the distribution of stock.

Item, Inspectors of Schools: 3 at £528, 2 at £504, 4 at £480, £4,562.

Mr. FOLEY: I have no wish to reduce the salaries of the inspectors of schools, but I do think we are spending too much money for the work we are getting, as well as for the results which are achieved. In my opinion, the gauge as to the suitability of a man for a position of inspector of schools is the small mileage that he travels for the work he performs. One of the inspectors recently went out from Kalgoorlie to Leonora, where there are three schools. He inspected two of them, but without inspecting the third he went off to Norseman, a distance of about 300 miles. He then came back to Kalgoorlie, and after passing through Leonora, he went to Wiluna, a distance of over 400 miles. He inspected the school at Wiluna and went back

to Kalgoorlie without taking in the other school at Leonora, and was obliged to make a special trip back to Leonora to inspect that school. If we take into consideration the travelling allowance at 15s. a day for this man and his other expenses, we must come to the conclusion that if the officers in charge of the department do not know how to arrange things better than that we should get someone else to take their positions. In spite of what the member for Kanowna said I contend that these inspectors are not in close touch with the children all the time. The hon. member also said that although there might be more teachers in our country schools, there were not as many scholars, and that the inspector had to take into consideration the individual scholars. He is entirely incorrect in that statement, which could only have been made by a man who had not studied the question. I know that when he occupied the position of Minister for Education he was heart and soul in the work, but I do say that he was prompted by those who occupied high positions in the department. It was stated, when I spoke on a previous occasion upon the question of inspectors, that I was prompted by some malcontent in the Education department. That is absolutely unfair. I would point out that the information I gave to members as to the amount of money which was paid for inspections and to individual teachers has not yet been refuted, and the figures I gave have not been found any fault with.

Hon. P. Collier: The member for Kanowna did not try to refute them.

Mr. FOLEY: The figures I gave, which proved that the State was not getting the best results for the money that was paid for the inspection of our schools, are borne out by the fact that the member for Kanowna was unable to refute them. The figures I used in regard to inspectors can be obtained from the Public Service list. I do not think there is much use in moving to reduce the vote because most of the money has already been spent for this year. The majority of the inspectors are situated in the metropolitan area, which is wrong. The State, for certain purposes, is divided into various districts, and I think it would be desirable to have an inspector for the schools in the Goldfields district, another in the Geraldton district, another in the South-West, and so on. If that were done we should get better results. The head teachers in the metropolitan schools could be sent out to do inspection work, while the present inspectors could reside in different districts. The inspectors should more often be brought into closer touch with the schools and the scholars. There would be better organisation. I hope next year when the Estimates are placed before us there will be some alteration in the system now in vogue.

Mr. PICKERING: I support the member for Leonora as to decentralisation in regard to inspectorship. It would be better to have inspectors for different districts, say one for the goldfields, another for South-West, another for Geraldton, and so on.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I fail to grasp what the idea of the member for Leonora is. He evidently wants to send out from the large schools the head teachers to inspect the outlying schools, which really means giving a holiday to the head masters of the State schools. While the head master was away the school over which he presided would suffer. As to placing inspectors in various districts, that system is in vogue at the present time, although the inspectors do not reside in the districts. The heavy cost of inspecting the schools was due to the community being so scattered.

Mr. HARRISON: The member for Leonora evidently objected to the cost of the inspection of schools because the inspectors did not go about their work in a systematic manner. They visited one school, then passed through a district to another school, travelling a long distance back to the centre from which place they started to visit other schools. The different districts should be served by inspectors at the least possible cost and the schools efficiently inspected.

Mr. JONES: I am in a quandary. If by moving a reduction of the vote I thought that the system of inspecting schools would be altered and that senior inspectors would be sent out into the country districts to do the inspection work, I would move in that direction, but probably the intimation now received by the department in consequence of the debate, would serve all the purposes necessary. I do not want to cut down the Education vote, but I want to see more efficient inspection in country districts. The larger schools in popular centres did not require so much inspection as the country schools did. I desire to see one of the senior inspectors spend more of his time in the country, rather than spend it sitting on the steps of the lodge doors of the Perth schools.

The PREMIER: The very course which hon. members desire should be pursued is actually being pursued by the department; and some of the comments made this evening are due to lack of knowledge. Of the nine inspectors, five reside outside the metropolitan area—one at Kalgoorlie, one at Northam, one at Geraldton, one at Greenbushes, and one at Katanning; so they are well distributed. Considering the large number of children in the metropolitan area, it is only natural that a considerable amount of inspection is needed in that area. Certain hon. members do not appear to realise fully the high importance of the work of the inspectors. It is well that throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia the teachers should know that occasionally inspectors will come to see how the work is performed and how the children are dealt with. In the Old Country the inspectors are nearly all University men.

Hon. T. WALKER: The member for Fremantle is under the impression that the head masters and teachers who are at the summit, in the educational sense, can do the work of supervision without any need for inspectors. But the inspector must visit the school, examine the children, inquire into the discip-

line, and report concerning the teacher himself.

The Minister for Works: He must also report regarding the school buildings.

Hon. T. WALKER: Every teacher in every school must receive a classification, must have his seniority marked, as to whether he is keeping up to standard or going back. And his assistants must be classified similarly. As higher vacancies occur, men apply for them; and naturally the department want to know who is fittest for advancement. How is that to be decided if the schoolmasters are left to judge themselves, or left to judge the teachers under them? The inspectors compare the teachers at the various schools with one another.

Mr. FOLEY: The brain of the member for Fremantle has not been developed sufficiently to understand plain Australian. The inspectors do not perform the work which is attributed to them by many hon. members. The Minister for Works said that in addition to their educational work these inspectors have to report on school buildings. If that is a fact, I shall have something to say regarding the Works Department inspectors who visit schools, when we reach the Works Estimates.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But they do not go round continually.

Mr. FOLEY: As regards the stationing of the school inspectors at various centres, if the work of inspection was split up into areas, all the work in one area would be attended to by one inspector, and there would be no need to refer everything connected with the education of our children to the head office in Perth. In those conditions only matters of policy would be referred to the head office. The Estimates are incorrect, because, whereas it is stated there are nine inspectors, the total number is more. There is first the chief inspector, then there are three inspectors at £528, two at £504, and four at £480. That makes ten altogether. Then there is an assistant inspector in nature study and an inspector in manual work, and an inspectress in needlework.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: With reference to repairs effected at the schools, if I had to send an inspector out every time I received a report, I should have a big bill to face for travelling expenses, and in addition I would require a bigger staff of inspectors. There are many schools in the State, and because of the condition of the finances they have not been kept in that condition of repair which should be the case. Now and again we get reports from the Education Department requiring repairs, and the reports of the inspectors of the Education Department on the subject are of such a practical nature that we can decide what to do without sending an officer down. Inspectors cannot be sent around to report on the necessity for having a new lock or a few screws in hinges. It would be wrong on my part if I did not bear testimony to the fact, that although I occasionally have skirmishes with the Education Department, I receive considerable assistance from them by

reason or the practical and common sense nature of the reports of their inspectors, which reports enable me to save the expense of sending an inspector of the Works Department into the country. With regard to the Education vote, I have no doubt that the Director would welcome suggestions in the direction of enabling him to keep down expenditure. He would then have a bigger fund to draw upon for the improvement of the schools. The sites of some of the schools in the country were very foolishly chosen in years gone by, and they are a source of considerable expense, but in regard to the sites selected in recent years the suitability of the position was carefully gone into.

Mr. HARRISON: I have learnt from the Director of Education that metric tables are given in our schools. This is news to me, and I trust the inspectors will see that the higher classes are instructed in that regard, because in the near future the knowledge will be required.

Item, Government schools, forage, lodging, district, cleaning, and retiring allowances, £251,000.

Mr. PICKERING: I have no wish to reduce the vote, but I draw the attention of the Minister to the necessity for endeavouring to raise the qualifications of the teachers in outback districts. More highly qualified officers should be sent out there. I protest against the excessive number of transferences in the outback schools. It is hopeless to think the children can profit by a course of education interrupted in consequence of frequent changes of teachers.

Mr. HARRISON: I think certain things might be done to save costs. In many of the country districts it is difficult to keep schools open in consequence of the small attendances owing to the movements of parents and families. It all serves to raise the cost per head. If children were grouped into one school the extra cost of transport involved would probably be much less than the salary of an extra teacher. The uncertificated teacher should be kept in the City, where he gets a better chance of improving his qualifications. Again, it might be of advantage to establish boarding-out schools where children could attend from Monday till Friday and return home for their week ends.

Item, Principal of Training College, £552.

Mr. FOLEY: The opinion is held that some of the students at the training college receive the major portion of their training at the University. If that is correct, how do the tutors at the training college fill in their time? It is said that the students at the training college are again counted in with the students at the University.

Item, Secondary Schools' Staff, £10,300.

Mr. HARRISON: It would be an advantage to raise the age at which outback children can win scholarships.

Item, Director of Technical Education, £354.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I want to impress upon the Minister the necessity for this officer having a little more backbone in order that he may stick up for his technical schools. While he is willing at all times to have peace other schools are keeping pupils away from the technical schools, to their detriment. The result is

that there is a duplication of system at increased cost. I am very glad to hear people who attend the technical schools for the purpose of taking up home hobbies are obliged to pay for their tuition. In Fremantle there are now 100 students who are prepared to pay for their tuition, because the class is so full that otherwise they would not be admitted. We must stop this overriding of technical schools by the continuation schools. There are many instances in which provision made for the teaching of a certain subject is a continuation school when that provision already exists at the technical schools. Should these pupils not be sent to the technical schools which are all ready to instruct in these particular subjects? This state of affairs has been brought about because the Director of Technical Education has not stuck to his rights.

The PREMIER: I will point this out to the Minister, and no doubt the matter will be into consideration.

Mr. HARRISON: Quite a number of people in this State have not been able to get themselves absorbed into the walks of life which they had been fitted as a result of training at these technical schools. They have been brought about because of certain restrictions which have been made under Arbitration Court awards, supported by the industrial unions. Only a certain number of apprentices can be taken into a certain shop and on many journeymen according to the number of adults in that shop.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is arranging that they can learn their trade properly.

Mr. HARRISON: In the past we have imported skilled labour when we have had State young skilled labour which was wanted to be absorbed. It is wrong in my opinion; we should not be able to absorb that labour for the development of the State. The members on the Opposition benches should rectify the position.

Mr. PICKERING: I regard this as one of the most important aspects of education. I certainly do not consider the terms "continuation classes" and "technical classes" synonymous. In the interests of our mechanical population, there should be ample opportunities for apprenticeship.

Item, Manual training, cookery, etc., £

Mr. HICKMOTT: I think parents are able to teach their children to cook, and manual training might also be cut out. This item should be reduced considerably.

Item, Furniture, books, sale stock, £10,300.

Mr. SMITH: Does this item include the purchase of school books, and are those books printed as I am given to understand in South Australia? We should print our school books, and thus give employment to our own people. Work is rather scarce at the Government Printing Office.

The PREMIER: The item does include books. The hon. member must not ask whether I will undertake to have the books printed in this State. If they can be printed here, I feel sure it will be done. Copy books, under-stand, are printed here. The other books required are obtained from the source

origin. They are largely copyright. I shall bring the matter under the notice of the Minister for Education.

Mr. MUNSIE: I hope the Premier will also bring under the notice of the Minister for Education the subject-matter of the books. A good deal more Australian history should be taught in our State schools.

Mr. Smith: And a good deal more Australian geography.

Mr. MUNSIE: A highly intelligent boy whom I know is extremely well versed in the history of other countries, but has only a very slight acquaintance with Australian history. Our children should be taught Australian history in order that, for one thing, they may know the betterment of conditions which has resulted from the efforts of those who went before them.

Mr. SMITH: I am surprised to learn from the Premier that it is compulsory to obtain school books at the source of origin.

Mr. Harrison: Do you know what copyright means?

Mr. SMITH: Surely we have good enough educationists here to write our children's school books. A school book used here, originating in America, described Perth as the capital of South Australia. Let our school children use Western Australian books written and printed in Western Australia. I hope the Premier will look into this matter.

Mr. JONES: This item, I believe, includes minor repairs. At present, when a door panel is broken or a window is smashed, the country teacher has to apply to the Works Department to have repairs effected, and that involves waste of time and money in the travelling to and fro of Works Department inspectors. The teacher should be authorised to have minor repairs carried out locally.

Item, Incidental £29,605.

Mr. DURACK: I have selected this item with the view of testing the feeling of the Committee as to whether or not a reduction could be made in the education expenditure. I would have moved a reduction in the total vote but for the fact that I understand such an amendment would not be accepted.

The CHAIRMAN: I will accept an amendment for a reduction in the total vote when all the items have been discussed.

Mr. DURACK: Then I will move the amendment later on.

Mr. MUNSIE: If the hon. member will not move an amendment to this item, I will do so. move—

“That the item be reduced by £140.”

Members have been asked to point out where economies can be carried out in this department. Here is where a beginning can be made without affecting the efficiency of the department. In the incidental vote, rent is included and my object is to strike at the action of the previous Government in taking a three years' lease of the palatial establishment in the George's-terrace owned by Mr. A. E. Morris at £560 a year, a wilful waste of money. If such a thing had happened a few years earlier there would have been a great howl, if not a word was said against the previous Government which entered into this arrangement. I realise that nine months of the year

have passed, and it is for that reason that I have moved to reduce the item by £140, which represents approximately three months' rent. I suppose the balance has been paid. I am taking this action as a protest against vacating the buildings in Parliament House grounds formerly used by the Education Department and which could still have been used, at any rate until better times returned.

The Minister for Works: They will be occupied again in a fortnight.

Hon. P. Collier: They have been empty for over 18 months.

Mr. DURACK: The amendment of the hon. member is putting upon us a big responsibility; it would be presumption on my part to say that a reduction could be made on this item.

Mr. Munsie: Do you not think that the £560 which is being paid as rent for the Terrace offices could have been saved?

Mr. DURACK: The hon. member should not call on us to answer that question.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I intend to support the hon. member's amendment as a protest against this unnecessary expenditure.

The PREMIER: The hon. member's amendment will not achieve the object he has in view because the Education Department is in occupation of the premises and a lease has been taken of them for three if not five years. Even if the department went out of the premises to-morrow, the Government would still be responsible for the rent and I think it would be difficult to find another tenant to pay £560 a year.

Mr. Munsie: That shows what a bad bargain was made.

The PREMIER: If the item is reduced some other branch of the department will have to suffer because the rent will have to be paid. The incidental vote is made up chiefly of postage £1,450; printing and stationery, £1,300; travelling expenses of teachers, £3,700; travelling expenses of inspectors, £2,900; driving children to school, £3,000; water, £750; fuel, £850; cleaning chimney, £35; light, £30; rents and quarters, £260.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some of that might be cut down. The teachers ought to live in the quarters provided.

The PREMIER: I do not know whether any houses are rented in town.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, there are. The houses at the school are not stylish enough for the teachers.

The PREMIER: Then, what is done with the quarters? Perhaps they are let again. If not, it certainly is false economy. However, it will be seen that we cannot reduce the rent of the building. If the amendment is carried, something else will have to suffer.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The same Minister for Education is there now as was there when the premises were leased. The lease is only for three years. I think it is the opinion of the Committee that the lease should not be renewed. The vacated premises are about to be occupied by the Water Supply Department.

The Premier: Only a part of the department.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The premises are too big for a mere part of the department.

Moreover, it will be unwise to distribute the department over two sets of premises. I hope the Committee will agree to the amendment as a protest against the unnecessary leasing of expensive premises. When the Scaddan Government were in power we had premises just below Parliament House suitable for the Education Department, and the department refused to occupy those premises. We saved £1,000 a year by bringing the department out of private premises and housing them in Government property.

Mr. MUNSIE: If I had any doubt about the wisdom of the amendment, the remarks of the Premier would have allayed it. He said that even if they had to vacate the premises, they would still have to pay the rent until the expiry of the lease, and that they would not be able to get anything like what they are paying for the premises. On the Address-in-reply I said it was a deal made to placate a friend. I still think so.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If this amendment is passed I hope the Government will take it as an intimation that they should not renew the lease of these premises. There is no more unsuitable part of the town for a Government building than at the eastern end of St. George's-terrace. The rooms, too, are very small. There is no doubt that the Government have made a bad bargain in this matter. If tenders had been invited for offices very much better accommodation could have been obtained at less cost.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. DAVIES: I would like the Minister to take into consideration some particulars which I desire to place before him regarding what is known as the central school at Midland Junction. Children at this school are taught up to the eighth standard, but at the other schools in the district they are not taken beyond the sixth standard. I would point out that on one day in every week the boys at the central school have to go to Perth to take a metal training course in connection with their industrial studies, and they are franked through on the railways each way. I cannot see why these lads should not be taught in this subject at the Midland Junction central school. With regard to the boys being franked through on the railways, I would also point out that children attending the Midland Junction technical school from outlying centres for a manual training course have to pay their own train fares, and this comes very hard upon parents who have two or three boys.

The PREMIER: I will point out the matter to the Educational authorities and ask them to go into it, and to furnish the hon. member with the information that he desires.

Mr. DURACK: I think the time has arrived when we should cry a halt in regard to this ridiculous expenditure, and in order to test the feeling of the Committee I will move an amendment—

“That the vote, £360,048, be reduced by £500.”

Point of Order.

Mr. Brown: I rise to a point of order. The whole of division 25 has been passed with the

exception of the deletion of an amount of £110. If all the other items have been passed no advantage can be gained by reducing the total vote.

Mr. Pilkington: The same thing was done the other night.

Mr. Brown: Then what was done was wrong. Hon. W. C. Angwin: Unfortunately it was right.

The Premier: It has always been the rule that once an item on the Estimates has been passed that item cannot be touched. We have now passed all these items. How, then, are we to reduce the total?

The Chairman: During the discussion on the London Agency Mr. Holman said it was his intention at the close of the debate on the item, to move that the total vote be reduced by a certain amount. At the time I thought it was an anomaly and I looked up “May” and the rule bearing on the question in our Standing Orders. I also consulted the Speaker who said that Mr. Holman was within his rights; that notwithstanding that all the items had been dealt with by the Committee it was quite competent for any member to move that the total vote be reduced by a certain amount. The Speaker said that had been the practice for years, consequently I held that it was my duty to recognise the opinion the Speaker had given and that caused me to tell the member for Kimberley that at the close of the items on the Education vote that I would accept an amendment from him to reduce the total vote. The Speaker also said that not one of the items had been passed by the Committee, they are still before the Committee and have not been passed in the way in which the Premier has indicated.

The Premier: With all due deference we cannot go back and deal with any of the items without recommitting the Estimates. No one can move to reduce the item Director of Education by £50, we should have to recommit the Estimates to do that. What is the use of a member moving to reduce the total when we have dealt with all the items? I must respect your ruling, Mr. Chairman, at the same time I have never heard of such a thing as the total vote being reduced. When an item has been reduced it is only a matter for the clerks to adjust the total afterwards. If an item is reduced by £100 or £200, the Committee does not reduce the total by that amount, it is done by the Clerks. I contend, according to the custom of the Committee, all the items have been passed and we cannot now alter any of them without recommitting the Estimates.

The Colonial Treasurer: For argument sake, if I call item 45 and there is a discussion, the assumption is that the Committee have passed all the items before that one. When the Committee have passed all the items they constitute the grand total.

The Chairman: My contention is that if a member wishes to reduce the total vote he cannot make a motion to that effect until the items have been passed or the items cannot be discussed.

The Colonial Treasurer: But you cannot go back. You defeat your own argument. If I am discussing item 69 no member can go back to item 44. That has been the custom as long as I can remember.

The Chairman: The member for Kimberley does not desire to go back on items; he thinks the total is too high.

The Colonial Treasurer: The member for Kimberley would have been within his rights in moving to reduce any of the items, but to pass the items and then say we can go back on the total is contrary to the custom of the Committee. What item would the amount be taken off if an amendment to reduce the total is carried? We cannot go back on items, that is a recognised principle. When all the items have been passed the total amount of the vote is passed. The member for Kimberley could have moved to reduce any of the items but not now. If the amendment of the member for Kimberley is accepted we start the general discussion again.

Hon. P. Collier: I submit that your ruling, Mr. Chairman, is perfectly sound. As a matter of fact we have not passed any item, we have merely been discussing the items, no vote has been taken except to reduce an item. No vote has been taken on any of the items, they are set out for the information of members. A member calls item No. 10 or item No. 20, whichever it may be to discuss it, but no vote is taken.

Mr. Smith: We took a vote on item 16.

Hon. P. Collier: To reduce it, that does not say we have passed any item. The Chairman puts the total vote now and the Committee have the right to carry that vote or reject it. We have the power to vote "No," to strike it out entirely. And if we have the right to reject the whole vote, we have the power to reduce it. The Chairman puts the total, £360,000 and we may decide to strike it out, therefore, we can reduce it. That has been the practice as long as I have been here.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is never done.

Hon. P. Collier: I think it has been done. I recollect an amendment moved to reduce the total vote. The Chairman puts the question that the vote stand as printed, then it is competent to move to reduce it. True, we cannot go back for the purpose of discussion, because if that was permissible the debate would be interminable. We do not go back and start item No. 1 again, but we can reduce a total vote.

12 o'clock, midnight.

Hon. T. Walker: All questions put from the Chair are debatable. If they are debatable, that means they are liable to amendment, and consequently subject to the vote of the Committee, one way or the other. If we have finished the matters upon which we can vote or move amendments when we have passed the last item, then there is no necessity to put the question from the Chair. But, if it is put from the Chair, it is sub-

mitted to the discretion of the Committee. It ought not to be necessary to have a vote at all upon the total, which is merely a total; but, once the question is submitted from the Chair, once the motion is put, that very instant it becomes the property of the Committee.

The Colonial Treasurer: Assuming that we had reduced each of these items during the discussion, what then?

Hon. T. Walker: I do not care how the question is stated from the Chair: if it is stated from the Chair, it is a question for the Committee. The evil lies in having to put it from the Chair. But, again, there may be this slight wisdom in it: we may have been going through the items carelessly, or perhaps sleepily; and, when we get to the vote, we wake up and discover our error; and then the opportunity is given us to correct our error.

Mr. Brown: Then start back from the first item?

Hon. T. Walker: No; reduce the entire vote, and leave it to the Government to apportion the reduction among the items.

Mr. Pilkington: The reduction can be spread over any of the items.

Hon. T. Walker: Exactly. But now we are asked the plain question, will we agree to a certain lump sum being given to the Government? Suppose we negative the vote and do not give the Government a penny. What will the Government do then?

Member: Go to the country.

Hon. T. Walker: Possibly; the Government could do many things.

The Premier: I have no desire to question the Chairman's ruling.

Hon. T. Walker: The Chairman's ruling is sound, and the only thing for us to do is all to vote against the proposed amendment.

The Chairman: If any member disputes my ruling, and submits his dissent in writing, I shall be bound to submit it to the Speaker.

Mr. Brown: Under the Chairman's ruling, it will be necessary for us in future to take a division on every item.

Hon. T. Walker: No. But I rise to a point of order. A ruling has been given, and there can be no further discussion unless a member moves to dissent from the ruling.

Committee Resumed.

Mr. DURACK: I move—

"That the total of the vote be reduced by £500."

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

Ayes	11
Noes	27

Majority against	..	16
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AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Broun	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Durack	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Money	Mr. Brown
Mr. Nairn	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Lacey
Mr. Collier	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Davies	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Foley	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. George	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. Green	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Roche
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Smith
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Jones	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Lambert	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Vote (as reduced to £359,908) put and passed.

[Mr. Foley took the Chair.]

Department of Public Works, Hon. W. J. George, Minister.

Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £120,019:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [12.15 a.m.]: Hon. members will find that whereas last year the expenditure was £107,161, the estimated expenditure this year is £120,019. This increase is accounted for by a number of unforeseen extras, amongst which is one which came upon us through what is commonly called an act of God. I refer to the heavy floods for which £10,000 had to be found to assist the road boards and others in making good the damage. In addition, an examination of the Fremantle wharves disclosed the fact that the ravages of the teredo have been serious and a sum of £15,000 had to be provided there for repairs. In previous years a much larger sum had to be provided but it was arranged to spread the expenditure over a number of years. There is a sum of £1,250 provided for the maintenance of the Perth-Fremantle road. That road was put into complete order by the Scaddau Government and the maintenance of it should have been a charge against the various road boards and municipalities in the districts through which it passes. Those bodies, however, did not do anything, and the Government had to take the step of maintaining the road and the cost was deducted from the subsidies given to the different road boards and municipalities. It is perfectly true there is a reduction in the subsidies to road boards and municipalities and no road board now will receive more than £300 per year, while the municipalities will receive no subsidy at all, except for the first four months of the year. The amount provided for road boards and municipalities for the year 1916-17 amounted to £36,000 and this year is £28,000. In addition to the other troubles we have had great storms on the coast, with the result that something like £8,000 or £9,000 had to be provided for repairs to jetties at different ports on the North-West coast, and only within the last few weeks a cyclone at Onslow necessitated the expenditure of £1,800 in repairs.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That takes place every year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amount set down for buildings is £31,959, but that is practically all maintenance work. There will be a recurring demand every year in this connection as we have so many buildings throughout the State, and the maintenance has not been kept up to the mark as it should have been. That means, of course, that every year there is additional expense. It is only right that I should say in connection with the staff charges that there has been a considerable reduction, spreading over a number of years. In 1912-13 the actual salaries paid amounted to £57,697 and the incidental expenses were £17,162. This year the estimated amount of salaries is £38,074 and the expenses about £7,400. It is true that the expenditure has come down considerably, as in 1912-13 the total was £1,433,693, whereas in the year 1917-18 the estimate is £654,523. In connection with the salaries paid by the Department, there is a considerable amount of work done for the Commonwealth for which we get a recoup, and in the year 1916-17 this totalled £3,772. To show hon. members that the question of the reduction of staff has not been lost sight of, I may state that from July of last year to February of the present year the reductions have numbered 36 representing in salaries £7,657. Five officers have been put on whose salaries amount to £706. The net reduction therefore has been 31 officers and the net saving £6,945. It is only right that I should tell the Committee some of the difficulties, which will serve to show that although this reduction in salaries has been made, it does not necessarily mean that the Estimates will be reduced to the full extent. For example, I have here a list of nine officers whose salaries for the full year would represent £2,846. The total amount actually payable will be £4,945 14s. I would like also to say that the work of the Public Works Department comprises many things. We have railway construction, public buildings, lands resumption works for all departments; we rent all the offices that may be required, we resume all lands and properties, we are responsible for all premises resumed and we control 414 tenants, receiving £8,631 in rents. We also maintain all buildings and generally do all in our power in the interests of the State.

General debate concluded: items discussed as follow:—

Item—Engineer-in-Chief, £1,300.

Mr. MUNSIE: I draw attention to the fact that in the next group of the Estimates there are 23 engineers. I would like some explanation. Unquestionably public works have not been going on as in the past. Have any engineers been retired?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have here a list of officers who have been retired, including eight engineers. The staff has been and still is being revised to bring it into proportion with the amount of work going on. The work of amalgamating the Water Supply Department and the Public Works Department is being carried on on this principle: there is a large number of engineers there. It is the endeavour of the department to act

as fairly as possible, but we intend from out of the combined staffs to keep only those who are best fitted to carry out the work.

Hon. P. Collier: Have those engineers been retired since the Estimates were prepared?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, since Christmas. Some have been retired during the last fortnight. I am sorry that it should have been necessary, because some of those dispensed with are very fine men. However, we have not the work for them, and so we had to retire them.

Item—Principal Architect, £600.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I take it there should be a reduction in the architectural branch as well as in the engineering branch.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Chief Architect, Mr. Beasley, has been retired, and the second in charge of the drawing office also has been retired. We do a lot of work for the Commonwealth, including preparation of plans, and I am sure that at present every officer on the list is required. The Under Secretary is very keen on doing the right thing, and wherever there is an officer without work we intimate to him that he must go.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is not real retrenchment, because these officers were previously paid out of loan. Their going makes no difference to the revenue.

Item—Supervisors, £2,220.

Mr. MUNSIE: I recognise the necessity for district inspectors, but on what grounds can the Minister justify the employment of 10 supervisors?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There were 10 last year, but this year there are nine. One went in February. Those still on the staff are fully employed.

Item—Maintenance and construction main road Caves, £700.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister told us what he was doing about the Fremantle road. Having regard to the difference in traffic, the amount spent on the Caves road is out of proportion with that spent on the Fremantle road. It has always been the idea in Parliament to cut this down, but this year an increase has been provided for. The same amount of money that was provided last year should be quite sufficient to keep this road in repair, and the road board should be satisfied with what they are getting. I hope the Minister will look into the matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have been very closely into this question and had a special inspection made. It was found that there was a place along the road at which a land slide had occurred, and that this constituted a danger to those who used the road. The road board did not apparently take much notice of it. I questioned the expenditure on the road, and wanted to see how the Government were benefiting from it. I was assured that the traffic along the road was large and was created principally by visitors. The provision of proper facilities for access to the caves meant an increase in the number of people who would visit them, and this meant additional revenue to the railway department. I am assured that the amount received by the railway department is very largely in excess of what is being spent on the road. It seemed to me, therefore,

that if we put this road into repair and kept it in repair the State would get a considerable amount of revenue. The extra amount on the Estimates was put there on account of the land slide.

Item—Repairs to Roads and Bridges damaged by floods, £10,000.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is adopting a practice which Parliament in the past has thought to be objectionable. The item, too, is misleading when read in conjunction with the footnote, under which the Minister may grant this money to a local authority under such conditions as he may determine. According to the item this money can only be used for roads and bridges damaged by flood.

The Minister for Works: That is all it has been used for, I believe.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Members in the past have objected to any item which can be used at the discretion of the Minister in this way. This precedent is an undesirable one. The Estimates should show what road boards are to get the money. It has been the practice that no grant should be made to any local authority unless it was set down in the Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The floods occurred at the time the Estimates were being made up, and owing to the seriousness of the reports that were made we were obliged to provide this item. Not a penny of the money has been given without full consideration, and in many instances the engineers have been sent out to examine into the justice of the claims. In one case a claim was sent in for £800 in connection with damage done to five roads, but upon inquiry it was learned that not one penny had been spent upon these roads. I have endeavoured to divide the money fairly amongst the different people, and have not given one penny except in the case of damage by flood. In cases where it has been impossible to send an engineer we have made it clear that if it is found when he does go round that the money has not been properly expended the amount will be deducted from next year's subsidy.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I can corroborate what the Minister has said so far as the York electorate is concerned. One of the boards referred to by him made a somewhat unreasonable demand, but had justice meted out to it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: One would not expect a member to say anything different.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: They got nothing like the amount they asked for. I know that the most careful investigation was made by the departmental officers into the justice of the claims.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I accept the Minister's assurance.

Items, Additions and repairs to wharves, jetties, stockyards, tramways rolling stock, lighthouses, wharf beacons, etc., and dredging at Albany, £27,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have no desire to object to this item, except insofar as it represents an innovation in the preparation of the Estimates. I remember that during a Treasurership of the Hon. Frank Wilson

the Estimates were sent back to be re-printed and re-submitted for this very reason. The amount is shown in a lump sum, instead of the necessary information being given to enable members to learn for what purposes the money is asked. It is true that these are re-votes representing moneys previously granted, but not extended at the 30th June last. However, instead of giving that information, the Government show these amounts as decreases. An endeavour is being made in this item to establish a very dangerous precedent, to which this Chamber has previously expressed its strong objection. I ask the Minister, before we pass this item, to give us his assurance that this will not occur again.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I ask the Committee to accept my assurance that there was no such object or purpose as throwing dust in the eyes of any hon. member. I would have liked more money than represented by this item, but the Treasurer showed himself irascible. Many of our jetties were built 20 to 30 years ago, and necessarily call for considerable expenditure in maintenance. For example, damage from the teredo has necessitated large renewals of piles. The pressure of wind and water during recent storms simply broke off numbers of teredo-eaten piles as if they were pipe-stems. At Onslow we estimated £1,800 for repairs to the jetty, but the progress of the work has disclosed that a much larger expenditure will be involved. On the Victoria Quay £15,000 will be spent this year. Renewals in Broome jetty have absorbed fully £3,000. The Point Sampson jetty has needed £3,500, and general repairs to jetties and tramways £3,500 also. Port Hedland fore-shore called for the expenditure of £1,500, and the Balla Balla jetty for £1,200. These are things we could not have foretold. Although this item asks for £27,000, I shall be well satisfied if we get out of it at all with £37,000. The work has to be done. If I am in my present position next year, I shall take care that full particulars are given in the 1918-19 Estimates.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: These are re-votes, unexpended votes from the last financial year. These are not new works.

The Minister for Works: But the work has to be done.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: True; but we ought to know how the money is to be spent. Full details ought to be furnished. I repeat, the Chamber was highly indignant at the previous attempt to establish this dangerous precedent, and refused to proceed with the Estimates, which therefore had to be re-printed and re-submitted. This should be shown as excess expenditure. Members should have an opportunity of seeing what the money is expended on.

Item, Perth Government House and Albany Government cottage, etc., £2,160.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The amount voted for this item last year was £350 and £760 was spent. On account of the times we are going through it should have been unnecessary to expend a considerable sum of money

in furnishing the Government cottage at Albany. The house was handed over for the use of the military authorities some time ago, and I think very bad taste was shown in taking the place back again. As a convalescent home for soldiers there was no better place in the town, and now these unfortunate men have been deprived from using it further. I know that the money has already been spent, but as a protest against the action of the Government in refitting the house when things financially are so bad, I am going to move an amendment. I move—
“That the item be reduced by £50.”

Mr. Smith: Make it £2,000.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I want to show that the action of whoever was responsible for the expenditure of such a huge sum of money in re-furnishing this house at Albany, meets with the disapproval of this Chamber.

Mr. SMITH: I intend to support the hon. member and I am only sorry that he has not gone further and moved to strike out the item altogether. It is absurd that this hard-up State should agree to such extravagant expenditure on a summer residence for the Governor. Already the Governor is costing this country something like £10,000 annually, a figure which is quite absurd when it is compared with the money spent by other States for the upkeep of the vice-regal establishments.

Mr. Johnston: It is an expensive luxury.

Mr. SMITH: At any rate it is much more than we can afford and we should now step in and endeavour to cut down the expenditure. If a house was required for the Governor at Albany, one could have been rented at a cost of about £60, and we would have then saved £2,100.

The Minister for Works: Oh, no.

Mr. SMITH: Then it certainly would not have cost more than £160, and the saving then would have been £2,000. A Government which wants to suspend its sinking fund and also wants to repudiate its just debts, is spending money lavishly in keeping up an ornamental Government house. The position is absurd. This item represents sheer extravagance. I will support the amendment.

[1 o'clock a.m.]

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope the hon. member will not press the amendment. As the Premier explained the other evening, the Government have certain obligations to the Imperial Government.

Hon. P. Collier: This is not one of them.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was at Rottneast a residence belonging to the Imperial Government. It was arranged by a previous Government to purchase a house at Albany and exchange it for the building at Rottneast. This house at Albany was handed over to the military as a hospital. But the Governor had his rights in connection with it, and if he asked for the house we could not withhold it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He turned out the soldiers in order to get possession of the house.

Mr. Johnston: And went to Albany and advised the people there to practice economy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was not a question of hiring a house at Albany for the Governor, because this particular house had been purchased outright. The bill for the furniture was closely scrutinised. His Excellency himself agreed to a number of small economies in furnishing and renovating the house. If His Excellency demanded the house from the soldiers we had to let him have it, because of our obligation to the Imperial Government.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am inclined to agree with the member for North Perth and strike out the whole of the item, notwithstanding that the money has been already spent. It would at least serve to show the people what we think of the business. To incur this increased expenditure on the Albany residence right in the midst of war is indefensible. I was a member of the Government that in a weak moment purchased this residence at Albany. Since then the late Governor renounced his right to it, and it was fixed up as a military hospital. One is astonished to learn that some who preach patriotism and economy indecently turn round and decline to practice it. His Excellency preached economy to the people of Albany just after £1,350 had been expended on fixing up his summer residence at Albany. I do not know who was responsible for this, unless the military authorities were. To incur this expenditure merely to give the Governor a few weeks at Albany during the summer, and at a time when the strictest economy should be observed in all directions, is certainly extraordinary. It is in fact a criminal expenditure. Those who are responsible for this cannot now utter a word about economy or patriotism, at all events while the war lasts.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: During the residence of the late Governor in Albany, at the time when Lady Barron left Western Australia, His Excellency found that he was unable to occupy the building himself and handed it over to the authorities for use as a hospital. Much as the people of Albany protested against the removal of the soldiers from this hospital, and though they did all they could to make their stay a happy one, they received definite information that the military authorities were determined on the score of economy to transfer the boys to hospitals in the metropolitan area. It will thus be seen that the Governor did not himself demand that this building should be returned to him for his own use. If hon. members were to see the state of the furnishings of this dwelling they would not complain of this item. It is not right to look upon this expenditure as coming out of one year's Estimates only. The residence was bought for the Governor of the State.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why can he not put up at the Freemasons' hotel as other people, who are just as good as he is, do?

Mr. H. ROBINSON: The stairs are absolutely bare of carpet and the whole place requires renovating. The only objection I can see in the matter is that the Government have not collected from the Federal authorities the cost of this renovation. When the building was handed over as a hospital the people of

Albany partly furnished it, and renovated it free of cost, and the £400 which was spent on renovating should be collected from the Federal authorities.

The Minister for Works: We cannot do that. The Federal authorities did a lot of work to the place, and this was set off against the other expenditure.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: The furnishing that was done by the Federal authorities was disgraceful. I understand that it is part of the conditions that His Excellency should be provided with a summer residence.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a condition which should not be insisted upon in these times.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: I understand it is the intention of the Governor to reside in Albany for six months in every year.

Mr. JONES: His Excellency must have suffered many hardships during the time that he occupied this dwelling, for we have heard that he had no carpet on the stairs.

Hon. P. Collier: Especially in war time.

Mr. JONES: I know of hundreds of houses, the stairs of which have no carpets on them. Now we find that an economy Government is prepared to spend the sum of £1,300 in furnishing and renovating this house. Anyhow, the entire expenditure was utterly unnecessary. In reply to a question asked in this Chamber, I was informed that the cottage had been lent by the State Government to the Federal Government at the desire of the then Governor, Sir Harry Barron, and that upon his retirement the arrangement had automatically ceased. Evidently, upon that gentleman's retirement it became unnecessary to have a convalescent home for returned soldiers at Albany; and, at the same point of time, it became necessary to furnish and renovate the cottage for the use of the present Governor. That, I suppose, is one of the results of our having imported Governors. However, that system will come to an end presently. I am satisfied even hon. members opposite, in their National desire to win the war and practise economy, will support the motion for reduction of this scandalous item.

Mr. JOHNSTON: A perusal of these Estimates must convince the Committee that the upkeep of the Governor's cottage at Albany, and of Government House, and of the office of State Governor, represents altogether too expensive a luxury for our small population of 300,000 odd with a deficit of two millions. Even in prosperous times I was one of those who regretted that the office of Governor was filled. I do not wish to see a Governor's residence anywhere in Western Australia. The sooner we get rid of this expensive office and of its expensive appendages, the better. I may mention that on one day the Governor's railway car went down to Albany, taking the staff and that on the following day His Excellency went down to Albany by motor car. Immediately upon arrival there His Excellency delivered that inspiring address on economy.

The Premier: It was the Governor's own motor car, and it took him to Albany at his own expense.

Mr. JOHNSTON: No doubt; but it will be extremely difficult to induce the people to practise economy, as desired by the Premier and

the Governor, unless those who preach the gospel of economy fortify precept with example. I support the reduction of this item.

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

Ayes	18
Noes	12
Majority for	6

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Brown	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Roocke
Mr. Davies	Mr. Smith
Mr. Green	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Jones	Mr. O'Loghlea

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Pickering
Mr. George	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Hardwick

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Item, Claremont Hospital for Insane, Renovations, £2,400.

MR. SMITH: That seems to be a large amount. The Minister might enlighten the Committee.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: This money is for very necessary painting and repairs. There has been practically no painting done at the institution for eight or nine years, and the consequence is that the exposed parts of the woodwork are absolutely perishing. A report was made and I personally inspected the place and saw immediately that unless something was done this year the cost of effecting repairs next year would be considerably more. Inside some of the places the condition is such that they are unfit for habitation. There has been no calcimining done for many years and the walls are reeking with accumulated dirt. The spouting too is out of repair and the water instead of being conducted away from its proper course is going down the walls and spoiling the place. I tried to let the work of painting by contract, but I could not see how it could be done. Unless the painting is done thoroughly now it may as well be left undone. It would be wicked waste not to attend to these repairs at the present time. I can assure hon. members if I had £50,000 I could easily spend it on repairs to public buildings throughout the State. Whoever will have to prepare these Estimates next year will be compelled to spend a great deal more on renovations, and if the money is not spent next year, 10 or 15 per cent. will have to be added to the total in the following year. It is madness to allow buildings to get into such a state of disrepair. Take Parliament House, in places the water has been coming through the walls. What is the reason? Neglect. Unless Parliament is prepared to

find money for maintenance, the buildings will go to the devil. Regarding the Claremont Asylum, if the hon. member will place his ear at my disposal, I will convince him of the urgent necessity for effecting repairs, and if I cannot convince him, I will see that he remains in Claremont permanently.

Vote (as reduced to £119,969) put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Public Works Department.

Department of Attorney General, Hon. R. T. Robinson, Minister.

Vote—Attorney General, £77,864:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [1.38 a.m.]: The summary given on the front page of the Estimates will show hon. members that there is an increase in this department of £10,266 over and above the expenditure of last year, an increase which is caused entirely by both the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly elections which necessitated a general vote of £9,000. The remainder, £1,200, can be accounted for by two extraneous items, the first being the retiring leave of the Registrar of Titles, £756, and the second an increase of £531 caused by granting special leave to officers with the military forces. Under Awards and Law Courts there is a standing vote of £1,000, but of that only £493 was spent last year, and on this vote therefore there is shown a paper increase of £507. As regards the general position of the department, economies are not shown in their true value in comparing this year's Estimates with last year's vote because the expenditure of the department has been gradually reduced ever since the beginning of the war. For instance, in 1913-14 the Crown Law Department's salaries amounted to £7,541; to-day they are estimated at £6,051. In 1913-14 the salaries of the Electoral Department were £2,223; to-day they are estimated at £2,154. The Titles Office has been reduced from £11,282 to £9,945, and Magistracy from £16,237 to £15,164.

Hon. T. Walker: How was that effected?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The reductions amount to £3,965 in that department alone, but on the other hand the Supreme Court figures have increased from £7,183 to £8,142. The total decrease is £6,810. We have a considerable increase in the probate and curator's staff, mainly due to the requirements of the service, which were so ably pointed out by the select committee on Supreme Court trust funds. Effect has been given to the recommendations in that report. The cost of that office has also much increased on account of the soldiers' estates. It must also be pointed out that while the probate work has largely increased, litigation in this State has decreased considerably. Miscellaneous and contingency votes have increased from £32,000 to £36,000. But this is not a fair comparison as regards extra expense for the general elections were thrown in on us this year. So, to make proper comparisons, we should withdraw

item for general elections. Generally speaking, the revenue of this department is dropping. Before the war it amounted to £85,000, whereas to-day it is £79,000. As I have pointed out, economies have been carefully studied right through the department. Personally I do not think it is possible to get the salaries reduced any more without impairing the efficiency of the department. In the administration this year extreme care has been taken to effect economies in all votes controlled by the department, such as incidental votes and the like, and although we have to a great extent gone through the year, yet taking the first six months the total expenditure is £34,280 whilst it will be observed the total for the year is £77,864; so if the £34,000 be doubled it will be seen that we are £3,000 or £9,000 within the margin. I hope that will be maintained. The difficulty just now is that revenue is not being maintained, and it is impossible to forecast what money we are to get in for probates. There is a heavy item, "subsidised clerks." Those officers perform work in other departments where their services are required. A great deal of work is performed by the officers of my department for the Treasury. Then those officers work as land agents, as shipping masters and in many other connections. The one salary is alone paid, and no recoup is made to us in respect of any of those items. Those clerks also perform work for the Commonwealth Government in connection with old-age pensions, invalid pensions, soldiers' pensions and the like. The fees from the Commonwealth Government for this work are paid into the Treasury by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Lutey: Is your department not credited?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. The money goes into the Treasury. So the salaries in the Attorney General's office really appear a little higher than the work of the department itself warrants.

General debate concluded: items discussed as follows—

Item—Registrar of Titles and Deeds, £90.

Mr. JOHNSTON: What is the policy of the Government in regard to filling the position of Registrar? I understand that Mr. Burt has retired, but I do not see any provision made in the Estimates for the filling of the position. I would also like to know whether the Minister considers the provision of fire-proof safes in the Titles Office is adequate. I understand that the position causes grave anxiety to the officers concerned in the safety of the documents deposited there.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The position of Registrar need not be filled for the moment, because Mr. Burt is really still Registrar. He is now enjoying 12 months' leave, which is usual in the case of an officer of his length of service. Mr. Glyde is discharging the duties in the meantime and is quite capable of filling the office until a permanent appointment is made. The position is due to be filled when the 12 months shall have expired. In regard to the fire, and the general condition of the office, the situation has always

given me a certain amount of worry, because I am aware that the valuable documents contained in the department are not as well housed and cared for as they should be. Nor is the building as safe from fire as one would like. We can only hope that no disaster occurs before that time when we shall house all the departments under one roof. In the event of all the Government offices being housed under one roof it will be my endeavour to see that the Titles Office is constituted very largely as one big safe.

Item, Magistrates, £7,545.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Will the Attorney General inform the Committee what the policy of the Government is in regard to these magistrates? The magistrate at Geraldton is said to be well over the age of 60, and some people in Geraldton think he should be retired. The same thing might be said of other magistrates in the State.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Probably two or three of our magistrates have reached the retiring age, but at least two of those I have in mind are strong and virile men and quite capable of performing their duties. In the case of the man who has spent a great many years in the service of the State we have to remember that the pension rates upon retirement would be very heavy. The whole matter is, however, receiving close attention, and if the opportunity occurs of effecting certain changes in this way I shall not hesitate to avail myself of it.

Item, Registrar, Master, etc., £804.

Mr. TEESDALE: This seems to be a princely salary to pay to this officer. I understand that he is getting on in years, and that it might be possible to retire him. Can the Attorney General afford us any information in regard to this position?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The duties of this officer are many, and he occupies many positions of trust. He has the sole management of the estates of persons of unsound mind, and of all prisoners' estates, and in addition to other duties supervises the routine work of the Supreme Court. Mr. Moseley is one of the most respected officers in the service, and is very highly qualified. There is no question about his ability to conduct the office of which he is in charge, and he is physically capable of doing it. It is very questionable as to whether it is advisable to dispense with the services of any officer merely because he has reached the age of 60. The deputy registrar, Mr. Sherard, is also a capable officer and is kept well employed.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Mr. Moseley's functions are of a semi-judicial character. He is a man of great experience and ability, and it is generally recognised that it would be difficult to get another officer as competent as he is.

Item, Official Receiver in Bankruptcy.

Mr. PICKERING: I notice that there is no provision made for this officer. Will the Attorney General kindly explain the matter?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Owing to this officer having joined the A.I.F. the country has been saved the expense of his

salary. The office is being carried on by the second in command.

Item, Incidental, £6,500.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: Will the Attorney General give the Committee some information concerning what is undoubtedly a large sum of money under this heading?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have here an analytical statement showing how every penny of this amount is being spent. It includes those items, such as postage, rent, travelling expenses, and so on, which are common to most other departments.

2 o'clock a.m.

Item, Extra assistance in the preparation of electoral rolls, etc., £5,000.

Mr. SMITH: Perhaps there is not much to cavil at in this item, but I wish to refer to the fees paid to returning officers at elections. The practice has been to employ well-paid civil servants for this work. A case has just come under my notice where the accountant in the Colonial Secretary's Department and general manager of the State Hotels and Chairman of the Fire Brigades Board has been further appointed returning officer for the forthcoming Legislative Council elections, for performing which duty he will receive a fee of three guineas.

Mr. Willecock: Seven guineas, I believe.

Mr. SMITH: This is most unfair. Many civil servants receiving small salaries could do the work of a returning officer, and they should be allowed to do it; or, better still, the appointment could be given to a returned soldier. I hope that in connection with future elections the Attorney General will take care that highly paid officials are exempt from these good things.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: As the hon. member may have observed from the Press, I have anticipated his suggestion. I gave the Electoral Registrar a general order that in the conduct of elections returned soldiers were to be employed wherever possible, though he was not to take that as an order that responsible positions were to be filled by untrained men, because in elections mistakes must not be made. There are, undoubtedly, in connection with elections, many positions which can be filled by returned soldiers; and this has in fact been done. Until the member for North Perth mentioned it, I was unaware that Mr. Campbell had been appointed returning officer. An officer less fully occupied than Mr. Campbell will in future be appointed to that position.

Item, Awards and law costs, £1,000.

Mr. TEESDALE: What is the meaning of this item?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The item is a problematical one. No one can foretell what is going to be paid under it. To illustrate: the Government have at present an action at law pending, which was lost in the lower court but which we hope to win in the higher court. It may, however, be lost in the higher court, in which event the Government would have to pay costs. There is also the matter of Mr. Nevanas, whom hon. members know. It is possible that the Government may have nothing at all to pay under the item.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Attorney General's Department.

Departments of Industries, and Woods and Forests (Hon. R. T. Robinson, Minister).

Vote—Agricultural Bank, £15,322; Industries Assistance Board, £20,992:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL, and MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES, and WOODS AND FORESTS (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [2.6 a.m.]: I have a few notes which may answer, in advance, some questions that are likely to be raised. The Minister for Industries does not often get an opportunity to tell hon. members of what is going on in his department; but it will be remembered that some three or four weeks ago I laid on the Table a statement showing the operations of the department. First, let me point out to hon. members that there has been a distinct movement towards economy in administration by the amalgamation of the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board. Thus, there were formerly two accounts offices, two correspondence offices, and two inquiry rooms—one for each institution. These have all been amalgamated; and, as far as possible, duplication of work, and unnecessary work, have been cut out. These economies were chiefly inaugurated by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), whom I had the privilege of following in the office of Minister for Industries. In view of this amalgamation, it necessarily follows that the Estimates of the two institutions have also had to be amalgamated—a circumstance which may perhaps occasion hon. members some difficulty in following decreases and increases of expenditure as compared with the figures of the period when the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board were separate institutions. However, I shall be glad to furnish any explanations required by hon. members. I am sure the Committee will agree that the activities of the two departments must not be diminished as regards the important work of fostering and building up the agricultural industry. Their functions must still be carried on, although I wish to impress on hon. members that I am working for a time when the Industries Assistance Board will have discharged all its duties to this country and when all our farmers will have been restored to that position of freedom and independence which the farmer should hold. Members will, no doubt, appreciate the fact that a decrease of expenditure amounting to £1,983 is provided for in this department for the current year. It is hoped that by the end of the year a much greater decrease will have been effected. There are a few figures which I shall give the Committee, mainly for the purpose of comparison. In the last financial year the Agricultural Bank spent £16,069 on administration. The estimated requirements for the present year amount to £15,322, being a saving of £747. This cost is approximately half per cent. on the average amount of advances. I have no hesitation in saying that is a great tribute to the officers of the bank for the way in which they are able to keep down their expenses. Under the

gamation of the two departments the function of the bank is to make loans on long terms for development purposes, and the function of the board on the other hand is to provide harvest to harvest credit. Although the activities of the bank so far as the granting of loans is concerned will show a further curtailment this year—the amount of new capital which the Treasurer was able to provide being £75,000 as against £93,000 expended last term—it has to be borne in mind that the business of the bank, unlike that of a spending department, is cumulative, and its difficulties only really commence after a loan has been made to the individual farmer. Interest and redemption instalments have to be collected and the maintenance of an increasing number of securities liable to wastage and depreciation call for an increased number of inspectors. It is well that I should make some reference to the part which this bank has played in the development of the agricultural industry of Western Australia. I have totalled up the development work which the bank moneys have effected. By its direct aid 1,770,000 acres of virgin land have been cleared for cultivation; 1,802,000 chains of fencing have been erected, and settlers have been supplied with stock to the value of £387,000. The actual amount advanced to borrowers as on the 30th June was £3,626,658, of which £873,099 has been repaid and written off, leaving a balance outstanding of £2,753,559 distributed amongst 8,914 settlers. I mention those figures to show the extensive operations of the Agricultural Bank. It is unnecessary for me to remind hon. members of the difficulties through which the industry is passing. Erratic seasons, the withdrawal of a large number of men for active service, and ravages due to rabbits have made the position one of extreme difficulty.

Mr. Smith: The bank should protect its securities.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The bank has no duty cast upon it to do anything in connection with the rabbits. The money advanced by the bank is an advance to the settlers of the community. The bank has the same obligation as any of the chartered banks.

Mr. Johnston: If they take possession they must get rid of the rabbits.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The member for North Perth makes a general accusation against the bank, that it should take care of all the rabbits. There are 9,000 settlers and is it to be expected that the Agricultural Bank can go out and take the rabbits off the holdings of all those settlers? It is an absolutely ridiculous proposition.

Mr. Lutey: They should fence in their own dams.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The bank has no dams of its own. It is just a banking institution that finds money for the farmers asking this country. During the 910 securities have reverted to the bank. Of these 683 carrying advances amounting to £204,245 are still in the hands of the bank. Of course where the bank is

in possession it must take the necessary precautions against rabbits and other depredations. It is very difficult to prevent wire from being taken away, or to see that the panes of glass are not taken out of the windows, or the iron from the roofs. I do not accuse anyone in particular of committing these depredations, but I should imagine that they were done at night time. Losses amounting to £4,860 on realised securities have been written off, but in the unprecedented conditions through which we are passing, it is impossible to estimate what losses the bank will eventually have to face. It is hoped however that with the revival of settlement when conditions become normal after the war, many of these abandoned properties will be taken off the bank's hands. The Industries Assistance Board last year spent £22,228 on administration and the estimated requirements for the present year total £20,992, showing a saving of £1,236. Members will desire to know some of the details of the work carried on by this board. The number of settlers on the board is 2,378. Hon. members will remember the table which I submitted a little time back. Shortly, 247 of the total number of settlers are represented by accounts marked "bad" and although in most cases the farms have been abandoned, I am pleased to state that in the sales made by the Agricultural Bank, no fewer than 36 of these properties are included, and advances totalling £11,904 have been taken over by the purchasers. It will thus be seen that even those debts branded as bad should not be written off at the present juncture in view of the re-sales which are daily taking place. I might refer to the detailed statement which I laid on the table of the House. That return shows that of the number of settlers mentioned 33.9 per cent. were considered good, 27.5 per cent. were considered fair, 28 per cent. doubtful and 10 per cent. bad. I feel convinced that this return not only supplied light on a difficult and vexed question, but also had the desired effect of convincing members that the operations of the Industries Assistance Board are being carried on on distinctly business lines, and that the proportion of anticipated losses, given ordinary assistance, will be lessened.

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

Mr. Willecock: What percentage would the recovery of bad debts represent?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: About one-sixth or one-seventh. I am also pleased to notice that the return I laid on the Table has created a very healthy interest in commercial circles. In addition to the advances dealt with, approximately the sum of £86,000 was outstanding on the 31st March, 1917, as payments due by the old board. I mention this as one or two members asked me at the time whether that return covered all the moneys due to the board. It does cover all the moneys due, with the exception of £86,000, which is for payments made by the old board under paragraph (c) of Section 9, for land rent and bank interest and representing sales of produce and advances made to settlers not otherwise assisted under the Act.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Does it cover the £34,000 loss on bran and pollard?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. The settlers I have indicated handle their own proceeds, and repayments are made to them direct. It is estimated that £20,000 at least of this amount will be written off as bad.

Hon. J. Mitchell: So the £34,000 must be written off.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, it must. I gave just now the returns from the Agricultural Bank in so far as they have affected the progress of the country in clearing, fencing, and the like. I want to give now the area cropped by settlers under the board. In 1915-16 it was 614,000 acres, with the same area in 1916-17; in 1917-18 the area was 477,000 acres. Super supplied for the same periods respectively amounted to £15,000 and £20,000. The proceeds of the 1915-16 harvest were 4,590,547 bushels, while other proceeds were 81,000 bushels. In 1916-17 the figures fell to 3,862,000 bushels, the other proceeds being 43,000 bushels. The figures for to-day I have not. In respect of cornsacks, in 1916-17 between 6,000 and 7,000 bales were imported from Calcutta and retailed to board clients at 8s. 8d. per dozen, although the market price was approximately 10s. We handed them over at cost price. In 1917-18 we imported 5,000 bales and distributed them to board clients for the present harvest. The price has not yet been fixed, but it is estimated that it will be between 8s. 9d. and 9s., whilst the general market price is between 9s. 6d. and 10s. Shortly, the financial figures at the end of March, 1917, were £1,344,658. As a set off against that there would be the proceeds of 1916-17 harvest, the distribution of which has been completed with the 1917 amending Act. The board has an authorised capital of £801,633, and for the past year the operations have been carried out on an overdraft provided by the Colonial Treasurer which will be recouped from the proceeds of the first dividends on the present harvest. To assist the Colonial Treasurer in financing the operations of the board, arrangements were made with most of the machinery merchants to take Treasury bonds in payment of their accounts. Those payments were made in pursuance of a guarantee given by the present board of 12 months to provide for the supply of additional machinery or for the retention of that on the farm. In most cases payments were made in cash, which enables the settler to secure machinery at a very much reduced cost.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Does that settle all outstanding machinery accounts?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, not all. Those that were guaranteed were of that class for the supply of additional machinery or the retention of that on the farm.

Hon. J. Mitchell: At what rate will that be charged to the farmer?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The question of how that is to be charged has yet to be debated with the Colonial Treasurer. I have more information here but I think I had better content myself with answering any specific questions hon. members may ask. Do I understand that the ruling of the Chair holds that Woods and Forests and

Industries are to be taken together, although they are separate departments?

The CHAIRMAN: I am of opinion that the general discussion should be on the lot.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Very well, I will say a few words about Woods and Forests. This is a department which my predecessor, the present leader of the Opposition, had the honour and privilege, I use the words advisedly, of inaugurating. It was he who first employed Mr. Lane Poole, and he who conceived the idea of placing the department in a position to become a national asset. At all events, it has fallen to my lot to continue in the work of my hon. friend, the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier). The Woods and Forests work is always very congenial and pleasant to me. There is naturally an increase in the Estimates due, to a certain extent, to the necessary increase in the number of inspectors for the satisfactory working of the department. There is this consolation about it, however, namely, that this is one of the Government departments which is a remunerative department. It is a department which, for many years, has poured money into the coffers of the Treasury. For years not a penny has been spent on forests, but the time has come when we have to spend money on the saving and regeneration of our forests, if we wish to preserve them as a national asset. I do not wish to anticipate, but next session I do hope to have the privilege of introducing a Forest Bill which will be the consummation of the work in connection with our forests. The Forestry Department has been conducted on very economical lines, and any changes that are made are very closely scrutinised beforehand. No officers have been added to it beyond those who were absolutely necessary. The Forestry Department will for all time be able to pay its way and hand over a very substantial profit to the Treasurer. I anticipate that when the Forest Act is working in full swing we will be able to hand over to the Treasurer half of the takings of that department, provided we are allowed to keep the other half for reforestation purposes. At present there is a shortage in revenue, owing to the suspension of the timber export trade, due to the lack of ships. But surely when this war is over, there will be such a demand for Western Australian hardwoods throughout the world that the most flourishing department of the public service of this State will be the Forestry Department.

Mr. Smith: Where are you to get the ships with which to shift the timber?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the hon. member would read the other newspapers that are published—

Mr. Smith: I did not say which one I read.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: He would see that the Forestry Department is publishing a series of articles. The first of these has already appeared both in the "Western Australian" and the "Daily News." The articles have been prepared in the F-

Department, and others are to come. They are to the effect that Western Australia has in the past produced wooden ships, and that Western Australia can build wooden ships in suitable places. We also desire to show to what use wooden ships can be put. People who are conducting the business of navigation have the idea that only steamships, and only iron ships, are of value. Those far-seeing people, the Norwegian and Swedish merchants, have been buying up from the foolish British holders all the sailing ships they were willing to sell. The time is fast approaching when the only possible way of dealing with such products as wheat, timber, and other necessarily slow travelling products, will be by means of sailing ships, if they are to compete in other markets of the world. I have no doubt that hon. members have read the articles, the publication of which in the newspapers, which were good enough to give us this space, was authorised by me, and will come to the same conclusion that we have arrived at, namely, that wooden ships constitute a national necessity. How this is going to be carried out in a practical way is another matter. We have no control over the finances of the Commonwealth. If the Commonwealth knew their business as well as we think we know it, they would embark upon a programme of wooden ship-building. Perhaps I am getting away from my Estimates. I shall be glad, however, to answer any questions that hon. members may put to me, either in connection with the Industries Department, the Agricultural Bank, or the Woods and Forests Department.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [2.35 a.m.]: I should like to know what the Minister intends to do with the farmers under the Industries Assistance Board, particularly in the coming season. These farmers receive certain monthly payments so long as they work on their farms. I should like to know if that is to be continued. I hope that will be the case for this arrangement has worked satisfactorily for the last 18 months. I should like to know from the Minister whether he intends to keep going the system which now obtains. Up to the 1st March, when I left office, the farmers had the right to draw up to 9s. a day as a living allowance, and it is important that the Committee should be told what is intended to be done in this matter.

Hon. P. Collier: Is not that amount too low?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Only about 20 per cent. of the farmers drew the full allowance which they might have had. They are allowed to keep their small things such as butter, eggs, and poultry.

Hon. P. Collier: I think we might increase the amount but reduce the interest.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That would probably be a thing. This is a matter of policy of which we should know something. The leader of the Opposition said about the interest to be charged. I said that the Government have increased the rate of interest to 7 per cent. and

that they have made this increased charge retrospective.

Mr. Johnston: It is scandalous.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I hope that this will not be persisted in.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This money was borrowed by the Labour Government at a lower rate of interest than is now being charged for it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I should like to point out that the capital used by the Industries Assistance Board was provided at a time when the rate of interest was lower than it is now. It is not fair to the farmers to charge them a rate of this sort.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The rate was $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is not fair to saddle these men, who come to the Government because they are in distress, with an increased rate of interest. This capital was borrowed at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and now that the Government have to pay 6 per cent. they desire to cover themselves by a higher rate of interest on present loans. It is ridiculous to charge the farmer an additional $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. It ought to be the policy of the Government to give out this money as cheaply as possible. In New Zealand, the advances made to farmers are greater per head of the population than in any State of the Commonwealth and they pay $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for it.

Mr. Smith: There are more farmers there.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: New Zealand has advanced 17 millions to the farmers, not temporary advances such as are made by the Industries Assistance Board, but advances similar to those made by the Agricultural Bank. The rate of interest is $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., notwithstanding that we are living in war time. They realise that the agriculturist is necessary to them. Their exports of agricultural produce practically constitute the exports of New Zealand. A million of people have sold 52 millions of produce to the British Government since March, 1915—almost wholly the products of the farm: meat, cheese, wool, and so on.

Mr. Smith: How much has Western Australia, with a third of the population, sold to the British Government during the same period?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Only a fraction of that amount. We have sold wool and wheat to the British Government, though we did not supply cheese and butter for our own consumption. Again, though we have meat to sell, we have no freezing works, and therefore cannot assist the Mother Land in that respect. Had we had freezing works, we should certainly have sold meat to Britain since the war began. I trust our farmers will be helped in this direction too. My friends from the North will be pleased to know that on the farms of Western Australia there are one million more sheep than there are on our pastoral runs; but the number of sheep will not materially increase unless freezing works are erected at Fremantle. I believe the plans are ready, and I trust that the buildings will soon be constructed. From the figures supplied by the Attorney General, the increase in the rate of interest on money lent by the Government means an impost of £13,000 annually directed against the farmers.

The Attorney General: May I make an explanation which will save a great deal of discussion? I can see the member for Northam thinks that the rate of interest has been raised on the whole amount advanced to the farmers. That is not so. On moneys advanced by the hon. gentleman himself interest is collected at the rate of five per cent., the rate fixed when the moneys were advanced. For another part of the advances we are charging six per cent. Seven per cent. is being charged on the moneys the farmers obtain to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is the money which we borrowed at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The Attorney General: No. The money which is being given to me to-day costs the Treasurer $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Where is the amount of £800,000 which was borrowed and has been paid back?

The Attorney General: That money is absorbed in the business. But the money supplied by the Treasurer from the beginning of the year is costing the State $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. The cost of administration runs to about 2 per cent.; but the Government are not charging the farmers more than 7 per cent. The bulk of the money carries interest at the rate of 5 per cent.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not understand how money being advanced now can be charged at a higher rate of interest as from October last. How can the higher rate be retrospective?

The Attorney General: Because all the advances are now being made at that rate of interest which is the current rate.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Then, I take it, there will be accounts against farmers charged partly at five per cent. and partly at seven per cent.

The Attorney General: And partly at six per cent.

Mr. Smith: The farmer won't know where he are.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: And the department won't know, either. Suppose a farmer with a debit of £3,000 repays £1,000; which part of his debit will be discharged—the part carrying five per cent. interest, or the part carrying six per cent., or the part carrying seven per cent.? We cannot have varying rates in these matters.

The Attorney General: Yes, we can.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Under the system of the board an amount is retained from the proceeds of the crop sufficient to cover the cost of cropping for the coming year, so that really the farmer from now on is using his own money. If this is so, he certainly should not pay seven per cent. interest on money which is really his own. However, it will be highly interesting to know how these collections are to be made, and whether this new money which the Attorney General speaks of is in addition to the advance which stood last October against the farmers, and not merely money representing the proceeds of the last crop. In the former alternative, there might be some justification for the action of the Government.

The Attorney General: That is what it is.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I doubt if the total indebtedness of the farmer for this year is more than it was in October last, when £1,300,000 was owing.

The Attorney General: The total of the indebtedness under the board is very much less.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Then, how can new moneys have been used in the conduct of this business? At any rate, it is quite evident that if the £1,300,000 at which the amount stood in October last is not exceeded this year, there can have been no new money put into this business, and therefore the increased rate will not be justified. In this matter we do not know one Minister from another. The decision to charge seven per cent. is a Government decision, and we look to the Government in the matter. The original rate is already sufficient; and if there is, as I contend and as the Attorney General really admits, no new money, there should not be the higher rate of interest. One word with regard to the work of the farmers. The board's work has been criticised, and the work done by the men on the farms has been criticised. I believe that no 2,000 men ever worked more honestly than the 2,000 farmers under the board have worked. I believe it would be impossible for any 2,000 men to give more faithful or more honest service to the State. These farmers ought to be regarded as a valuable asset of Western Australia. Our agriculturists ought to be regarded here as the agriculturists of New Zealand and those of Canada are regarded in their countries. They have made both those countries, and the Opposition now tell us that the agriculturist is going to make Western Australia. Before the country gets out of the wood, we shall have to obtain a great many more agriculturists, and they will have to be granted a great deal more assistance. I am surprised to learn that the Attorney General thinks the Industries Assistance Board should cease their operations as soon as possible. I believe the board to be very necessary.

The Attorney General: There is the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Agricultural Bank is very necessary, too; but the Agricultural Bank cannot do this business of cropping and of temporary advances. It is necessary, as the Attorney General has pointed out, that the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board should be kept quite separate. That is so, and always will be so. Further, I believe that the board will be required in connection with the settlement of the returned soldiers. However, we need not on this occasion discuss the closing down of the board, because the board will not be closed down for some time and we shall have plenty of opportunity to discuss that question more fully. Given a return of reasonably decent conditions, the values of our securities will be restored. It will readily be understood that the fall in the value of ten thousand securities will be considerable, but notwithstanding that, only a small loss is expected. As regard to the Woods and Forests b

everybody knows that nothing is being done in the way of cutting timber; yet the Minister has increased the expenditure of inspectors, clerks, labourers and messengers by £1,300. That is a very big sum in these days and one can hardly understand how such an expenditure can be necessary in view of the fact that there will be little timber to inspect. I hope the Minister will explain the increase. I should not object to it if we were doing some work.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [2.53 a.m.]: With regard to this vote it can safely be said that there was never a more just measure passed than the Industries Assistance Act, nor one that has done so much for Western Australia. The assets of the State have been kept alive and the populous centres have received the chief benefit. I certainly think the wheat farmers have saved Western Australia. There seems to be a good deal of misapprehension in Western Australia, however, as to the value of this particular measure and as to what is being done under it. A little while ago Mr. Hughes said that the wheat farmers of the Commonwealth had received 35 million pounds for their wheat. As a matter of fact the wheat farmers have received very little. True the money has been given as a guarantee for the purchase of wheat. But what has it done? The wheat has been distributed through the Industries Assistance Board, and the storekeepers in the districts of farmers, and the wholesale merchants, have had their bad and doubtful debts converted into gilt edged securities through this measure. With regard to the matter of interest, I know of clients of the Industries Assistance Board who, if they could get the full value of 4s. per bushel would be able to free themselves from the Board. But the Board are going to charge an increased rate of interest though the assets of the farmers are being held not only by the State but by the Commonwealth. If they are treading on the assets of the farmer on the guarantee given by this State and also the Commonwealth, it is not right that they should increase the rate of interest. I would like to know from the Minister if those assets will be calculated before any of their accounts are to be charged the higher rate of 7 or 8 per cent. If that is going to be done it is not equitable. I do not think that the Government should exceed what would be done by chartered banks or trading firms. I have stated before that the Act has proved to be one of the best measures ever passed for the farmers in this State. The rates of interest were reduced from as high as 33 per cent. to 5 and 6 per cent. and farms were saved. If many of the farms had been wiped out at that time, what would have been the position of Western Australia? Had it not been for the assets created under this particular Act where would we have been? The Act is still doing good work and it must remain in existence, otherwise what with the rabbits and other troubles the State will feel the effect of decreased production which must follow throughout the agricultural centres.

Mr. H. ROBINSON (Albany) [3.0 a.m.]: I understand that the Industries Board was created for the benefit of the wheat farmer. I should like to see the same advantages extended to the market and particularly to the potato growers.

Angwin: They used to get it.

BINSON: They have had assistance cultural Bank, but not on so favourable as are extended to the wheat Minister in charge of the Industries

Assistance Board has placed certain limitations upon them, with the result that the unfortunate potato growers have had to hand over the whole of their proceeds to the Government. This is hardly fair, because the board has not provided potato growers with allowances for stores, as in the case of the wheat growers. Instead of allowing him out of his crop the amount of his stores, I understand the decision was that the whole of the crop should be taken, first by the Government, and any balance left over by the merchant. The board has taken over, the security of already secured creditors, namely the machinery merchants. In many instances the machinery merchants have unnecessarily forced on the farmer expensive machinery which could have been done without. The machinery merchant gets a deposit for the machinery, after which the Government step in and, in order to fully protect the machinery merchant, take over his account. What about those storekeepers who stood by the farmer before the Industries Assistance Board was created, and who are standing by him still? I think the Government should allow a proportion of the crop to be paid yearly to the storekeeper who has been keeping the farmer. Some time ago the Minister placed before us a return in connection with the board. I would like him to tell us whether any amounts have been written off and should have been shown on this statement. The number he gave for my electorate was 107, yet I find that two inspectors have 81 each. Then there are the potato growers.

The Attorney General: They are not included in my statement. They get a special allowance from the Agricultural Department.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: I am glad to hear that both the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board are being run under one management. I have an illustration of what has occurred in the past under separate management. One man with 3,536 acres of land secured from the Agricultural Bank a loan of £2,048 4s. 3d. On 31st December last his interest and arrears amounted to £215 13s. 9d., while his land rents represented £231 2s. 4d. The amount he was owing to the Industries Assistance Board on 31st March, 1917, was £540 10s. 6d., the total owing to the Government being £3,035 10s. 10d., while his liabilities to other creditors amounted to £1,342 12s. 10d., or a total of £4,378 3s. 8d. If every man was helped as lavishly as that it would take the Bank of England to finance the farmers. On the other hand there is in my electorate a hard working industrious man who for four years has had bad crops. Last season he got only 250 bags of wheat. He has never been able to find out his position under the board. He is 12 miles from a railway. He made application to be assisted with sheep, but his application was turned down. He also made application for his rents to be deferred, but this request has been refused. These anomalies can only be overcome by having the control of the two departments vested in one manager.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [3.8 a.m.]: The Woods and Forests Department has been very much neglected in the past. I am pleased to see the Minister taking such a lively interest in it. I would like to know whether anything has been done in regard to getting the long promised laboratory established.

The Attorney General: Yes, we are pegging away at it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Further than that, I believe the Minister sent 30 tons of jarrah to the munition works in London in order to find out whether it would be a commercial proposition. Can the Minister tell us what has happened to that shipment?

The Attorney General: I made a statement about that in the Press. Owing to some bungle in the Agent General's office, that 30 ton shipment was not sent on to the munition factories, but was used in other ways. They have since sent out for a consignment of 300 tons, but of course we cannot at present supply it. However, the tests have not been made.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We have had before the select committee appointed to inquire into the rabbit pest, a Mr. Murray, who showed to the members of that committee some very fine samples of leather tanned by red gum. If he is able to solve the problem which exists in regard to getting a good colour into the leather which offers some difficulty, because of the use of red gum, for tanning purposes, I think we shall find that we have an asset of enormous value to the State. That gentleman will be brought into contact with the department concerned during the next day or two, and something of importance to the State may result. I consider that members of this Chamber ought to take more interest in this department than they do.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [3-12 a.m.]: I think I can fairly congratulate the Minister upon taking such an active interest in the work of his department, and showing such a keen desire to establish new industries in Western Australia. Only this afternoon we had the pleasure of the Minister's attendance at a meeting of the executive of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Has he joined it, too?

Mr. JOHNSTON: He is a sympathiser, and I hope he will show himself an active supporter of some of our requests. In the course of his remarks—and I have the Minister's explicit permission to refer to this matter—he put before us the desirability of establishing a woollen factory in Western Australia. He also gave us a great deal of interesting information, which I am sure convinced us that we ought to have a new and up-to-date woollen factory in the State before long. In this and many other directions the Minister is showing a desire to keep people within the State by the establishment of new industries in various directions, so as to prevent the money that is now going out from leaving the State. The Minister has a very wide field for his undoubted abilities upon the question of repatriation. It appears to me that since his department has become actively concerned in this work, and since the general manager of the Industries Assistance Board has been controlling the work under his direction, he ought now to see that the licensed surveyors in the State are put busily to work as quickly as possible.

The Minister for Industries: This concerns the Lands Department.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It appears to me that this work of repatriation cannot be carried out unless the land is first surveyed, and every surveyor ought immediately to be put to work in this direction.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is nothing in this vote about surveyors.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The work of repatriation is at present under the control of Mr. Paterson.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not in this vote.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am anxious that Mr. Paterson's work should be preceded by the survey of all available Crown lands, and by the classification of private lands suitable for settlement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is nothing in this vote about that.

Mr. JOHNSTON: What I have said is pertinent to this department. The work cannot proceed unless these surveys are made. A promise has been made through this department to the Federal Government for the absorption of 8,000 settlers, I think in the first year after the war, and this promise cannot be given effect to until the land is made available for the purpose. The people in my district have been trying to get butter and bacon factories established for some considerable time past. Although we have met with sympathy in our dealings with the Minister, and although the people are putting their hands deeply into their pockets, and a considerable portion of the necessary capital has been subscribed, we are having a difficulty in obtaining anything of a definite nature from the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This is under the Minister for Agriculture.

The Minister for Industries: That is not a fair statement to make.

The Premier: It is incorrect.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I have correspondence in my pocket which goes to show—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is discussing Division 10—“Minister for Agriculture.”

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in discussing butter and bacon factories under this vote.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Am I not permitted to read a letter from the Minister for Industries, who is the Minister controlling the department, on this subject?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We must deal with the Estimates.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Minister's department controls this work.

The CHAIRMAN: It has nothing to do with this Vote. I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss butter and bacon factories. The matter should have been discussed under the Vote of the Minister for Agriculture.

Mr. JOHNSTON: To the best of my knowledge and belief, this department is controlling the supply of the money.

The Colonial Treasurer: I am controlling the supply of the money.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Colonial Treasurer supplies the money to the Minister, and the Minister passes it on to the people interested.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot help that. If the Minister for Industries is supplying money for bacon factories, the matter should have come under this head, but as it is not under this head I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss the matter now.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Very well, Mr. Chairman. I should like to refer to the question of the increase in interest charged to assisted settlers, to which some reference has already been made. I was pleased to hear the explanation of the Minister that the 7 per cent. interest is only being charged on a portion of the advances.

The Minister for Industries: On the new money.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That was not known in the country districts. General notices have been sent out to the assisted settlers briefly stating that their interest has been raised to 7 per cent. as from the

1st October last. The Minister can readily understand that, in these circumstances, a great deal of alarm is felt by the settlers. It was felt to be unfair that such an increase should be made, and made retrospective. In this connection I do not think it is a legal act to charge the increased interest back to that date. The farmers who have had the use of the money have thought that they were to pay the lower rate of interest. Now they are notified that the increased rate applies retrospectively. I hope the assisted settlers will take steps to test the legal aspect of the matter. No private bank advancing to people generally can increase the rate of interest retrospectively. The rate of interest can be increased only by proper notice under the mortgage. I would urge the Attorney General to review the legal aspect. Apart from that, there is the moral aspect, which deserves the attention of the Government. On reconsideration the Government will probably recognise that it is unfair to date the increased interest back. As regards the Agricultural Bank, the Attorney General said that he was most anxious to see settlers quickly attain a position of freedom and independence.

The Attorney General: That remark of mine referred to the Industries Assistance Board.

Mr. JOHNSTON: At all events, I wish to see them attain that position in every respect. The limited amount of money available this year for new advances certainly will not assist the settlers much in that direction.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [3.22 a.m.]: There is one section of the public particularly interested in the subject of this debate, and that is the storekeeper. The matter is of the utmost importance to him. He has been supporting the farmer now for years, and that support has run into a considerable amount of money. If the rate of interest on Government advances is raised as proposed, it will practically mean that the storekeeper will not get a farthing of the farmer's indebtedness to him. I suggest that the Government might see their way even to exempt the amount of money owing by the farmer for stores, of which amount they have returns. That would help considerably. From personal experience I know that the indebtedness of the farmer to the country storekeeper is a very serious item. The storekeeper has had to pay his interest regularly to the bank, but he has not been able to get payment of his own account from the farmer. Numbers of country merchants have, in consequence, been brought practically to the door of the insolvency court. They are just hoking their own, trusting like Micawber, that something will turn up; but they are and have been having a very bad time. There is the gravest risk that this extra ounce or two in the shape of increased interest may prove of such serious moment as to force them to close up for good. I feel sure that the Government recognise that the storekeeper has been very lienient with the farmer, and has put up, from the banks, with a very great deal of harrassing treatment which he could not pass on to the farmer, because the attempt must necessarily have proved futile. The storekeeper knew he could not get the money owing to him by the farmer, and he has patiently waited for a good season to come along, but there seems to be a kind of blight on the country. If the Government could see their way to accept my suggestion that the rate of interest on which the money was originally lent should continue to apply in respect of the amount of the farmer's indebtedness to

the storekeeper, they would earn the latter's gratitude.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [3.24 a.m.]: I desire to obtain from the Minister for Woods and Forests a statement as to the policy of the department with regard to the timber hewers. I have in my electorate a number of hewers, who are experiencing great difficulty in getting bush in which to make their living.

The Attorney General: There is plenty of good bush.

Mr. PICKERING: The conditions appertaining to hewing are most harrassing, and I shall be glad to know whether the Minister is prepared to make any concession in this regard. As to the sandalwood plantation, it is interesting to learn that the Government are establishing reafforestation on these lines.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [3.25 a.m.]: I am not surprised to learn that the Government find it necessary to raise the rate of interest on advances to farmers, because I am sure that no economy whatever is practised by the department concerned. This year there has been an increase of £6,000 or £7,000 in the administration expenses. Hon. members will observe that even the inspectors have increased in number and in salary.

The Attorney General: No; not in number.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The amount for their salaries is nearly £1,000 more than it was last year.

The Attorney General: Last year the inspectors drew only ten months' salary.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Further, we find that the rent of offices in which to carry on the work has also risen considerably.

The Attorney General: Not this year. The amount shown on last year's Estimates represented rent for only a portion of the year.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I consider that the Minister could use his own offices to get the work done in. There is no necessity to rent two or three sets of offices while the Attorney General's own office is almost continuously empty. There is accommodation in the Crown Law Department quite sufficient for this work, and in that way the rent of the suite of rooms in the building at the corner of William-street and St. George's Terrace could be saved. It is the farmers who will have to pay the rent of the premises occupied by the Industries Assistance Board. Hon. members will observe an increase of £1,000 in the clerical division. There is great need for the exercise of economy here.

The Attorney General: There is a reduction of £3,000.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Undoubtedly the farmer will have to pay for all this. The whole of the cost is booked up to him. The late Liberal Government gave the agriculturist £50,000 or £60,000 per annum through the medium of a reduced railway rate for fertiliser, and now the National Government are making him pay it back through another channel. The Labour Government borrowed a sum of £802,000 for assistance to settlers during the years 1914-15 and 1915-16. That money was raised at 4½ per cent. interest, and that money was intended to be used over and over again for the express purpose of assisting the settlers. Now, if the National Government have used that money in other directions, if it has been expended in works, they should say so. I notice that the Government have recently built a railway for the purpose of assisting farmers. Accordingly,

the Government are now compelled to go on the market for money to help the farmers, and, of course, a higher rate of interest has to be paid. I hold that the farmers should have had the advantage of using that cheap money, £802,000, over and over again. Further, I consider that the original rate of interest should still apply. I was rather struck with the manner of the Minister in introducing the Woods and Forests Estimates. He led off by complimenting my leader, the member for Boulder; and when compliments such as the Attorney General's are passed across the floor of the Chamber it makes one suspicious as to what may be at the back of them. I observe that the Woods and Forests Estimates for this year are higher by £2,346. The revenue of the State has dropped and we cannot afford to indulge in experiments. It is our duty to see that we keep down the expenditure; it is necessary that we should watch every shilling, and I regret that in the department under the Minister for Woods and Forests economy is not being exercised to the same extent as is the case in other departments. Increases are shown right and left.

The Attorney General: That is not a correct statement; the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Department have reduced their expenditure by £3,000; it is in the Woods and Forests Department that there is an increase.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The expenditure of the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Department has increased by some thousands of pounds since the present Minister took office. It is the duty of the Minister to see that the same economy is exercised in this department as in the other departments.

The Attorney General: I have reduced the staff from 80 to 50 in the last two years.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is strange that the Minister will adhere to the belief that he has reduced the expenditure. In 1915-16, the expenditure of the Industries Assistance Board totalled £16,488 and if hon. members will look at the Estimates they will find that the total now is considerably more.

The Attorney General: True, because the member for Northam introduced a system of inspection. I have not added one inspector to the staff.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Of course we want to see the farmers get out of the difficulties they got into through the drought, but they must pay for the assistance they have had. Unfortunately, however, they must now pay 7 instead of 6 per cent.

The Attorney General: Only on new money.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the Government have used the farmers' money in other directions they have been obliged to borrow new money for the farmers.

The Attorney General: We are only charging them 5 per cent. for that money.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: By the return which has been placed on the Table it would appear that the amount borrowed was repaid, but that no allowance has been made for that, and that repaid amount has been re-loaned. If we lend the farmers £500,000 and they repay that sum, and then we lend it again, it is carried on as if a million had been loaned instead of half a million. If the Government are using this money over again, they should not charge the higher rate of interest on it. If the Government have used the money in some other direction, they should say so, and they should state also whether they have had to borrow new money with which to assist the farmers, but

they must not expect the farmers to pay additional interest on the money previously raised.

Mr. BROWN (Beverley) [3.35 a.m.]: I would like to know in connection with the rent which is being paid for offices, totalling £1,870 whether a lease or leases have been effected or whether the tenancy is from year to year. Something should be done in regard to housing the two departments. If the amount is to be a recurring one as the result of leases entered into, it would easily pay interest on buildings which could be erected to accommodate many departments. In the Woods and Forests department there is an increase in the vote of £2,346 and of £1,507 in the administrative portion. It appears to me that the work which has been done this year must be much less than that of the previous year.

The Attorney General: There was no department in previous years.

Mr. BROWN: According to the figures before us there was spent £8,170 last year, while this year the amount is £9,677 and the fact remains that there was an increase there of £1,507. I would like to have some details from the Minister in regard to sandalwood transactions and the increase by £282 this year over the expenditure of last year. In view of what we heard the other night from the member for Kalgoolie in connection with making the export of sandalwood a monopoly, it may be necessary to get on with the reforestation. At the present time, however, this might be left over until the finances are in a more flourishing condition.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning—in reply) [3.44 a.m.]: I had better take the question of interest first. The hon. member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) is mostly right in his statements about that. There was a sum of £800,000 borrowed specially for this purpose. The rate originally charged on that money is being charged to-day. In March of last year there was a sum of over a million pounds raised in the Industries Assistance Board, but during that same period refunds in the way of wheat had been made which were quickly turned into cash, and this had the effect of reducing the year's advances to somewhere in the neighbourhood of £500,000. But the advances had to be made for this current year's cropping, which ran to £490,000, so the two figures taken together reached the neighbourhood of a million pounds. In due course that million pounds will be reduced by payments for the wheat that will be coming in directly, and I hope those payments will be considerably reduced again. It will therefore be seen that to-day there is a million of money in the Industries Assistance Board. There is no change in the interest on that sum, but at one period last year, when there was considerably over a million pounds out, I was notified by the Colonial Treasurer that he had to provide fresh money and had to pay six per cent for it. We then increased our rate from five per cent to six per cent. There was a loss on the transaction, for I only charged the same rate as the Treasurer charged me. Later in the year the Treasurer notified me that he had to pay $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. We then increased the rate to seven per cent. I venture to say that at present that seven per cent. cannot possibly be charged on more than £40,000 or £50,000 all told. The great bulk of the Industries Assistance Board's money is at only five per cent. When we get down again to within the amount originally borrowed, the farmers will get the advantage.

Mr. Johnston: The notices sent out do not show that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will have a look at the notice tomorrow, and if it conveys a wrong impression to the farmers, I will have it corrected. When I came along to the Agricultural Bank I found that all their securities were taken at a common rate of five per cent, and that they were making loans for over 30 years at five per cent, with money costing the Treasurer six per cent. I speedily altered the form of the Agricultural Bank's mortgage so as to charge interest at current rates, the same as is done in any other institution. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) an old banker, said that the books of the department would get confused because of there being two rates of interest. This is done in every bank and company trading in Perth, yet it does not confuse their books. The member for Northam asked me whether the Industries Assistance Board are going to continue the present system. Certainly they will until the farmers are reinstated in a free and independent position. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) asked as to the payments made to storekeepers. Last year the Industries Assistance Board paid the storekeepers £204,000 for back money.

Mr. H. Robinson: How was that money paid to storekeepers?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In cash direct, but it was only paid to those entitled to it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Was that for accounts run up by the Industries Assistance Board?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was for accounts owing. Last year 110 settlers cleared the board. Those men had credit balances, and those balances were used to pay off storekeepers and others entitled to be paid under the distribution. When the extra shilling is received, as it will be directly, for the 1916-17 harvest, it will give us £200,000. Out of that sum at least £25,000 or £30,000 will go to storekeepers. The Government in making these advances secured themselves to be paid first. As to the machinery merchant, he is on a different plane from that of the storekeeper. It is so provided in the Act. In the original third schedule, while the storekeeper came last in order of the payments, the machinery merchant came first. The reason is not far to seek. Whilst the storekeeper once ministered to the wants of the farmer, today the farmer is paid for his stores and so can pay cash for them. But the machinery merchant supplies to the farmer his machinery under a hire agreement, and the machinery is still the property of the merchant until it is paid for. Clearly that was a very good deal for the Board to make. My object is to arrange that the farmer shall get as much benefit as possible.

Mr. Harrison: It is an important matter to the farmer.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I would point out, however, that the farmer cannot have all the profits, and put all the losses upon the shoulders of the Government. It is also a fact that large amounts which have been given to the farmer have been altogether written off from their indebtedness. He cannot have things both ways. He cannot have all the profits and not share in some of the losses. It is this aspect of the matter that I desire to thrash out with the Treasurer. It will then be discussed by Cabinet and I expect that, subsequently, hon. members will also be given an opportunity of discussing it. The farmers of the State can rest assured that we are reasonable men and will endeavour to do a fair thing by them,

having regard to the interests of the State. The member for Albany mentioned something about certain clients of the Agricultural Bank and Industries Assistance Board. I do not think I can be expected to answer questions of that nature offhand, seeing that we have about 9,000 accounts in the Agricultural Bank and 2,000 odd under the Industries Assistance Board. If the hon. member will supply me with the names of the individuals concerned, I shall be glad to furnish him with sufficient information to enable him to form a judgment on the subject. I would point out that these accounts are always judged in their relationship one to the other. The bank knows well what the Industries Assistance Board is advancing, and the board is closely in touch with the Agricultural Bank as far as the advances from that institution are concerned. No advantage, therefore, can be taken by any individual by reason of the accounts being kept separately. The member for Subiaco, and I think the member for North-East Fremantle, object to the rent paid by the Industries Assistance Board for their offices. On the very first day that I went to the Industries Assistance office, I was met by the officers and told that I had a knotty problem to decide regarding the rental of the premises. I replied that it would be decided very quickly, and that I did not think the Industries office should be located where it was on account of the expense. I did my best to have the rent reduced, but I found that the Minister who had preceded me had entered into an agreement to continue the lease for two years. I asked the A.M.P. Society to let us off with another six months, and then tried for 12 months, but the society would not agree to this.

Mr. Pickering: When was the agreement entered into?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Six months before I assumed office. We had to respect that agreement and, as the result, this increased rental appears on my Estimates. I do not agree with the member for North-East Fremantle that the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank could be housed in the Supreme Court buildings. There are six offices to spare down there which used to be occupied by the State Hotels, but there are 50 clerks alone in the Industries office.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not say they could all go there, but that the Minister could.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is quite possible. One or two questions have been asked regarding Woods and Forests. The member for Sussex asks what the policy of the Government is concerning hewers. The policy of the Conservator of Forests is—

Mr. Pickering: To wipe them out.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is not his policy. The policy is to allow the hewers to go upon country from which they can make a good living. I have made that clear to the hewers, and when I come into personal contact with them, and do not meet them through the representations of other persons I get along very much better with them. I am, of course, not reflecting upon the hon. member who has asked the question. The member for Forrest brought a number of hewers to me some months ago. We had a general discussion about the hewing business, and they left me perfectly satisfied to give the new regulations a trial. I have not heard a word from them since.

Mr. Harrison: Would it not be possible to make some provision for returned soldiers in this direction?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, in cases where they are competent and able to carry out the work. This, in itself, accounts for some of the additional expense which has been incurred. In the ordinary course of events, when a tree is tackled by say, a sawmiller, under the very best conditions, he does not get more than 50 per cent. out of it, and some of the sawmillers do not even get that. Out of the same tree a hewer will not get more than 25 per cent.

Mr. Pickering: I am not surprised at that, judging from some of the trees.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If we take the biggest tree in the country, we find that the sawmiller will get his 50 per cent. out of it, but that the hewer, on account of the size of the tree, will not get more than 25 per cent. Therefore, if the hewer was allowed to go into the virgin forests, it would amount to sheer sacrilege. As a rule, however, the hewer follows the miller, and the miller works away at this forest until he has withdrawn from it everything that, in his opinion, constitutes milling logs, and when these logs are cut and realised upon, what is left—and very often they are good trees that are left—the hewer can easily get at. The trees out of which the miller cannot get very much, the hewer can make a good living out of. In order to show that the hewer is not in any way being penalised or hurt, I need only mention that these areas are now put up to public tender, and are tendered for and thus disposed of. All the areas which have been rendered available have been readily taken by hewers, and large numbers of hewers are working those areas to-day very profitably to themselves. When an area has been denuded of mill logs, it is surveyed and classified by the forest rangers, and then submitted to the hewers. Plenty of this country is available: and if there are any hewers without country, they need only make application, and I will have areas thrown open to them. The hewers who came to see me in September last—I think it was in September—did not want to hew under the new regulations. I told them that they had not given the new regulations a fair trial, and that I felt satisfied they could make at least a living wage under them. Eventually they promised me that they would give the altered conditions a trial, and I have not heard from them since. I can confidently claim that I have taken a firm stand for the protection of the hewers; otherwise I would not have the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlin) working in harmony with me in regard to forest areas, as he is doing to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Now the Minister is plimmenting the member for Forrest. What does it mean?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Only one question now remains to be answered, and that question was asked by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Brown) and also by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin). It relates to the details which make up the increase of £1,500. The increased expenditure in the item "Maintaining nursery, and pine, wattle, and sandalwood plantations, including reforestation," is in reality not expenditure. Reforestation appeared on last year's Estimates for an amount of £158, whilst on these estimates it appears for £440. The item "Reforestation" drops out, and the estimate of expenditure for the year is added to the department. The excess of £136 is estimated as being needed for additional labour at Ludlow. Ludlow, as hon. members may recollect, is a pine plantation started six or seven years ago by a

previous Government. As the plantation reached certain stages of development, additional labour was needed every now and then. Ludlow has now arrived at a stage when an additional amount of £130 is required, and has to be supplied. Then as regards the increase of £1,500—

Mr. Brown: That is in the items representing salaries.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will take the item of salaries of inspectors, clerks, labourers, messengers, etc., which shows an increase of £1,393, made up of the following:—Sundry labour nurseries £375, additional ranger, £182, assistant nurseryman (new position) £150, apprentices £185, extra assistants for head office staff £497. A system of apprentices has been brought into vogue for the purpose of training forestry officers for the future. As I explained when I was, not as the member for North-East Fremantle declared, throwing bouquets at the leader of the Opposition, but merely giving that hon. gentleman his due, the forestry service was started by him. In order to carry on the business of the department, it has been necessary to put on some inspectors, and we have had to train others for the position of rangers. There are four apprentices receiving 12s. 6d. per week with 10s. subsistence, and they rise at a rate which I cannot recall for the moment. They are article to Mr. Lane-Poole himself, with a view of becoming forest rangers. The item called "Additional ranger, £182" was expended last year in labour or for extras. It will be observed that in these Estimates there are no items for contingencies, no items for extra hands—in fact, none of those convenient items in which other departments lock up their incidentals. Under an instruction issued by the Treasurer to me—and, I presume, also to other Ministers—every expenditure possible has been put into a precise item, for the information of the Committee.

The Minister for Works: The other Ministers have done the same thing.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Take the item "Additional Ranger." Last year that appeared in the item for labour. Take the "Assistant nurseryman"; last year that also appeared in the labour item. Now the assistant nurseryman is made responsible, and accordingly appears on the Estimates. The principal extra expense is for additional staff in the head office £497. The additional staff is necessitated by the extra work involved in the classification of forests which has been undertaken, and by the special labours of the Conservator. Whilst, on the one hand, as I have explained, hon. members may contend there is an increase in the costs of the Woods and Forests Department, so, on the other hand, they will see an increase in the revenue which will much more than cover the increase in expenditure.

General debate concluded; votes and items discussed as follow:—

Votes—Agricultural Bank, £15,322; Industrial Assistance Board, £20,992:

Item, General Manager, £1,000.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I believe Mr. Paterson is manager of the Industries Assistance Board as well as Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank. We have had a statement on the subject from the Minister, but I fail to understand what the position is. The Minister has told us that the advances made to farmers by the board totalled, on the 31st March, 1917, £1,257,184, and that against this proceeds amounting to £737,770 had been received.

The Attorney General: Yes.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have proceeds from the sale of wheat £737,710. The amount recouped was £595,000 and with the £142,000 paid to creditors the total comes to £737,000. If we deduct this amount of £737,000 from the £1,257,000 there remains £519,000 instead of £661,000 as stated in the return which has been laid on the table. If the other figures are as accurate I do not know where we are.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It looks to me as if there had been a typing error. The hon. member heard me say that the amount was in the vicinity of half-a-million, so that my figures agree approximately with his. The hon. member must know that it is difficult to investigate closely matters of this description at four o'clock in the morning, but I cannot get away from the fact that before the hon. member spoke I several times declared that the balance owing, after allowing for recoups, was in the neighbourhood of half a million.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is impossible for it to be much more than half a million.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: With reference to the rate of interest, two sets of notices have been sent out to the customers of the Bank. I agree that in private life a person cannot be notified that it is intended to charge him a certain rate of interest; he can only be charged the increase from the day of notification onward. Whatever the terms of the notices which have been sent out may be, I can promise that the rates charged will be charged after notice has been given.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Will the Attorney General explain the meaning of the item, "C. C. C. and Secretary to Board"?

The Attorney General: This item was previously paid from "Extra clerical assistance."

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Why have the Estimates been prepared as we find them here? Is it intended that in the future only lump sums are to be shown?

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Woods and Forests, £12,432—agreed to.

This completed the Estimates of the Industries and Woods and Forests Departments.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 4.23 a.m. (Friday.)

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 19th March, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

QUESTION—CLOSE OF SESSION, GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

Hon. P. COLLIER (without notice) asked the Premier: Will the hon. gentleman make a statement to the House with regard to the disposal of the business set out on the Notice Paper, in view of the motion of which he has just given notice, for the suspension of the Standing Orders during the remainder of the session? This morning's newspaper announces that the Government intend to close the session before Easter. Having in view the fact that there are on the Notice Paper 14 or 15 Government Bills of the utmost importance, and that notice of another important Bill has been given this afternoon, I think it is only fair to the House, as well as in accordance with practice, that a statement as to which measures the Government intend to put through, and which, if any, they propose to drop, should be made for the information of hon. members. In my opinion, it will facilitate business, as well as assist members, if the Premier makes a statement in that regard, because it is obviously impossible to close the session before Easter if anything like the volume of business on the Notice Paper is to be got through.

The PREMIER replied: In addressing myself to-morrow to the motion of which I gave notice this afternoon, I shall be able to make clear the matter upon which the leader of the Opposition desires information.

Hon. P. Collier: I have, of course, to accept that answer; but I should prefer to have a statement this afternoon. Such a statement might help the progress of business to-day.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act Amendment.

2, Treasury Bonds Deficiency.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—SPECIAL LEASE (GYPSUM).

Select Committee's Report.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.50]: In the absence of the chairman of the select committee, the member for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse), I move—

"That the select committee's report be adopted."

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.51]:* I think the hon. member ought to give the House some little information. The printed report of the select committee has been