

Then later, we are to say that it shall all be graded. There is no consistency about it.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I will withdraw the amendment and see about resubmitting it when the Bill is recommitted.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 98 to 177—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—PARLIAMENTARY ALLOWANCES ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 3rd December, 1925.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Address: Death of Queen Alexandra, reply ... | 2399 |
| Questions: Wooroloo Sanatorium ... | 2399 |
| Liquors, Chief Inspectorship ... | 2399 |
| Bills: Loan, £4,000,000, 1R. ... | 2400 |
| Miner's Phthisis Act Amendment, 1R. ... | 2400 |
| British Imperial Oil Coy., Ltd. (Private), Select Committee's Report ... | 2400 |
| Parliamentary Allowances Act Amendment, 3R. ... | 2400 |
| Brookton Recreation Reserve, returned ... | 2435 |
| Loan Estimates, 1925-26 ... | 2400 |

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

ADDRESS—DEATH OF QUEEN ALEXANDRA.

Telegram in Reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following communication from His Excellency the Governor:—

The Hon. the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. The Governor has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia that he has this day received the following telegram from the Secretary of State

for Dominion Affairs:—"Your telegram dated 27th November, containing the terms of the address from both Houses of Legislature, has been laid before His Majesty, who commands me to convey his most grateful thanks for the expression of sympathy and assurances of devoted loyalty." W. R. CAMPION, Governor. Government House, Perth, 3rd December, 1925.

QUESTION—WOOROLOO SANATORIUM.

Transfer of Patients.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister): 1, Is it correct that certain inmates of the Wooroloo Sanatorium are to be removed to the Infectious Diseases Hospital site at Subiaco? 2, If so, which class of patient is to be removed—those in an advanced stage, or those slightly affected? 3, On whose recommendation is the change, if any, to be made? 4, On whose recommendation, if it be a fact, was Subiaco chosen as a suitable spot? 5, If a change is to be made, will it apply to ex-miners?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE replied: 1, Yes, when necessary renovations, etc., have been carried out at West Subiaco. 2, Advanced cases of tuberculosis. 3, That of a departmental committee, consisting of Drs. Everitt Atkinson, R. M. Mitchell, and John Dale, and Messrs. H. C. Trethowan and F. J. Huelin. 4, Of the officers previously named. 5, Any change made will be directed by the type of case (see answer to No. 2) rather than by the question of previous occupation.

QUESTION—LIQUORS, CHIEF INSPECTORSHIP.

Mr. J. H. SMITH asked the Premier: 1, Is the Chief Inspector of Liquors leaving the Government service at the end of this month to take a position as Chief Inspector of Liquors in New South Wales? 2, Do the Government propose to call applications to fill the vacant position? 3, If so, will they avail themselves of the services of Inspector McHenry to examine applicants as to their qualifications, knowledge of liquors, etc.?

The PREMIER replied: 1, He is resigning as from 31st December, but it is not known to what position he is going. 2 and 3, The question of filling the vacancy will be considered at a later date.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Loan, £4,000,000.

Introduced by the Premier.

2, Miner's Phthisis Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Mines.

BILL—BRITISH IMPERIAL OIL CO., LTD. (PRIVATE).

Report of Select Committee.

The Minister for Works brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the Bill.

Report received, and ordered to be printed, and to be considered at the next sitting of the House.

BILL—PARLIAMENTARY ALLOWANCES ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1925-26.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 1st December; Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental, £117,937:

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.42]: Year after year we deal with Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, and just as surely with Loan Estimates. For the most part the money borrowed by this State has been invested very wisely indeed. I doubt whether any State of Australia has done better in the way of investing borrowed money than Western Australia has done. Most of the money has been spent on railways, harbours and other facilities; but a large proportion of our total indebtedness is due to our having lent a great deal of money to individuals for the development of the country. To-day we are dealing with that aspect of our loan operations. However, this year the amount is much larger than has ever before been considered necessary. The Premier is asking the Committee for no less a sum than £4,748,000. Four years ago the total expenditure on loan account was £2,454,000; for 1922-23 it was £3,389,000; for 1923-24, £3,936,000; for last year, £4,099,000. I suppose that when the current

financial year has ended, out of the £4,748,000 comprised in these Estimates, about £4,000,000 will have been spent. The Premier has told us that this great expenditure is due largely to increased activities in settling the South-West and in further developing the wheat belt. In 1911 our borrowed money paid its way; that is to say, the earnings of the money paid the whole of the interest. In 1916, when the war had been in progress for two years, the position changed greatly; and the taxpayer was then called upon to make up a shortage of about £700,000 in the result of the operations for the year. Between 1911 and 1916 we invested a good deal too much money in public works, and not enough in agricultural development. Now we are back to the position of 1911. Members of this House know what the position is, but the people outside should realise that they get all the advantages of this vast expenditure of loan money without having to pay for it, except in so far as they use the conveniences which the State has established. The advantages to all sections of the people are very great, and they get them without providing by way of taxation one penny to meet interest on the money borrowed. Surely that justifies us in going on with the work of development represented by items on these Loan Estimates. The public should realise that the State borrows money in order to increase its population and to increase the production of wealth—two urgent and important necessities. It is not so much for the House to consider small items on these Estimates as it is for it to consider the effect of the policy as a whole on the State. The Premier has told us that never before have we faced the expenditure of money quite as we do now. Really to-day we are getting from the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments very considerable help in the work of developing the country. The Premier has indicated that he desires to reduce railway and other charges made in relation to facilities we have set up. With that I entirely agree. But it can only come about by very much increased revenue, and increased revenue earned by these public utilities can only come with the increased production of wealth. It is with the object of increasing wealth production that we are considering these Estimates. We can borrow so long

as we spend wisely, and it ought not to be very difficult to spend wisely, since we have experience behind us, experience that has not landed us in any difficulty, but has helped to make the country what it is. When we face the borrowing of money now, we face it because all development of land must come from long-time credit, and no longer is long-time credit given by financial houses, or not to the extent it once was. So long-time credit really has to be supplied by Governments. It is better that it should be so, because what we do really is to act as agents in the borrowing of money for people who borrow in turn from us for the development of their holdings. In 1916 we lent to individuals 16 per cent. of all that we borrowed. The people to whom we lent it really made it possible for the rest of our invested money to carry its load. Since 1919 we have lent to individuals 64 per cent. of all that we have borrowed. I suppose it is a world's record. Certainly it is a very comfortable one, because money loaned to individuals is paid for by individuals. Later I will show how impossible it is for the State to lose in the aggregate, how it must gain actually in cash in the Treasury by this policy. We now lend to individuals 64 per cent. of all that we borrow. That proportion should be maintained. If we take one-third of our borrowed money for providing facilities such as harbours and railways, and two-thirds of it for lending to individuals in order that they make it possible for the Treasury to pay interest on the whole of the borrowed money and at the same time create new trade, we shall be doing what is right. These Estimates scarcely come up to that standard, but they are not very far removed from it. To the Treasury, trade contribution is a very material thing. When trade is slack the Treasury suffers very seriously quite apart from railway earnings. If we could loan to individuals for the purpose of making farms another 10 millions, then I think we should be in a much better position than we are to-day in respect to taxation: indeed, we could wipe out all taxation in view of the interest we should be drawing on that extra 10 millions. Again I would remind the public of the advantages that come to them by the lending of money for the production of wealth from the soil. The present Esti-

mates make provision for £2,250,000 to be advanced to individuals in respect of agricultural development, and for £2,498,000 for works, or a balance of £248,000 in favour of works. That proportion is wrong. I think we ought to spend less on works and more in advances to individuals.

The Premier: It is largely due to the abnormal expenditure on metropolitan water supply.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am coming to that. It is largely due to the fact that we are spending as agents for the metropolitan area a very large sum on metropolitan water supply. I did not propose not to acknowledge that: indeed it is necessary that it should be emphasised. The interest on this money is paid by the people concerned. We are really agents in the spending of this money, and of course the rates and charges will cover the interest and operating costs. I think the Minister for Works said that last year he was £16,000 short.

The Premier: We are going to be much shorter this year if that motion in another place is carried.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course that would not be right. It is clearly understood by the people of Perth that it is their scheme, put in at their cost, and that all its advantages and disadvantages must be for them. The general taxpayer cannot be asked to foot the bill for a special service. I should like to know from the Premier if interest is charged against works under construction from loan funds. It ought to be charged. When the railways were built from here to Kalgoorlie, to Geraldton and to Bunbury, a fair expenditure on the lines was charged, but not interest, and so it was impossible to get at just the correct charge that ought to be imposed against such works. If we had the figures we should find that our loan money has gone much further than we imagined. The cost of construction is a very serious item this year, and interest during construction is quite a proper charge. The fact that we are spending so much money for water supply in Perth does alter the proportion as between advances to individuals and works to be constructed. Still works to be constructed, if they be all constructed during the coming year, will be rather more than we should pay. I notice a sum included for University building. I am glad of that. I suppose it means that an

other building will be erected. I think we can afford it and ought to do it, for the University is very badly housed. I am sorry there is nothing in the Estimates for workers' homes. I had hoped the Premier would include an amount to strengthen the funds of the board. The building of soldiers' homes has pretty well ceased now, but a lot of houses are required by people all over the State. Young people are getting married, and we ought to help them to do their duty by the country. I see that £106,000 is provided for the development of mining. When the test of Wiluna was under consideration some time ago I wrote to the people concerned that if the tests proved satisfactory in the opinion of the Mines Department, Parliament would be asked to consider the advisableness of laying down a railway. The Premier, I know, confirmed that when he took office. I do not know whether the Mines Department has reported on the tests. There is no money on these Estimates for such work if in the opinion of the Government it is deemed advisable to consider the question of laying down a line during the coming 12 months. I hope Wiluna will prove all that is expected, and that it will give a new impetus to mining. I suppose the battle of the routes, in which I can see my friend the member for Geraldton on the one hand, and my friends the Premier and the two Honorary Ministers on the other—

The Premier: Trying to hold the balance.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think you are more likely to overbalance it if you are not careful. Still, the battle of the routes must not be allowed to retard the building of the line if the Government are satisfied that the Wiluna tests warrant it. I have been informed that the mine is a very big one and if rich enough will be very valuable and will provide employment for a large number of people. If the harbour at Geraldton is to be used as it should be, the opening of the manganese deposits and of the mines at Wiluna will do a good deal to help the port—that is, if the railway goes to Geraldton.

The Minister for Railways: There is only one way for it to go, and that is the shorter way.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course the Government will have to take the advice of the officials to some extent, but I imagine that the short route must be the route selected. There is on the Estimates £220,000 for roads, the largest amount we

have had for the purpose. The Minister the other day referred to the fact that more money had been spent on roads than ever before. That is true. But he did not tell us that it came from loan funds and from moneys supplied by the Federal Government. The liberality of the Federal Government in making this grant of £96,000 has justified the borrowing of money for road construction. The position is that we borrow 10s. for every £1 spent. That is good business. This year the Minister proposes to spend £220,000 and another £90,000 odd in addition, so he will get nearly to £300,000 this year. If we spend steadily, as I hope we shall do, something like a quarter of a million of money a year for a few years, we shall have some very good roads and probably a considerable mileage of them. Two State steamers are under order, so there is nothing more to be said about them. I hope they will be suitable. For harbours and rivers there is a fairly heavy amount without including the considerable expenditure on the harbour at Geraldton. Our harbours are few and far apart. From Geraldton to Fremantle is a distance of 300 miles; from Fremantle to Bunbury is another 100 miles; to Busselton 30 miles, and another 230 thence to Albany. I am pleased that such a large tonnage was shipped from Geraldton last year, and the quantity of wheat to be shipped from that port is expected to be greater this year. I remember when I used to go to Geraldton to encourage the people to develop the country for wheat growing. We surveyed about 13,000,000 acres of land up there, and there must be tremendous shipments of wheat from Geraldton before long. People ask why we want a harbour at Geraldton. They do not realise the tonnage that does go and must go from that port in the near future.

The Minister for Railways: A million bags will be shipped from Geraldton within a few years.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope there will be more than a million. We must provide a harbour if the work being done in the country is to continue. I am sorry to see that provision has been made for the building of so few new railways. The Dwarda eastwards line is down for £100,000, and the Norseman-Salmon Gums for £30,000. The latter was the last line authorised. There is also something to complete the payment for the Lake Grace-Newdegate line.

For other lines long authorised, however, there is nothing. The people in the Yorkrakine and the Dale River districts have waited a great number of years for railway conveniences and in both districts the country is good. The Pemberton south line and the Denmark-Nornalup line have been forgotten altogether; neither of them finds a place on this list of works. That is wrong. I do not know why those works are not proceeded with, but I know it will be very difficult to settle a large number of people on the land in the South-West unless those lines are built. In the early days of group settlement we took land adjacent to railways together with land served by a recently constructed line from Busselton to Margaret River, but while all that land has not been used up, the greater portion of it has been, and we shall have to go further afield from Pemberton and use the land between Denmark and Nornalup if we are to settle large numbers of people. I should like to move that an item be included in these Estimates, but I would not be permitted to do so. I hope the Premier realises that no considerable settlement of British people can take place in the South-West unless we build those lines and build them soon.

The Premier: There is a fine road to Northcliffe.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so, but it is necessary to reach the land beyond Northcliffe. The idea was to build a 10-mile section of railway, settle the people on either side of that, and then move on another 10 miles, and so on until the line was completed, never getting much ahead of settlement. Unless we start building those lines, this idea cannot be carried out, and if good roads are not provided transport becomes very difficult in the winter months. The Premier has said that we want speedily to develop the country. I do not think we can do it too quickly. There can be no question of the advisableness of doing it. We have the new migration agreement which means very cheap money, and that changes the whole position. When I went to London and discussed matters with the Imperial authorities, the best I could do was to get the agreement that operated until the one recently completed was entered upon. My agreement meant a saving of 20 per cent. in interest during the first five years; that is 20 per cent. to cover losses. That was a liberal agreement, but times have changed,

the policy of the British Government has changed, the Federal Government have become a little more liberal, and now we get not five years interest advantage, but 10 years interest advantage which is a mighty different thing. To-day we make a saving of about 40 per cent. in interest which means 40 per cent. to cover losses. We must use this money. We cannot afford to miss it. Up to 1919 only 16 per cent. of the money we borrowed was loaned to individuals for land development and our investments in railways and harbours paid their way, but during the last few years we have been advancing 64 per cent. to individuals, and we intend to continue somewhat on that basis. Where we have an opportunity to do this with money costing us so little, we cannot afford to hesitate. The time has come when we can face this work, and we ought to undertake it very actively. The terms under the new agreement are splendid, and we should look for nothing better. Those terms date from the day my agreement was signed. The Premier said we had drawn £750,000 before he took office. At any rate we have received £750,000 under the agreement, and there is a sum of £1,250,000 of money already spent and owing under the agreement. As this agreement dates back and we have been paying 5½ per cent. interest for the money we have used and not drawn, there will be a considerable cheque coming to the Treasury by way of refund. Members will realise what this assistance means if they get into their minds the fact that the interest on the £1,250,000 was £68,700 a year, whereas under the new agreement we pay £12,500 a year. Thus we save £56,000 a year in the interest we have been accustomed to pay. That, too, is for the first five years, which means £281,000 for the five years. Then we get a second five years during which we pay one-third of the total interest charge. For the second five years there will be a saving of £229,000, or a total saving of £510,000 in the 10 years on the £1,250,000. If we could afford to use money and pay full interest rates for this work, how much better can we afford to use it at the present rates? Shall we always have this opportunity? I suppose we shall have it for some time, but I take it we shall not have the opportunity unless we deserve it and use the money to increase immigration. We cannot afford to spend wildly money costing

even so little. We must move cautiously and spend wisely even the money we are getting under the agreement. But we should use it. It is so simple to do so. I suppose no officials in the world have had the experience of settling penniless people on the land that the officers of our department have had. The greater part of our land development has been carried out by men placed similarly to those now coming to the State. We must use this money to increase our population, to bring people of our own flesh and blood from the Old Land. We must spend it in such a way as to provide for the permanent production of wealth; in other words, for permanent employment. By the use of this money we can provide further prosperity and employment, and it would be wrong to expend it in any other way. We must see that employment occasioned by the expenditure of the money is continued. This has been done and we can continue to do it. The Premier will see that my only objection to his proposal regarding the expending of the money is that he is not likely to move fast enough. My justification for saying he is not likely to move very rapidly is that the two railways I have mentioned do not find a place in the list of works to be constructed. That is a great pity. Two years ago it seemed to me necessary to get Parliament to pass those railway Bills. Notwithstanding that we have good roads, those railways are needed. The opportunity is ours; the time has come. We have been looking for this opportunity for years. There is no question about the value of the lands of the South-West. Every test that has been made has given wonderful results. Since group settlement was started, nothing we have tried to grow in the South-West has failed in the slightest. The most optimistic amongst us did not expect that the land would do anything like so well as it has done. I suppose if we had got two-thirds of the result from the crops that have been put in, we would have been satisfied. Take the pastures from Perth to Albany on the poorest of the land and the result has been magnificent. Let us adopt a policy of settlement on the results of the tests made. New Zealand, the richest part of the Southern Hemisphere, lives entirely on its pastures.

The Premier: They have not the climate we have.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Nothing like the climate we have. Yet for all these

hundreds of years that land has remained idle. The croakers should get out of the way, those who are talking against the south. The tests have been made. They were made years ago by the few who were settled there, but they have been made in broad fashion now as a result of the group settlements and the methods applied. When one travels from Perth to Bunbury one sees the wonderful and marked change that has occurred in the last few years. There are now hundreds of cattle and sheep where there were only a few before. Where the old grass would be dead, on the newer pastures the clovers that have been put in and properly fertilised are quite green. The face of the country has changed. If the croakers told the truth it would be with bad intent. We have spent £2,400,000 in the South-West. The advantage to this country will be vastly more than that. Quite recently 300 Murchison bullocks were sent to Pinjarra and sold to go on to the pastures in that district. About five years ago one would not have taken a tenth of that number there with any chance of selling them. Just as the wheat-fields are valuable, or the pastures of the North are valuable and producing great wealth, so there is wealth in the land from here to Albany to be had as easily. There is no better life than the life of the man who uses pastures. We should have all that New Zealand has in the way of pastures and stock raising. New Zealand, I think, exported last year £37,500,000 worth of meat, butter, cheese and other stuff that came from the clover fields and pastures. The population of that dominion is only a little over one million. Why cannot we do the same? We have lost years of opportunity to produce wealth from the land. I said in the House five years ago it would not be always as easy to borrow money as was the case in the past, so that we must use our borrowed money in order that we might take the real cash from the soil of the country. That is the real money, and it is an annual crop with very few deductions. Such money is alive and active. If we can send to the Old Land a small proportion of the crops we produce as a result of using their money, in order to pay them the interest, and put the bulk of the proceeds into our own pockets by way of profit, that will be something worth doing. Although individuals may not make very much from their work on the land, at least the people can realise that they benefit to the full extent of the gross

production. A wheat farmer may produce 2,000 bags of wheat. He may lose in his work, but the public will gain to the extent of that 2,000 bags of wheat. Only a few lose money, but it is a fact that the State derives an advantage to the full extent of the gross production. We cannot afford to let this wonderful asset remain any longer unused. We had experience before starting the group settlements to the extent that we were justified in starting them, but we have it now in the work done in the last few years. The Minister for Lands said the other night that I had spent too much money in experimenting at Albany. He did not mean that.

Mr. Teesdale: He withdrew it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course he did. He was a little annoyed with me at the time. That was an experiment in pasture grown on 150 acres of the poorest land to be found in the South-West. It has produced wonderful results. By a bit of luck for me a Northam cattle owner rented the paddocks last year, and did so again later in the season. He fattened a considerable number of bullocks on the clover that was put in at King River by way of experiment. There is no land in the South-West that will not do as well as this has done. That land was selected because it represented all classes of poor country. We have had the experience now, and we can get right on with the work. There are British people willing to come here. Surely we ought to be more than anxious to help our own flesh and blood in the Old Land, those who are out of work and are likely to be out of work. The population there is about 47,000,000 and is increasing rapidly. Our duty is to give them the opportunity and to bring them out here. The duty of every Parliament in Australia is to stock up Australia. A population of 6,000,000 cannot expect to live safely in Australia. The Continent cannot be defended by that number of people. We ought to bring British people to these shores. We have at our disposal British money British people, and British markets. The time is ripe for us to discontinue the slow and cautious pace, though we must be careful, and do the right thing. We have experimented in the growing of various products. In one case we had a quarter of an acre of potatoes planted in each of the 12 months of the year, and 12 good crops were grown on the high lands of the Augusta district. There are 100,000 British born peo-

ple in the State, about 150,000 Western Australian born, and the rest who had the good fortune to leave the East to come West.

Mr. Wilson: And the rest came from Cornwall.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I did not include Cornishmen or Scotchmen.

The Premier: Western Australians, Eastern-Staters and Britishers make a good blend.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: An excellent blend. The Western Australians raise the standard. The British-born people have proved good everywhere. It is wonderful to see a Cockney on the land, and notice how quickly he becomes a farmer and how much work he does. On the Peel Estate one of the best men was a London cab driver who had never seen a farm before. Right through the country Englishmen are doing wonderful work. We must not under-rate the British workman and his anxiety to make good. He is probably not quite as fat as the people of this country nor quite as big.

The Premier: But he is hardy.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, he is made of the right stuff. We have had our tests all round. There is no necessity to hesitate any longer. We are getting this money at 1 per cent. It would be a poor Parliament and a poor man who could not use money loaned to him at one per cent.

The Premier: He would be a pessimist.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and a first-class idiot.

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Let us spend this money. We owe something to the British people, to our children's children and to the generations yet unborn. Let us make this country safe for them. It cannot be made safe without more people. This help is thrust upon us, and we would not be true to our trust unless we agreed to use the money and do the work the Empire needs. When people talk of markets as they do, I think they forget, or hardly realise, that the population of the world is rapidly increasing. It has more than doubled in the last 100 years, and the increase over the next 100 years will probably be in the same proportion. The world's acres are not increasing, and the amount of cultivable land is only about 40 per cent. of the world's surface. Our opportunity is here. It will take the first

6,000 of the new settlers to provide all we need for our own consumption. Our population is also increasing, as is the demand for butter, bacon, cheese and other things. If we have not pluck enough to do anything else let us grow enough to eat. We are buying butter produced from land costing £100 an acre in the other States, and allowing our land to remain idle. We have done this for years. It is time we set about doing things. We are fairly afloat now, and there will be no turning back. We shall go on. It is just a matter of the pace at which we travel. We must not be content merely to float; we must go forward at a speed of 20 knots, at any rate for the next few years. I agreed to discuss group settlement matters on the Loan Estimates, but the Minister for Lands spoke about it on the Revenue Estimates. He forestalled me, but I will catch him before long. Group settlement merely means a multiplicity of small farms. If we can get one small farm doing good work and then add another and another until we get a great many small farms, it will be a good thing for this State. It will mean that towns must spring up throughout those areas. It will be the same as our experience in the Eastern wheatbelt. If members go to Goomalling out through Minnivale to Wyalcatchem, Bencubbin, Nungarin, and so on, they will see the towns that have sprung up as the result of the development of that area.

Mr. Lindsay: I am glad you picked my centre as among the best.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I said that before the hon. member was born, and the hon. member has assisted too.

Mr. Lindsay: Yes, I helped a little.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I urged the people to go there, and the hon. member went there and was one of the first settlers. He did well, and was one of the best there. Thus it is that towns will spring up throughout the South-West. With such small areas it will be necessary to have towns of a considerable size at least every ten miles along the railway. Businesses will have to be conducted there, and bacon and butter factories as well as canning factories, and so on. It all means work and that work will not be all down there but in the metropolitan area as well. There must be

those engaged in the transport and marketing of the produce. There will be more factories in the city, and, in fact, the work that is done in the South-West will be reflected in Hay-street. There will be more opportunities for everyone. When we go to the South-West and note land that for countless centuries has grown nothing but valueless scrub of all sorts, now growing magnificent fodder crops and other produce, it is possible to realise what has been accomplished in two or three years by a handful of people, mostly British.

Mr. George: Yes, but they were encouraged by us.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, I like the idea of encouraging other people to work. It is splendid.

The Premier: Truly a splendid idea.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have helped those people in a way that no other country in the world has done. We have done the job well for them and they are doing their part too. For instance, they have converted a considerable area near Fremantle from waste lands to wonderful gardens and splendid pastures, and there, as in the South-West, the crops are annual ones. That is something we should be proud of. This question of land settlement is merely a great co-operative work. The Government have control of a tremendous area of land that cannot be used by the people here. We have the land; we can get the money; we want the men who are willing to work. Let us find those men who are willing to work, for we cannot progress without them. We say to them, "We will give you the land and advance the money that you can repay. We will supervise your operations and you can go on with your work. By this means you shall have an opportunity to make a competency for yourself and your family and you will be able to do well." But there is another side to the picture. This undertaking is not all for the man on the land. It increases the opportunities open to everyone in the State. It increases our wealth and expands our production. The people realise that we do not merely send throughout the world to get people to come here and settle on the land simply for their own advantage. No such thing would be done because the people would not stand it. It is patent that this scheme is to the advantage of everyone. The whole

State benefits. Even the people who do not become farmers benefit, and naturally we could not afford to have every man a farmer. I suppose that for every man on the land there are five or six working in the country areas. So it is that we should go on with this work. Every man who goes out into the country creates work for others. At Midland Junction to-day there can be seen running yards full with wheat consignments the result of the work of men who had just as much money when they started as the men we are putting on the land to-day. For over 80 years we waited for men with money to come here and grow wheat for our own use. Then we took men from the wharves, from the mines and from every trade and calling, even parsons, and put them on the land. The result was that within a very few years we produced many times more than we were able to consume and to-day train loads of wheat, approximately 20,000,000 bushels of it, are being hauled to Fremantle for export purposes. Is the benefit of that trade wholly with the producers? Of course not. I do not propose to discuss the items on the Loan Estimates. They would not be here and would not be necessary if the country were fully developed. If we had attained that position our Revenue Estimates would cover all our activities, but the fact is that for many years we shall have to borrow money in order to develop the State. Thus it is that the Loan Estimates really represent construction work, the details of which are strewn throughout the Estimates. These items are not for the mere carrying on of government, for the administration of justice, the education of our people and so on; they represent real constructive work and members will do well to give attention to the items disclosed. Again I say the Premier should introduce supplementary Estimates and take authority to construct the railways I have already referred to. There is provision for extra rolling stock and the amount set aside for the purchase of rails and fastenings is far in excess of the requirements of the Government. I do not object to that, but according to the Public Accounts I see that there are large stocks on hand already. There is a considerable amount provided for the improvement of existing railways and rolling stock. I suppose that provision is unavoidable because we have increased trade. I would like to see provision made for the construction of these new lines. I

do not know what induced the Government to omit provision for those railways.

The Minister for Railways: It is useless to build new lines unless you have the rolling stock to run over the lines.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not complaining about the provision for rolling stock.

The Minister for Railways: Inferentially you did.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No. I drew attention to the provision and I expressed the hope that the rolling stock would be actively used.

Mr. Lindsay: Extra rolling stock is badly required. We cannot get sufficient trucks to bring our wheat down now.

Mr. George: If double the money were provided it would not be too much.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The wheat was satisfactorily handled last year and for the two previous years as well and it will be handled satisfactorily this year. With the increased strength of the engines and the improved trades, quicker transport will be provided. Larger train loads will be hauled. Certainly I do not complain about this provision on the Estimates. The Minister for Railways will realise that these lines cannot be built in five minutes, but I have made it quite clear that, in my opinion, the work to be done in accordance with the provisions set out in the Loan Estimates is one of wealth production. We must dig it from the soil in greater quantities than ever before, and it is only by the use of loan funds that it can be done. We cannot go on with the further settlement of the South-West in an extensive way unless railways are built. The Yorkrakine line and the Dale River railway have been promised for many years, and even if started the cost this year would not be very great. I have nothing more to say beyond expressing my pleasure at seeing such a large amount provided for the assistance of agricultural development. I hope the Premier will endeavour to keep to the proportions I have mentioned, namely, one-third for works and two-thirds for production, land development and advances to settlers. If he does that I venture to say we shall never have to call upon the taxpayers to provide a penny for interest on the money we have borrowed. On the other hand, we will provide the people with greater opportunities, with greater advantages, with increased production and an increased volume of trade must surely follow.

MR. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [541]: The Leader of the Opposition has dealt with many of the items generally and there are a few only to which I desire to draw attention. Sir James Mitchell is a Western Australian born and is naturally proud indeed at the presentation of Estimates of this description. They afford an indication of the progress of the State and of the steady, sturdy, hard work of the people here. As an imported Western Australian, I am also proud of the position. In some respects I may perhaps be prouder than the Leader of the Opposition. I am satisfied that wherever these Loan Estimates may be perused, it will be recognised that the people of Western Australia are virile, have confidence in the future, and assuredly will make good. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the provision for rails, fastenings and rolling stock. I may be permitted, on the score of my experience in these matters, to say that if the amount provided for rolling stock were doubled, I am sure the Commissioner of Railways would be able to find full use of the extra plant and even then it would not be more than is required. It is true that we have cut down grades and have engines of greater hauling power, but it is also true that trains cannot be made up unless trucks are available to carry the produce. The Minister for Railways will know that it is only by the exercise of the greatest care and foresight that our produce has been carried with the trucks available. Years ago it was urged that whenever a railway was built, a certain proportion of the funds should go into rolling stock for the extra mileage and that the further the terminus was from the centre of the system, the more trucks should be allowed. These questions were worked out on the basis of the experience of years and I would certainly feel more satisfied if it were possible for the present Government or some future Government to lay it down that if a railway is to be built, the necessary additional rolling stock shall also be provided. With regard to rails and fastenings, the sum of £128,000 is provided. That seems to be rather more than is required for the lines that are down. But the main subject on which I wish to address to the House a few remarks is the question of the water supply for the metropolitan area. There has been so much nonsense talked by those who ought to know better about the water supply that I trust that what I have to say will not

be regarded as being out of place. The water scheme which is being carried on by the present Government was started by the Mitchell Government, and would have been commenced in August, 1920, if funds had been available. It is no new scheme. It is a scheme that has been discussed by the department for years, and different Governments have gone so far as to bring to the State experts from other parts of Australia to examine it and to give it a thorough sizing up. We know perfectly well that when the ex-Premier made a speech at North Perth, he told the people plainly what the scheme was, and he also told them that they would have to pay more money for water and that they would have to pay smilingly. Last year and the year before estimates were brought forward for this scheme, and the scheme was started. Yet we have silly, almost impudent, criticism from persons who ought to know better, but who apparently are misled on account of pressure on money bags that is to be applied by way of additional taxation. Perhaps I am able to speak with more authority on this subject than other members in the House. The original scheme for supplying the metropolis with water was carried out by the firm of Neil McNeil & Co., for whom I was general manager. A commencement was made in 1890 and the work was finished in 1891. If hon. members will turn up the newspaper files of that period, they will find that the same silly and ignorant criticism took place then as is taking place to-day, and that the bulk of that criticism came from the same rogue elephant who is trying to upset matters at the present time. There is an old saying that "a little learning is a dangerous thing; drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring." I am afraid that a good many of the critics about to-day have not drunk deeply from that spring. If they had done so they would have had some knowledge, and their opinions might then have been of some value. They skim over the surface of matters and then pose as authorities. It is about time they were dealt with to prevent them from continuing to mislead the people in the metropolitan area. These critics to whom I refer are deliberately trying to mislead the people on the subject of taxation. We are told by them that the extra taxation will be severely felt. But it will be felt mainly in the heart of the city where the big assessments are. There may be an increase there, and the in-

crease may be 50 per cent. or even 100 per cent., but the people who have to pay those taxes use very little water. The critics forget that neither Perth nor Fremantle could exist unless there were people in the country to provide opportunities for trade. But for the timber people, the goldminers, the farmers and others, Perth could not exist, and the ratepayers in St. George's-terrace and in Hay-street could not carry on their work. The same thing applies to the hundred thousand people who are working in the metropolitan area and who are ratepayers though in a smaller way. The extra taxation that will have to be paid is a fair levy upon the profits that the people in this big city are making. The majority of the people in the metropolitan area must have a good supply of water, otherwise they could not be here. And if they were not here the people in the country would not be able to carry on. I could say a great deal more on the subject than I care to do to-day, but I do think it is about time that someone spoke out pretty strongly in connection with this business.

The Premier: I think that one or two may yet be deported.

Mr. GEORGE: I do not know about deportation; deportation is not a matter that comes into this. The question of water supply all over the world has caused engineers great anxiety and trouble wherever there has been an increase in population demanding bigger supplies than had been required before. Here in Perth the little scheme I was associated with in 1890 involved a supply of half a million gallons a day, and the newspapers of the time declared it to be extravagant. To-day we are using about 16 million gallons, and yet there are people foolish enough—I was almost going to say criminal enough—to attempt to block the wheels of progress in connection with what is an absolute necessity of life. There is no excuse for the crusade that is going on, because all that was gone over two or three years ago. There were columns in the Press and leading articles were written on the subject. Yet to-day, when the work is in progress, we find the same silly, impudent criticism of a scheme which is required for the great bulk of the people. I say unhesitatingly, and with great feeling, that if it were not for the question of the higher taxation we would never have heard a single word about it from the voice that is at the back of the agitation. The un-

generous and unscrupulous criticism of this metropolitan scheme drove to his death the engineer who had to do with it. My feelings on that point are strong and, as a citizen of this State, one who was connected with the first water scheme for the metropolitan area, who went through all the criticism and misrepresentation of the time, I resent the impudent tactics that are still being adopted to-day.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.55]: I listened with a considerable amount of interest to the Premier's speech on Tuesday evening, but it is somewhat difficult to fully digest the whole of the Loan Estimates straight away. Very often the majority of members speak on matters affecting purely their own districts. I propose to indulge in what might be termed a little general criticism. The Premier told us that practically all the public utilities, works both large and small, had to be carried out by the Government, that none of our local governing bodies had been entrusted with any of these utilities, and that very few private companies carried on works of any magnitude within the State. On other occasions I have stated that it was desirable that the metropolitan area should have control of the public utilities. We have approximately £500,000 on the Estimates for expenditure on water supply and sewerage. I do not intend to criticise that because the people it is intended to serve are justly entitled to the expenditure of that money. And not only are they entitled to that, but we know that under the conditions on which the water and sewerage schemes are constructed, the people who are given the conveniences will have to pay. It is only reasonable, therefore, that those essential works should be constructed for them. I agree with the previous speaker that an adequate water supply is necessary for the metropolitan area. Whether the present scheme is right or wrong, I am not in a position to say. We have just been told that in 1920, if the money had been available, the work would have been put in hand. There has been, and there is still going on, in another place, a considerable amount of discussion as regards water supply, and as to whether the scheme now being carried out is, or is not, necessary. Some laymen have gone so far as to say that in their opinion there is considerable waste, and that other sources ought to have been exploited. That does not come within the purview of members

here because we are not able to say whether the opinion expressed is right or wrong. Unquestionably, State trading concerns discourage the establishment of private companies in the State. Though we are up against many Federal disabilities, on these Loan Estimates there is an item of £10,000 for new machinery for the construction of implements. Various companies had already constructed large buildings in Western Australia for the manufacture of implements when a previous Government decided to establish State Implement Works at Fremantle. That £10,000 could have been saved, and the private companies would have placed the implement industry on a much better footing. Unfortunately the machinery originally put into the State Implement Works was of poor quality and obsolete. The Government were, in fact, sold a pup. I do not blame the Government in question, since they acted on expert advice. Last year the present Government spent £7,500 on the extension of the State Brickworks, and they propose to spend £2,000 on those works during the current year. It is a matter of opinion whether these moneys are well spent. Despite last year's expenditure there is still a shortage of bricks in the metropolitan area.

The Premier: What is private enterprise doing?

Mr. THOMSON: Private enterprise naturally refuses to enter into competition with the Government, who are in the happy position of being able to compete without incurring rates and taxes and other incidents. Further, the Government are in the happy position of being able to specify that State bricks shall be used for State work.

Mr. Chesson: The State Brickworks are turning out a good brick.

Mr. THOMSON: There is no shadow of doubt about that. I am not discussing that phase.

The Minister for Works: The State Brickworks were only extended when private enterprise had failed. We waited for years for private enterprise to supply the bricks required. Moreover, the late Government were in office for eight years. Why did not private enterprise extend its brickworks then?

Mr. THOMSON: The late Government, being against State enterprise, naturally did not extend the State Brickworks. However, it was frequently stated by the late Opposi-

tion that once they came into power they would extend State enterprise. I acknowledge that they are perfectly justified in giving effect to the planks of the platform which they put before the people. Notwithstanding last year's expenditure of £7,500, there is still a shortage of bricks.

The Premier: That £7,500 was spent in providing new kilns. But for that expenditure, the shortage of bricks would be still greater.

Mr. THOMSON: Possibly; but I know of one man interested in brick works in the neighbourhood of Perth who has leased the works, saying he is not going to fight the Government, as the competition would not be fair.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: If the Government went out of the business, would he be able to make the works pay, or would he increase the price for that purpose?

Mr. THOMSON: Does the Honorary Minister think the price of bricks is lower by virtue of the existence of State Brickworks?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It is so as a matter of fact.

The Minister for Works: We have been asked to increase the price of bricks.

Mr. THOMSON: The Government have specified the use of State bricks in country districts where bricks are actually being manufactured.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: What class of bricks?

Mr. THOMSON: Very good bricks. At Mt. Barker there is a railway station constructed of State bricks notwithstanding the fact that excellent bricks are turned out at Albany.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: As a matter of fact, a large number of those bricks were produced at Kendenup, which is closer to Mt. Barker than is Albany.

Mr. THOMSON: Unfortunately all the bricks for the outside of the station were brought from Perth.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Now you are coming a bit nearer. A little while ago you said all the bricks came from Perth.

Mr. THOMSON: The Government specified that all the bricks to be used in the Mt. Barker railway station should be State bricks.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Which Government?

Mr. THOMSON: A previous Government. It was so specified by the departmental officers.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Would you as a practical man have put the local bricks into the face of that building?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, without any hesitation whatever. The same position obtains in the Railway Department. Recently two small buildings were erected on the station at Katanning, where first-class bricks are made. The original Katanning station was constructed of Katanning bricks. Yet railway freight must be paid on State bricks for the two buildings I refer to. So the cost of building is inflated, and centralisation is supported as against encouragement of industry in the country districts. I do not say for a moment that the vast majority of the items on these Loan Estimates are anything but desirable.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You endorse everything except the State trading?

Mr. THOMSON: I do not know that.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: So far you have only criticised State trading.

Mr. THOMSON: But I am only starting, and have a long way to go.

The Premier: That is just what we are concerned about. You know we had this brick business on the State trading concerns. We know it by heart, you have given it to us so often.

Mr. THOMSON: Under the heading of "Departmental" a sum of £117,937 is provided. Naturally, that amount has to be charged against the loan expenditure. It was pleasing to hear from the Premier last night that he intended to make some reduction in the way of taxation if the Government received the proposed Federal allowance of £330,000 odd per annum. Unless we are able to reduce taxation, we are not likely, generally speaking, to have private companies establishing themselves here. Those who have it in mind to establish factories, naturally look to see what taxes they are to be called upon to pay; and from that point of view they will prefer a State like Victoria where taxation is considerably lower than it is here. The Premier said that practically all public utilities, both large and small, had to be carried on by the Government here. Our large expenditure is due to the fact of our having exceedingly high taxation. Failing control of our own Customs, I would regard the Federal contribution as a boon. The loan expenditure under these

Estimates totals £4,748,795. It is almost impossible to determine how much of that amount is represented by what may be termed local expenditure. I have not had the opportunity of dissecting the figures, and therefore can deal with them only in a rough and ready manner. It would be interesting to know exactly how much of this money will be spent in salaries and wages. In connection with this one set of Loan Estimates there is an amount of £117,937 for salaries alone. The policy of the Government being to introduce the 44-hour week throughout the public departments and to do everything by day labour, there must be a considerable increase in the cost of our loan works.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. THOMSON: Before tea I was dealing with the 44-hour week introduced by the Government in respect of all public works. I estimate that the wages that will have to be paid for one-twelfth less work will represent £150,000, which is a very low estimate. Allowing for interest and sinking fund to be paid on our loan indebtedness, we are accepting an additional charge of approximately £9,000 per annum, for which the State is getting no tangible result.

The Minister for Works: How do you know how much has to be paid in wages?

Mr. THOMSON: I am well below the mark in setting wages at one-third the total cost of works.

The Minister for Works: The estimate for the pipe line between Perth and the hills as constructed on a 44-hour week, is below the estimate given for the same line constructed on a 48-hour week.

Mr. THOMSON: After all, an estimate is only an estimate. From my experience I am convinced that a gang of men working a 48-hour week will do more than a gang working only a 44-hour week. Through the introduction of this 44-hour week we are loading the figures by at least £150,000, or £9,000 per annum. On these Estimates I find a sum of £75,000 provided for Fremantle Harbour Works. In the main I have no objection to that, for it is essential that the chief port should be kept up to date. Under the heading "Development of Agriculture," we find also a sum of £14,000 provided for the extension of the export depot, grain sheds, etc. I am not sure

how much of that is to be utilised at Fremantle. However, in these two items we have £89,000 provided. The system of financing the Fremantle Harbour Trust is, I think, wrong. I do not blame the present Government for it, because they are simply following the methods adopted by previous administrations. In my view, it would be better to have all our various public utilities in the hands of trusts, with power to pay their way out of profits. From the report of the Fremantle Harbour Trust I find that their gross revenue for the year was £421,255 and that their total payment to the Government, including interest and sinking fund, renewals, etc., was £242,123. After allowing for interest and sinking fund, renewals, and all expenses, they have paid into Consolidated Revenue £130,776. Yet we find on the Loan Estimates £75,000 provided for the Fremantle harbour. In 1924 the Trust paid in interest £87,783, in sinking fund £21,564, and in renewals £2,000, or a total of £111,347. In my opinion it should not be necessary to have this £75,000 on the Loan Estimates for the Fremantle Harbour Trust. Since the trust made a net profit—paid into Consolidated Revenue—of £130,776, they should have been able to set aside whatever was necessary for their purposes and so save interest and sinking fund on the £75,000 provided on the Loan Estimates.

The Minister for Works: But that is governed by Act of Parliament.

Mr. THOMSON: It may be. The point is we have taken into Consolidated Revenue £130,766 for which the Trust gets no credit, notwithstanding which we now have to provide £75,000 on which we will have to pay something like six per cent. We find from the Trust's report that the gross revenue for the year under review reached the highest point in the history of the Trust, the total amount collected being £421,255, an increase of £63,804 over the total for 1924, which was in turn the highest record at that date. These returns achieved by the Fremantle Harbour Trust may be taken as a safe criterion of the wonderful progress being made by the State.

Mr. Sleeman: The Trust's returns would be a lot more if we had wharfage dues on wheat.

Mr. THOMSON: And probably still more if some of the gentlemen in whom my friend is interested were to work a little harder.

Mr. Sleeman: They cannot do any more than they are doing.

Mr. THOMSON: However, I am dealing with the financial position and showing that on the Loan Estimates £75,000 is provided for the Trust, despite the fact that the Trust has paid into Consolidated Revenue £130,766. The Trust Commissioners' report that the war surtax of 20 per cent. on all dues and tolls, as distinct from handling charges, is still in operation, and that the collection under this heading amounted to £46,132 for the year. It is not sound business. If I wished to instal new machinery in my business and had made a profit of £130,000 for the year, I would not think of taking that profit into my income, spending it in other directions, and then borrowing £75,000 from the bank to extend my business. I would set aside £75,000 from the profit for the business extension.

Mr. Sampson: You might first of all decide to pay your income tax.

Mr. THOMSON: Of course, but I would not dream of incurring an additional liability of £75,000 to extend my business if I had made a profit of £130,000. The Harbour Trust Commissioners have strongly advised the abolition of the surcharge, which produced £46,132, with a view to reducing the port charges. It is the duty of the commissioners to reduce the port charges wherever possible. Such a reduction would be beneficial to the primary producers as it might lead to cheaper freights.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: They cannot get an cheaper wharfage, as no wharfage is paid on wheat exported.

Mr. THOMSON: I am referring to freights.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The Harbour Trust do not control freights.

Mr. THOMSON: No, but the people who are submitting ships for charter by the wheel pool or local buyers take into consideration the port dues that have to be paid. Their freight charges are levied on the dues at the port at which they intend to load. The commissioners advise that in the interest of the harbour the outside pilotage due should be abolished, and there another £10,000 of port charges could be saved.

The Minister for Works: Saved by whom? The shipowners.

Mr. THOMSON: When the Minister asks for an estimate for a particular job, the officers who compile it have to consider all

the details of railway freights and handling charges.

The Minister for Works: Do you think the British shipowners would reduce freights if that £10,000 were knocked off?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes.

The Minister for Works: Not at all. What difference would £10,000 a year make to all the boats that come into Fremantle?

Mr. THOMSON: In addition to the £10,000, there is the surcharge of £46,000, a total of £56,000, which in the opinion of the commissioners should be abolished.

Mr. Sleeman: They are interested in the primary producers.

Mr. THOMSON: I am studying the interests of the primary producers.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That amount would not make a halfpenny difference.

Mr. THOMSON: The price of wheat on the London market is reflected in Western Australia. Every charge levied for the handling of the wheat is added. There are the port dues and unloading charges at the other end, freight and insurance, and handling charges here.

Mr. Sleeman: What are the handling charges on wheat?

Mr. THOMSON: It is not loaded for nothing.

Mr. Sleeman: I do not think the primary producers are paying for the handling of wheat.

Mr. THOMSON: Does the hon. member suggest that the farmers are in the happy position that they have only to send their wheat to Fremantle and it automatically goes on to the boats?

Mr. Sleeman: They have to pay something for handling, but the wharfage charge is nil.

Mr. THOMSON: We recognise that the Trust have provided up-to-date elevators for loading wheat, but the elevators cost money and have to be paid for. I am indicating where £56,000 could be saved. When the Trust show a profit of £130,000, it should be their object to reduce the port charges.

The Minister for Works: The State has to get the money somewhere. How would you make it up?

Mr. THOMSON: The Government are making a taxing machine of a public utility.

The Minister for Works: There are services rendered.

Mr. THOMSON: Quite so, but it has always been said that the function of government is not to make profit out of public utilities. They are designed to provide for the wants of the people at the lowest possible cost, and not to make profits.

The Minister for Works: If we are losing elsewhere, we must make a profit somewhere.

Mr. THOMSON: Why penalise one section of the community?

Mr. Sleeman: Which section is being penalised?

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member's section is being penalised to a certain extent. Whatever charges are imposed are automatically passed on.

Mr. Sleeman: You suggest that the primary producers are being penalised.

Mr. THOMSON: In my opinion they are.

Mr. Sleeman: The commissioners are looking after them just as well as is anyone here.

Mr. THOMSON: I am supporting the recommendation of the commissioners. They recommended that the surcharge of £46,000 and the outside pilotage dues of £10,000 should be abolished.

Mr. Sleeman: You also agree that there should be no wharfage on wheat, but that there should be 1s. 6d. wharfage on timber.

Mr. THOMSON: Wheat shipped from the port of Fremantle makes employment for the people represented by the hon. member. I am pleased that the price of wheat is high, and I hope that in the interests of the State it will long continue to be high, because so much money is involved in our agricultural policy. The agriculturists and the pastoralists are the people who are providing the work.

Mr. Sleeman: But they do not provide the work that the timber industry does.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, they do. Would the hon. member agree to all wheat now shipped from Fremantle being sent away from Bunbury and Albany? We would make the change with pleasure.

Mr. Sleeman: You would not send it through Fremantle if it did not suit you to do so.

Mr. THOMSON: We are providing sustenance for hundreds of people in Fremantle.

Mr. Sleeman: Because the port of Fremantle suits you.

Mr. THOMSON: I feel rather amused at the member for Fremantle. He should remember we are all Western Australians. I am not blaming the present Administration for adopting the policy now being followed, but it is wrong to pay into Consolidated Revenue £130,000 of profit, and then to provide for harbour extensions out of loan funds.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Why didn't you object that the same conditions should apply to the motor ship "Kangaroo" when she earned three times her capital cost and the money was paid into Consolidated Revenue and then £49,000 was spent on her for alterations?

Mr. THOMSON: I did not protest.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The Government of the day did that in opposition to our wishes.

Mr. THOMSON: The principle is wrong. Here is a public utility, the operations of which affect a great portion of the State. The present system should not be perpetuated.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I am glad you are coming around to our way of thinking.

Mr. THOMSON: If the Honorary Minister and I are in accord on this question, we certainly disagree on many others. The commissioners' report also states—

The question of the cooling of fruit for shipment advanced another step during the year by the commissioners being informed by a deputation representing the fruit shippers that the previous requests made for the insulation of a shed was entirely unnecessary, and that all that was required was increased ventilation in one of the wharf sheds, so that the fruit while stacked in the shed after a heated run from the country in railway wagons could cool down to normal shade temperature, and the carbonic acid gas given off by the fruit could be dispersed.

The member for Swan and I attended a fruitgrowers' conference last week when this matter was thoroughly discussed. The growers were very grateful to the Harbour Trust for having assisted them in the way they have done. They stated, however, that owing to the refusal of the lumpers to stack goods higher than 8 feet there is a considerable space above that which could be insulated in such a way as to bring the fruit down to a temperature of 40 degrees. They showed that fruit had been taken out of cool store, placed on the wharf, and shut out of a shipment. It then had to go into a hot shed and serious deterioration followed. I

hope the Government will take that position into consideration, although nothing is provided on the Estimates.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: What is desired?

Mr. THOMSON: They want the space in the shed increased and the roof and ceiling insulated. They would then be able to put their fruit into that space, and from there it could be shot into the hold of the ship without any further handling. The Premier has stated that agriculture was directly responsible for the sum of £2,250,000 and was indirectly responsible for a greater part of the balance asked for. Western Australia requires a vigorous policy of land settlement and development. I congratulate the Government upon carrying that policy into effect. It is satisfactory on the whole to find that the Government are carrying on the good work which previous Governments have carried on. In 1911 the Labour Government did excellent work in liberalising the Agricultural Bank and in other directions. It is essential that new lands should be opened up and developed. I regret the Minister for Lands is not here to-night, for I hoped that the policy of the Government concerning the future administration of group settlements would have been announced. We have seen the report of the Royal Commission, and have had the result of a conference at Bunbury when the creation of an advisory committee was strongly recommended. No doubt the Government will profit by past experience. I wish to pay a tribute to Mr. Richardson, the officer in control of this huge undertaking. No doubt many mistakes have occurred, but considering that he had no definite policy to work to, except to get on with the work, he is to be commended for what he has done. There are great possibilities in the South-West. I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition upon having provided money for the carrying on of experiments near Albany. I recently saw the King River experimental plots. I was astounded at the splendid results of the work of the Albany Land Committee, under the capable direction of Mr. Vaughan, the departmental officer. More use should be made of that gentleman. Surrounding the plots is country of the very poorest nature. In less than three years these particular plots are thick with pasture that is knee-deep. Everything there shows the wonderful possibilities of that poor-looking country. The climate is excellent, and the moisture and warmth are all that are

needed for the growing of such crops. On the Loan Estimates a sum of £1,100,000 is provided for group settlements, and £150,000 for roads and drainage. In the Denmark area settlers have been placed 36 miles away from the railway. I attended an inter-district conference at Albany. One delegate there said it was costing these settlers £4 10s. a ton for freight for their goods and chattels from Denmark to their holdings. These settlers are receiving only 9s. or 10s. a day. When they grow potatoes they have to pay cartage at the rate of 4s. 6d. a cwt. upon them. In the circumstances, it is impossible for them to carry on successfully. Near Mt. Barker there are large areas of Crown lands similar in nature to land on the King River. It would be wise if the Government, instead of placing people 36 miles out from a railway, established groups upon that land. The State has sunk a considerable sum of money in the freezing works at Albany, which have not been a success. It is in the interests of the Government, therefore, to develop the land in the immediate vicinity of those works and the butter factory. The land I speak of is close to townships, roads are running through it, and there are schools in the vicinity. In view of the success that has attended the experiments at the King River, it seems that this particular land could well be put to the same use and provide a living for numbers of people. There is no provision on the Estimates for a railway from Denmark to Nornalup. Perhaps the Government are waiting until they get the cheap money in order to construct the line. Until the line is built, the settlers who are situated 36 miles from Denmark have no chance of making a success with their holdings.

The Minister for Railways: The cartage charges you mention seem to be extortionate.

Mr. THOMSON: The figures are correct.

The Minister for Railways: There are good roads within three or four miles of those settlers.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: It is quite correct.

The Minister for Railways: You refer to Group 116?

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Yes.

Mr. THOMSON: This is a charge levied by the department. The Premier said that £97,126 had been provided for public buildings, including sewerage and equipment. He also indicated that money was being provided for nurses' quarters at the Perth hospital. Money is also on the Estimates for

loans and grants to local authorities for the erection of country hospitals. The sum involved is about £19,000. Included in that is a sum for the discharge of liabilities of trustees of agricultural halls, mechanics' institutes and other institutions. Hardly sufficient money has been set down for the erection of country hospitals. I understand that £12,000 was provided for the Collic hospital, but I do not know whether that is included in the total of £19,000. If it is included, it will mean that not very much money will be available for country hospitals generally and they will be in for a bad time during the current financial year. I admit, generally speaking, that the Government have been as liberal as funds permitted regarding our country hospitals. It is recognised in my district and others that the Medical Department, with the Honorary Minister at the head of it, is working more harmoniously with the country districts than was the experience in the past. I regret that the funds provided are not larger, but, although I may be accused by some members of being inconsistent, I know the urgent need for providing adequate hospital accommodation in the country areas. Last year the Government spent £10,000 on the Perth-Armadale road, but nothing has been provided on the Loan Estimates this time. I realise that the Government have been in the fortunate position of having been able to spend £30,000 from the Federal grant, but the people in Albany received no benefit from the grant and the position there was so desperate that an appeal was made to the public and funds were raised with a view to putting sections of the Albany road into a state of better repair.

Mr. Sampson: There was a working bee on the road at Gosnells.

Mr. THOMSON: I know that the Government provided a subsidy on a £ for £ basis.

Mr. Sampson: Traffic was held up and everyone contributed towards the work, more or less.

Mr. THOMSON: I have shown the desperate plight in which the Albany people found themselves, and I trust that when the next Federal grant becomes available the residents of that district will receive some benefit.

Mr. Sampson: The expenditure of funds was not justified elsewhere more than on the road at Gosnells.

Mr. THOMSON: I recognise the position of the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) and if I represented that district I would adopt the same attitude as he is doing. On the other hand I wish to give the Government an indication of how the Albany people view their position. They recognised that if people were to travel with safety over the road something had to be done. They therefore contributed towards the work. The total amount provided for on the Loan Estimates is £4,748,795. I frankly confess that it is difficult for me to say what items should be excluded or what items should be cut down. I can quite understand that when the Estimates were submitted to the Treasurer originally he, as is usual with Treasurers, applied the blue pencil, much to the disgust of Ministers themselves. Nevertheless the sum I have mentioned is an enormous one for us to be asked to pass. When we realise that it involves an additional amount of £237,435 for interest and sinking fund every year, we have to appreciate the fact that we are placing a pretty hefty burden upon the people of Western Australia. It also demonstrates how essential it is that we shall secure the fullest value from the money expended. We as private members are not in the position to criticise or express an opinion as to whether the money provided on the Loan Estimates will be wisely expended. I have indicated that £75,000 should not have appeared upon the Estimates. It was during the time when the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) was Minister for Works that the Labour Government introduced a Bill for the appointment of a public works committee. That measure was rejected by the Legislative Council. Later Sir James Mitchell again introduced a Bill also providing for the appointment of a similar committee and that Bill passed this Chamber. I feel strongly on this point because I claim it is desirable in the interests of the State that we should have a strong public works committee to closely scrutinise our public expenditure. We are told that we are the custodians of the public purse. I have discussed many Estimates in this House, and I realise that there have been times when in our zeal we have reduced an item by £1 as an indication to the Government that the total should be reduced. Then we found when the next year's Estimates were presented, that the amount in

question had been exceeded. While we must carefully scrutinise our Revenue Estimates we must more carefully still examine the Loan Estimates. Although we are dealing with practically £4,750,000, all we have is a general discussion. The Premier gives the Committee the fullest information along general lines and then, although we claim to be the custodians of the public purse, we pass the Estimates and the money is expended when and where Ministers may decide. That is what we are faced with. In my opinion there should be more control of the Loan Estimates and for that reason we should have a strong public works committee to carefully scrutinise public expenditure. I have been told by men who have sat on the Federal Public Works Committee that many thousands of pounds of Commonwealth money have been saved because of the committee's investigations. Had that committee been in existence at an earlier stage, probably millions of pounds would have been saved instead of being wasted on works such as the Naval bases. I cannot discuss that question on the Loan Estimates but I mention it as an indication of what safeguards there are in a public works committee.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [8.25]: The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) has referred to the obvious fact that the Revenue Estimates of to-day do not provide that scope for a review of the activities of the State that they did in years gone by. The Revenue Estimates are referred to in the Budget which is supposed to give members an opportunity to discuss all phases of Governmental activities and to review generally the result of expenditure on various State activities and to judge of those results. While years ago that was possible because of the large amount of revenue expended in various directions, to-day we have to wait for the Loan Estimates to really arrive at an understanding of the expenditure in various directions and to attempt to analyse the position generally regarding the development of the State. The Revenue Estimates to-day are mainly confined to the payment of interest and sinking fund charges, some little maintenance, and the rest represents salaries. Therefore it is impossible for hon. members to give that close attention to the general development of the State that one would expect by means of a review or analysis of the

Revenue Estimates. Again, it is perfectly obvious that year by year there is, gradually but surely, a transference of previous revenue expenditure to the Loan Estimates. By this means we find that the revenue is proportionately more buoyant, while the loan expenditure increases with a consequent increased responsibility in respect of interest and sinking fund charges. Then again when we review the Loan Estimates, we find that to-day expenditure is not distributed as it was in years gone by over various activities in various parts of the State. On the other hand, that expenditure is mainly confined to large items. That practice virtually commenced when we started on a policy of agricultural railway construction. When that policy was adopted, huge sums of money were raised and expended on those works, and we found a large proportion of the loan expenditure concentrated practically on items relating to railway expenditure. Nowadays it has changed a little bit and we find that the present expenditure is more or less concentrated on agricultural development, including expenditure on groups. There is also a large increase in the expenditure on roads and water supplies for the metropolitan area. I do not propose to go into details in connection with the expenditure of those moneys. No one is more enthusiastic regarding agricultural development than am I. At the same time I am not prepared to follow those who claim that all is well with the large proportion of the expenditure that is concentrated on the groups. I do not propose to go into that question but merely to mention it in passing. I am not prepared to say that all is well. I question the wisdom of following the dictates of the Commonwealth Government in regard to the huge expenditure on road construction. To-day we have to raise a lot of money for expenditure by way of subsidy in respect of money to be returned to us by the Commonwealth. There are people who are urging that the money returned to us on account of road construction should be considerably increased. I would raise no objection to an increase in that direction if it did not entail an increased subsidy by the State. When we find the amount being increased one must ask himself whether we are acting wisely in spending such an enormous sum on roads. I admit that the last grant has been given without any provision for subsidy, but great care must be exercised in regard to the expenditure ahead

of settlement, particularly in the South-West. Roads have been made in the South-West, and because of the want of traffic, they have soon disappeared from sight by reason of the rapid growth of scrub. A fair amount of money has been wasted in that way, and I hope the Minister will realise that in this respect the South-West is a difficult proposition as well as being difficult from the point of view of settlement.

Mr. Richardson: Are they macadamised roads?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, roads that have been formed of gravel and limestone, and it would seem that this combination of material aids the growth to make its appearance. We know, after clearing in the South-West how rapid the re-growth is, and this makes its appearance on the formed roads as quickly as it does anywhere else. Therefore, unless the traffic is sufficiently heavy to keep that down we may expect to continue to find that the newly made roads will disappear from view. We must be struck by the ready manner in which the Assembly proposes to pass an amount of $4\frac{3}{4}$ millions. This is an enormous expenditure for roughly 360,000 people to undertake in one year. We must bear in mind that a considerable portion of this amount will not return interest immediately, and that for a time, while a portion of the interest will be contributed from outside, the main burden of interest and sinking fund will be the responsibility of 360,000 people. We should not fail to recognise that the chickens will come home to roost unless we exercise great care.

Mr. Sampson: Figuratively speaking, they will start to lay eggs as the result of this expenditure.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Leader of the Opposition rejoices in the fact that there has been a change in the country. That is true, but the hon. member was referring to the increased pastures. There is a great increase in the stock-carrying capacity of the huge area of Western Australia. I want to emphasise what is a more striking change with regard to the political position in Western Australia, and it is that the old political strategy has gone. Party methods have altogether changed. We find that in this Assembly there has ceased to be that careful review of Government activity that was experienced some years ago. To-day there seems to be a common understanding between

the Government and the Opposition, an understanding that is supported by the daily Press that if the policy of the Government goes along certain lines, and that if the Government keep on the right track, they will be permitted to reign in peace. Whether this change in political methods is going to make Western Australia flourish as the pastures have flourished, as emphasised by the Leader of the Opposition, remains to be seen. Personally, I view with a great deal of concern this apparent understanding between political parties to go along in the one given way that is not criticised by the Press and which does not result in the public getting that detailed information that can only be obtained by the careful watching of Government activities, and by the existence of a vigorous and definitely interested Opposition.

Mr. Panton: The Upper House is our Opposition now.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I intend to deal with the Upper House shortly. Apart from the fact that there is not that keen criticism that formerly took place in the Assembly, we find that if one attempts to take up a strong attitude in regard to a particular subject he is immediately assailed by the Press and held up as a pessimist, a mark-timer, a stagnater, or something equally opprobrious. In years gone by the man who was keen in his criticism was usually encouraged. It is a virile Opposition that brings good government. It is a live Opposition that really gets results from the Government. Where there is a want of keenness on the part of the Opposition then the public must become concerned with regard to the general administration. I congratulate the Government on the serene atmosphere in which they move and have their being. They are indeed in a glorious position.

Mr. Brown: What is wrong with the Opposition.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Government have little to worry about, but so far as the Press are concerned there is a good deal to worry about. If the Minister for Works were not so much concerned about the mutilation of his industrial legislation by another place, we would have little or nothing in respect of comment by Ministers. We must also recognise that while a common understanding exists in the Assembly, the value of political warfare has been moved to another place. We find now that

the erstwhile vigour of the Assembly in regard to the watching and the safeguarding of legislation and administration, has been transferred to the Legislative Council, a Chamber that is not so representative of the people and that has not had the experience of the Assembly regarding matters of detail. That is obvious from the fact that in the Assembly we have seven Ministers, each capable of taking his part, defending his administration and the expenditure of public money when called upon to do so. But Ministers do not appear to be called upon to do so, with the result that we get little, comparatively speaking, in the way of information. There is an air of indifference, and that, combined with the silence of the Press, gives one food for serious thought. The Legislative Council, however, is very active. I do not say members there are wisely active; I think they are dangerously active. For instance, whilst we have seven members in this Chamber capable of defending the Government policy, there are only two Ministers in the other place. I sympathise with those two Ministers just as much as I congratulate Ministers in this Chamber. There is no question that in recent years the responsibility of the two Ministers in the Council has increased enormously. We can see that the Legislative Council is becoming powerful enough to influence the Government policy to a great extent.

Mr. Lindsay: We have no chance here. Our numbers are not big enough.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The best Opposition we ever had in Western Australia was small in number. Governments in power have had bigger majorities than that possessed by the present Administration. And the member for Toodyay would have us believe there is no room for effective work here because of the big majority possessed by the Government. It is a majority of two!

Mr. Lindsay: No matter how good the case is that we put up, it has no effect.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That only emphasises the point I have been trying to make that even though there is criticism, that criticism is not regarded in the manner that one would expect, seeing that the Government and the Opposition so seldom differ. When they do differ, one would think that the difference would be emphasised by the Press. In this Chamber we have the

power of initiation in the way of expenditure. New works must have their origin here. But while we can under these Estimates and by other means initiate works and expenditure, another place can by certain activities absolutely undermine the whole of the Government's ambitions in regard to expenditure. One need only refer to a couple of matters that happened recently. The Government incurred comparatively huge expenditure on the further equipment of abattoirs in the metropolitan area. In order to recoup that expenditure, the Government introduced certain charges.

Mr. Sampson: Terrific charges.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Those charges were, very properly, laid upon the Table in either House as regulations. Another place, having no voice in regard to expenditure, immediately attacked the regulations.

Mr. Sampson: They were also attacked here.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: By legislation another place has power to veto the administrative Acts of a Government. That is totally wrong. Another place is but partially representative of the people, and is limited in its knowledge of general administration through not having the opportunities afforded in this place, and cannot deal with expenditure as this Chamber does. By legislation we have given another place the definite power to dictate to the Government on important questions. The abattoirs regulations were disallowed by another place. Immediately they were disallowed, the people using the abattoirs took advantage of the opportunity to notify the Minister that although he had spent something like £40,000 for the purpose of providing them with increased facilities, they would not pay in proportion to the increased expenditure. They calmly informed the Minister that they were prepared to pay under the old scale of charges, a scale imposed prior to the expenditure of the additional £40,000. This is not a question of the £40,000, but one of principle. The trouble is that this Assembly does not realise the serious nature of the departure from constitutional practice that is involved. The expense is incurred by this Chamber on a definite understanding that the charges levied for the increased facilities will be such as to recoup the expenditure. That understanding hav-

ing been arrived at here, another Chamber, with no voice in regard to the details, can upset all the calculations of the Minister and say, "Although you have incurred the expenditure, you cannot earn the revenue." We hear a good deal about direct action. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) would be loud in his condemnation of a trade union or an individual attempting to use power on something over which it or he had no legal right of control, thereby hampering industry and interfering with public policy. He would term that a departure from the recognition of law and order. But here we find another place taking money from the Government and putting it in the pockets of private individuals. Yet the members of another place preach recognition of constitutional procedure and observance of law and order. Another place attempted a similar line of conduct in regard to a still larger expenditure. I refer to the Minister's proposal to increase water rates as a result of the enormous increase in the expenditure on metropolitan water supply. The Assembly knew that this additional expenditure was to be incurred, and understood that it was to be recouped through increased rates paid by consumers of the water. But another place is again active in attempting to prevent the Government from receiving the revenue which is essential to justify the expenditure. I want the Assembly to realise that we are drifting into a dangerous position. Certainly it is a position that is absolutely new as regards the relative responsibilities of Assembly and Council. Unless members take an active and serious interest in the matter, the arrogance of another place will grow to so dangerous an extent that the Assembly will be forced to take action which in the best interests of the State ought to be avoided. Another view I would like to put forward is as regards the amount of money on these Estimates that is being expended on activities, enterprises and works which will largely increase private wealth. For instance, railways are to be built. Immediately a railway comes close to lands, their value is increased. The productive value of the lands is heightened, and their owners are compensated by obtaining increased wealth. The same thing applies to the construction of tramways, and also to the provision of roads and water supplies.

At one time the country people, in order to get secondary education for their children, were compelled—those who could afford it—to send the children to the metropolis. Now there are high schools established in various centres, enabling country people to obtain secondary education for their children at a minimum cost, comparatively speaking. All these expenditures go to increase private wealth and private profit. When one sees such an enormous amount on the Loan Estimates and realises the great benefit which the individual will gain from them, one is concerned about the small degree of patriotism displayed by those who gain most from the expenditure. In Western Australia we have numerous people who are relatively wealthy. When the position is analysed, one finds that the great majority of them have acquired their wealth because of Government expenditure and Government assistance in development. Take the case of Bruce Rock, a district with which I am associated. Undoubtedly the Bruce Rock people are comparatively wealthy, wealthy in comparison with what their financial position was when they first started at Bruce Rock. In a matter of 12 or 13 years, with Government assistance in the way of making land available at a cheap rate and afterwards providing railway facilities, water supplies, and so forth, Bruce Rock landowners have been enabled to produce on a basis showing a profit year by year. I admit there are some at Bruce Rock who are still struggling, the explanation being the existence of adverse circumstances in farming just as in every other walk of life. However, quite a number of people in the Bruce Rock area have made considerable amounts of money. Yet it is a deplorable fact that in this area one finds men actively looking for opportunities to invest their profits outside Western Australia. I raised this matter on a definite motion. I tried to get the Assembly to realise that we must review our financial position from a revenue point of view. We should do it immediately. The motion received scant consideration, but I have noticed since then that various members, and particularly the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert), have emphasised the need for doing something to encourage a greater investment in Western Australia of the profits and wealth made here by individuals. I ask the Government to

realise the seriousness of the situation and to get some tribunal—I care not what it is or who it is—to get its head down and probe the problem. Only the other day an interested party came from New South Wales with some activity to be established there. For that purpose he needed some tens of thousands of pounds. He came straight to Western Australia and sought out men who have surplus wealth as a result of the kindness of Western Australia to them; no doubt assistance was given by the banks as well. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) can tell more than I can about the matter, because he comes more into contact with those people than I do. He moves more in that circle. However, I know the matter to be as I have stated. Probably the member for Williams-Narrogin will recognise the individual and the occasion. He is aware that certain men with surplus wealth were sought out, and that representations were made to them to this effect: "There is a good proposition in New South Wales, with undoubted security. While the security is worth so much to the New South Wales investor, it is worth so much more to you on an equal return, because your local taxation is so much heavier. If you transfer your wealth from Western Australia to New South Wales and invest the money there, then although the investment will return a smaller amount than that which it would bring you here, yet the profit to you will be enormous in comparison." That is purely so because our taxation penalises the man who invests here as compared with the man who invests in Victoria or New South Wales. As a matter of fact there are in Western Australia people who have accumulated wealth in this State and who are able to educate their children on what they save in taxation by investing their surplus wealth in Eastern Australia. And this is growing. Because wool has increased in value, the incomes of the pastoralists in the North have increased enormously.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: We shall have to reduce State taxation.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member would have a reduction in the taxation of the bigger incomes. I do not advocate that. As a matter of fact, as little as I am able to go into it, I cannot see any concrete remedy. But we have experts on the subject, and we got together a committee to go into the disabilities of Western Australia.

Everybody was astonished at the enormous amount of material that committee was able to place before the Federal Disabilities Commission. It was material not previously available. When I moved a motion in regard to the same matter I pointed out to Ministers that it was not possible to get from the departmental heads the information required to make a case. Ministers construed my motion into an attack on the administrative heads. I did not desire to attack anybody. Afterwards, when the Federal Disabilities Commission came along, Ministers had to appoint a committee to put up a case. It proved a very able committee. The most capable of all, Mr. Simpson of the Treasury, deserves unbounded praise for the energy and capacity shown in his preparation of that case. I want to have appointed a committee consisting, say, of Mr. Simpson, with some assistance, to go into this question and see if we cannot make public the enormous amount of money earned in Western Australia because of the Government enabling people to acquire land on easy terms, to secure enormous areas in the North-West and accumulate money as the result of Government expenditure such as we are dealing with in the Estimates before us, and then invested beyond the State because, it is said, we are asking a little too much in taxation. Surely we can appeal to Western Australians to be a little more patriotic! We all realise that what we are struggling against is the want of secondary industries. Money cannot be secured in Western Australia for secondary industries. Competition from the Eastern States is too strong, and if we do manage to start a secondary industry it cannot stand up against the dumping of Eastern States manufactures into Western Australia. We require to investigate these questions and see if we cannot overcome them. Some little could be done under the proposal submitted by the member for Pilbara (Mr. Lamond). A few people up North are earning too much from the enormous areas they hold. Yet the large amount they are earning is small compared with the possibilities of the areas they hold. Their huge areas are not developed to the extent they should be. Those pastoralists have sufficient income from the areas they are using, and consequently they say, "Why extend? We have more than enough. We are getting huge incomes, so much so that we can invest them in Victoria and New South Wales and

so earn a further income from our surplus wealth." We made a mistake by extending the leases to 1948. The Act did not have the effect the Assembly was led to believe it would have. We were told that under it no area of more than 1,000,000 acres could be held. We know that such areas are held to-day. Since development has taken place and wool increased in value, we have to ask ourselves whether any man really requires 1,000,000 acres. I say he wants nothing like it, that half that area is sufficient for any pastoralist. However, I do not want anything in the nature of confiscation. I do not want to do injury to those men. I want merely to appeal to their patriotism. Western Australia has been generous towards them, and they have accumulated sufficient wealth. If it could be brought home to them that the development of one of the wealthiest portions of this State is being retarded because of their control of enormous areas, I believe those men would co-operate with us in an effort to get a better class of settlement on smaller areas, so as to increase population in that part of the State. In that regard I hope the Government will immediately get to work. If they will not concede all the member for Pilbara desires in respect of an investigation of the North, I hope they will go into the question of the pastoral leases and see it, next session, they cannot bring down a proposition that will do no injury to the pastoralists, yet will have the effect of increasing population up North, where increased population is so badly needed. One would naturally pass from this subject to the development of group settlements. However, I do not propose to do that. As a member of the Royal Commission that inquired into group settlements, I went very closely into the general activities and expenditure on group settlements, and endeavoured to arrive at an opinion as to what the result would be. To deal with that question on the Loan Estimates is utterly impossible. But I am very much concerned with the apparent indifference of the Assembly to the Group Settlement Commission's report. I do not mind it so much from the Opposition, but I say that members on this side have not treated that report as it deserves. It may be right or it may be wrong; it may be an over-estimate or it may be an under-estimate, but at least it is worthy of discussion. When we realise that with the expenditure now proposed we shall have expended over

£3,000,000 on the group settlements, and when there is a difference of opinion with regard to the wisdom of that expenditure, and when the Royal Commission has recommended caution, surely the report of that Royal Commission is worthy of serious consideration! Members on this side are accepting the responsibility for carrying on. They know that the Royal Commission was appointed as the result of a party decision. At the elections the Labour Party definitely declared that group settlement would be investigated by a Royal Commission if that party were returned in a majority. We know that the present Minister for Lands was not favourably disposed towards the investigation. He did not want it. Nevertheless, it was a pledge given to the people, and the Government rightly decided to appoint a Commission. That Commission's report is not the property of the Government. It is true the report went to the Government; but the party has to accept responsibility for it. So, as a party, we are to-day in the position that by ignoring the findings and recommendations of the Commission we are accepting the responsibility of carrying on the group settlements, and the Minister ceases to have that responsibility. I do not propose to say any more on that point. I will let it remain with the party to consider the Commission's report or leave it alone. On the items I will voice my opinion in respect of one or two matters, but as to the policy and administration of group settlement I say there is only one practical way to arrive at a definite understanding, and that is to have a general discussion on the Royal Commission's report. The Leader of the Opposition has referred with pride to the increased production in every part of Western Australia. With him I rejoice at it. There can be no question that during the last few years there has been an enormous increase in production and in cultivation. But that only goes to prove that production is the result of individual effort. It is not Governments, but individuals, that increase production. It is individuals that experiment and help one another to improve methods and so improve results. Therefore, while we can rejoice that, by the distribution of people in various parts of the State and their activities, we are getting greater production and consequently greater wealth, we have to recognise that just as production increases, so the problem of profitably mar-

keting that production becomes more pronounced. During the election members of the Government said definitely that they recognised this as a Government responsibility. They said that if returned to power they would assist in the marketing of the State's production. While the Minister for Agriculture, in response to a definite party declaration at the elections, introduced a Bill for the marketing of fruit, we find that another place vetoed that Bill. Strange to relate, those people who claim to be representatives of primary producers as a body voted against organised markets.

Mr. Lindsay: Under Government control.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, that is where the hon. member is wrong. It is true the "West Australian" voiced that opinion, but I thought the hon. member would study the Bill for himself and not be dictated to by merchants, or by the newspaper representing those merchants. The administration of that measure was to be wholly in the hands of a board of producers. They were to have full control. The Bill gave them the right to control the marketing. I regret that the solution of the great problem of Western Australia has not been assisted since the present Government came into power. Another place representing vested interests saw fit not to make the Bill more acceptable, but to reject it. Members there did as the members on the cross benches here—they voted against the principle of the Bill. When a member votes against the second reading of a Bill he votes against the principle, and the members concerned voted against the principle of organised marketing. We know why they did it. It was because those who profit as a result of increased production were more active in political propaganda when the Bill was introduced. It is deplorable that the producers, who in a few months will realise what the loss of that Bill means, did so little, while those who exploit them did so much to secure the defeat of the Bill.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The protests we received were from the organised growers.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The protests were from those people who were in a position to exploit the struggling growers. The Mt. Barker apple growers have a glorious control of the market. Their cold storage gives them a monopoly. To-day they are sending apples to the metropolitan area. I myself got a case from Mt. Barker to-day.

If members wish to get good fruit at a reasonable price, they should buy at Mt. Barker when apples are cheap, store them with the co-operative people, and bring them out during this hot weather when a good apple appeals to one. Because Mt. Barker growers have such a glorious control as a result of their cold storage works they say, "Hands off the apple market. No organisation by other growers; you struggle through and get the Government, the I.A.B., or any one else to see you through, but do not interfere with us. We are having a really good run because we have combined."

Mr. Brown: What about Bridgetown growers?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: They are in an exactly similar position. The extraordinary thing is that the Bridgetown and Mt. Barker concerns claim to be co-operative organisations, but they have their tongues in their cheek when they talk of co-operation which is limited to that extent. The defeat of the Bill was due to the organisation of vested interests, and the private exploiters concentrated their influence on the Legislative Council and were backed by organised growers who had a voice in the Press to the exclusion of struggling growers. In spite of all those difficulties we are making great progress. The marketing of apples during the last season has been most encouraging. There has been no great difficulty about getting them away. We had some difficulty owing to the limitation of markets, but that has been overcome. To-day we are back to normal conditions in respect of shipping and marketing, and as time rolls on the quality of our produce improves. In London to-day the Australian apple tops the market and is sought. The same applies to our wheat and wool. We can compete without difficulty. There is no trouble about marketing Western Australian wheat, which commands 1s. to 2s. per quarter more than the wheat from other parts of Australia. We have established the fact that we produce grain of high standard. Some people complain that our standard, comparatively speaking, is too high. Eastern States people quite recently made representations to our Minister for Agriculture to ascertain why Western Australian grain was of a higher standard and was commanding more respect in the world's market. It was found that we have a higher standard because we grow a grain of better quality. Consequently we can compete even

against the rest of Australia, and Australia can compete against any other part of the world. We are in a glorious position as regards wheat growing, and there is no need for fear on the score of over-production. Some people contend that when Russia or some other country gets active, it will be necessary for Western Australia to look out. There is nothing in that contention. Ours is a superior mixing wheat, and the more of inferior wheat that is imported into England, the greater will be the quantity of good wheat required for mixing purposes. As Russian production increases, so the demand for our superior wheat to mix with it will increase. For fruit, wheat and wool, the outlook is most encouraging and our development is really fine. But it is sad that, although we are getting increased wealth as a result of successful competition in the world's market, Western Australia is not getting the benefit of it. On the other hand, the wealth thus accumulated is going to other parts of Australia for investment. I appeal to the Government to continue to assist in the establishment of co-operative butter factories. I want them to follow up the cows as closely as possible, in order that there may be no chance for vested interests to get a footing in the manufacturing of the product. As the cows increase, we want facilities for manufacturing the product. People in strong positions have been attempting to get the whole of our dairy products concentrated and controlled by one big company. I am glad that the co-operative movement was able to prevent that. The Westralian Farmers' Ltd. got active; they did not hesitate to spend money to prevent private control of the products of group settlements and other areas. To-day that attempt at private control is dead. There is a growing activity for the establishment of co-operative factories in different parts of the State. The Government can do much to foster that movement, and I hope they will realise what it means to Western Australia. The greatness of New Zealand is due to her having organised her butter industry on a co-operative basis, under which the people controlling it are the people who produce it. Because of that, they are interested in the quality, and they attend to the marketing of their butter, just as our wheatgrowers are attending to the marketing of their wheat. As our wheat growers are succeeding, so New Zealand succeeded with her co-operative butter

factories. We have to do likewise. While I agree with the Leader of the Opposition in his constant references to the great increase of production in this State, I join issue with him when he states that marketing is not a serious problem that has to be recognised. Production can be left to the individual; marketing cannot. I hope that the Government, although they do not receive much encouragement from another place, will wherever possible, encourage and assist co-operative effort. I appeal to the Minister for Agriculture to take special notice of the difficulties attending Esperance development. Esperance this year is going to produce a fair quantity of wheat for export. It is the first time the Esperance settlers have been in that position. But they will experience great difficulty to get it away. There are quite a number of problems attending Esperance development that the Government should investigate. The exchange on cheques in the agricultural districts in 1s. per cent.; the exchange on cheques at Esperance is 7s. 6d. per cent. The handling charge for wheat at Fremantle is about 1s. 3d.; at Esperance it is about 3s. 6d. The port of Esperance is not registered under the Customs, and there is difficulty regarding shipping. If a sailing ship went there, which would be the kind of vessel used, provision would have to be made for a tug to help her into the port. Costs, too, will be enormously increased unless something is done to expedite the delivery of the wheat on the jetty. I mention these things that immediate attention might be given to them. The Esperance settlers are rejoicing to-day because they have a considerable quantity of wheat for export, but if the value of the wheat is absorbed by the charges I have indicated, they will conclude it is a hopeless business and will abandon their efforts. I know the Minister for Agriculture is taking the matter in hand. We have already discussed it, but many departments are interested. The Minister for Agriculture has a limited say; either the Minister for Works or the Railway Department controls the jetty; the Agricultural Bank and the I.A.B. are interested, which brings the Minister for Lands into it. When I go to one Minister I am told, "I cannot finalise this; I recognise the position, but I have to discuss it with someone else." I go to someone else, but there again the reply is, "I cannot final-

ise it; someone else has to have a say." Between the lot nothing is being done. I appeal to Ministers to assist this place, where considerable public expenditure has been incurred by building a railway in anticipation of settlement, because settlement is small in comparison with the length of railway. This year there will be an increased demand for Esperance land if we can show people that what they produce can be marketed at a reasonable rate. Under existing conditions they cannot market it at a reasonable rate, and the Minister should give close attention to the matter. The wheat pool people are anxious to assist and are prepared to help with finance. They recognise that they have a responsibility to assist in the marketing of Esperance wheat, the same as the wheat of Bruce Rock or Wyalcatchem. Although the expense will be great and there are difficulties to be faced, they are prepared to do their part to assist if the Government also will co-operate. I agree with previous speakers that we have a great country. There are some people who regard me as a pessimist, simply because I was one of those who urged caution regarding group settlement. I am still of opinion that very great caution is required. I could take a number of practical business men through the groups and bring them back to Perth, and they would be the most satisfied men in Australia. They would be enthusiastic supporters of group settlement. They would think it was the grandest kind of thing ever attempted in any country, and the grandest method of settlement in any part of the Empire. I could take them on another trip and their hearts would be in their boots. They would say, "My God! What is going to happen with the huge expenditure in this area?" There are groups and groups. From some of these groups such as those around Manjimup and Jarnadup the visitor will come back satisfied that the settlers have a glorious future. If they go to Abba River they will have the "blues" for a week after their return.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [9.31]: I listened with great interest to the utterances of the member for Guildford. They should give rise to a great deal of thought on the part of members, especially in the reference he made to the motion he brought before the House, in which I was particularly interested and in which members generally

should have been more interested than they appeared to be. He drew attention to the fact that there was a sort of general agreement between both sides of the House that everything was peaceful and lovely in the garden. I could not help looking round the Chamber and noticing that there were 10 members on the Government side of the House listening to him, and six on this. There were 16 members out of 50 listening to his speech, which was ample justification for the strictures he passed upon members. I am not going to speak upon idealistic or academic lines. I shall deal more particularly with the f.s.d. or practical side of the various questions. I may be looked upon as a parochial. These loan moneys affect our individual electorates, and each member should see to it that his electorate has a fair run in the allocation of the funds. I listened with interest to what the Premier said. It was not my intention to speak to the general discussion this evening, but to reserve my remarks for the items. It was not what the Premier had to say, but some of the things he left unsaid that has caused me to speak this evening. I have often referred to the Yorkrakine railway. I have introduced deputations innumerable to Ministers since I have been member for Avon. On the last occasion when I led a deputation representing the whole of the country from Yarramony to Merredin, we left completely satisfied in our minds that at last we had found a Government which would do something for us, and that there was a big chance of a start being made with the railway before the end of the financial year. On a previous occasion in the House I gave members something which rather surprised them. I intend to proceed along the same lines to-night. A distinct injustice has been done to the people I represent as well as those in the Toodyay electorate. It is a shameful thing that they should be made political catspaws. After 17 or 18 years of waiting these people were led to believe something would at last eventuate for them. I find from the Loan Estimates however, the same old unexpended £30,000 at the end of June, 1925, and no provision for any expenditure for the ensuing year, merely an anticipated unexpended balance of £30,000. Evidently it is not intended that anything shall be done in the way of starting a railway for these people. After all the talk, the deputations, the heart-burnings and the struggles of these people since 1908

nothing is to be done for them. They have now reached the stage when the sons who are growing up have grown so tired of waiting and of carting their produce 26 miles to a siding, that they are clearing out and leaving their fathers to carry the baby. I intend to give members something to show that my indignation is justified. Here is a brief history of what has taken place since Mr. McMahon, one of the members of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, the present Minister for Lands and the ex-Premier (the Leader of the Opposition) gathered together the crowd of unemployed at Fremantle and placed them on the land at Yorkrakine.

Mr. Sleeman: And they all did well.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No. At least 40 per cent. have been starved out. In 1908 the prospective Yorkrakine settlers were told by the then Premier that no settler would be more than seven miles from a railway. Mr. John Scaddan, when Premier, stated that when existing authorisations were completed the Yorkrakine railway would follow, and the survey was forecasted in the Governor's Speech of that year. The late Mr. Frank Wilson, an ex-Premier, stated that the Government would honour the promise. On 1st November, 1916, the late Mr. Frank Wilson promised a deputation that the advisory board would be sent out, and that if the report were favourable the survey would be proceeded with. On 13th June, 1917, the report had not been completed owing to the advisory board's chairman being ill, and that gentleman subsequently dying. Attempts to secure a finalisation from the Government failed. Mr. Frank Wilson then died. In November, 1918, Sir Henry Le-froy became Premier and he met a deputation that urged the construction of the line. Sympathy was extended and an investigation promised. The settlers on 19th January, 1919, asked the Premier what had been done in the matter. The reply was that the Premier was going to Melbourne to raise funds for public works and that the important Yorkrakine district would not be overlooked. Upon his return he got the sack.

Mr. Teesdale: There was a lot of bother over it. It killed a few of them and got some of them the sack. It seems a fatal sort of place.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: In May, 1919, Mr. Colebatch, the then Premier, was written to, but nothing eventuated except the riot at Fremantle known as the "Battle of the Barricades." Exit Mr. Colebatch; no

flowers by request. On 19th August, 1919, a deputation waited upon the one and only Sir James Mitchell, who admitted that the railway was necessary and justifiable and promised an inquiry. Early in 1920 the Premier was asked the Government's intentions, and a reply was received that the Advisory Board would again inspect as soon as practicable. October 11, 1920, the Advisory Board reported in glowing terms. On 9th December, 1920, the Yorkrakine Railway League decided to deputationise the Premier, who refused to meet them, but wrote that he would introduce a Bill for the construction of the railway next session. Be it noted that there were elections pending at that time. Mr. Scaddan wrote to the league supporting the project. Mr. Collier also tickled the ears of the Yorkrakine groundlings. He said that if in power after the elections he would carry out the Mitchell promise, and if in Opposition he would assist the Government to pass the Bill. November, 1921, saw the Public Works Department authorised to proceed with the survey. The Premier's promise to introduce the Bill was not kept. December, 1923, once again on the eve of the elections, after the farmers had waited 15 weary years, the Bill was passed. I would call the attention of members to the fact that in 1925 the same old game was going on. I do not know whether these people are being made political catspaws. I should hardly think, as has been suggested in the country districts, that the £30,000 which is set down on the Estimates has been put there to keep them going, or that it has been placed there with the intention, somewhere about next September or October, of getting the railway properly started so that it will be in full swing when the elections come along. I do not voice this as my opinion, but it has been voiced by many settlers. A deputation from Yarramony and Quellagetting, representing about 100 soldiers, waited on the Premier. The settlers of North Cunderdin, Hindmarsh, West and East Yorkrakine, Kodjokodin, North Kellerberrin, North Baandee and North Nangeenan, representing a string of settlement stretching as far as Merredin, and the old pioneer group of Yorkrakine settlers of 1908 who have been waiting for this railway for 18 years, joined in the meetings. It is time something definite was done for them. I am sorry the Premier is not here to-night. I thought something would have been said regarding

this matter, but no word was spoken of it. He made no comment when the Leader of the Opposition referred to the Yarramony railway. I will also quote the Premier's remarks on the occasion of the last deputation I took to him. Prior to that a series of meetings was held along the length of that country.

Mr. Hughes: This is the next volume, I suppose.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Just as the hon. member pleases. It may be a laughing matter to him, but it is a serious one to me and the settlers. The Railway League had a big meeting at Yorkrakine at which about 100 settlers were present. They met on the following Sunday at Quellagetting, where the soldier settlement is. The chairman of the meeting showed that one obstacle after another had been surmounted, until a deputation waited upon the Minister for Lands, when it was stated that only shortage of money stood between the league and their objective. Judging from the remarks of the Premier it seemed that the Government could get all the money that is wanted for railway construction. There must, therefore, have been another obstacle inasmuch as there was a limit to the amount they were prepared to add to the interest bill. It was to ask for the removal of this last obstacle that they were at the meeting that day. The chairman also stated that at a large and representative meeting of the Yorkrakine settlers the following motion had been unanimously carried:—

That this meeting request our executive to urge the Government to proceed with the construction of the Yarramony-Baandee railway; that our delegates are herewith authorised to pledge the district to the betterment principle to meet the estimated shortage of interest earnings on the working of the line, as set out in the Government Advisory Committee's report; payments to be based on unimproved land values.

Continuing, the speaker said that scores of settlers had grown old in the struggle they had put up during the last 15 years, and were rather sick with hope deferred. He also pointed out that economic conditions were altering and it was not possible to stand the strain much longer. He thought that the present Government might reasonably be expected to help those who were willing to help themselves. Meetings were held at other centres along the line and it was unanimously decided to put that proposition before the Premier. I intro-

duced the deputation to the Premier and he told us that he could not make any definite promise as to when the line would be constructed. He informed us, however, that it would be taken into consideration when the Loan Estimates were framed. He said he hoped it would be possible to carry out the work at an early date. Speaking at considerable length in his usual affable way the Premier went on to forecast a record amount for the Loan Estimates, and referred to the heavy interest burden to be incurred by the people of the State. He told the deputation that he was afraid to contemplate what the loan expenditure would be this year and he hoped that members of Parliament would be merciful to him when the Estimates were before the House. Mr. Baxter, M.L.C., told him members would help if the money was for development work. Then the Premier said it would be, and he continued—

So long as that was so, it was wise expenditure but even in that direction, there was a limit to the burden which could be placed on the shoulders of the taxpayers. The situation would be greatly relieved and would justify a much greater expenditure this year than in any previous year because the State had signed the new migration agreement. Under that agreement the Government would be able to get money, not at $5\frac{1}{2}$ and 6 per cent., but at an interest rate of 1 per cent. for the first five years and a third of the total for the next five years. Under the agreement he thought the Government would be able to include some works other than group settlement, such as railway construction, roads, and works not provided for in the old agreement. The State would therefore be justified in embarking upon a pretty vigorous policy of developmental work, if a considerable amount of money at 1 per cent. could be obtained. He thought the State would take advantage of it. It would be of very great benefit to Western Australia.

Hon. members will, in view of the Premier's statement, understand my feelings of intense indignation when I found that nothing had been provided on the Loan Estimates for this railway. I was confident that something would be done. I note that the survey has been completed to Merredin, but the House decided that the line should not go on to Newcarrie until an investigation had been made regarding the route to Merredin. Money has been found for all sorts of things, including the Salmon Gums-Norseman railway, and it is no wonder that one man in the Yorkkrake district said to me, "How long, oh Lord,

have we got to wait for our railway? Do you think we will ever get it? Do you think we will get it in 20 years?" I told him that I thought that was about the time. Having voiced my protest I can only let it rest at that. I do not know what the settlers will think about the position in which they have been placed. If only something could be done to start earth-works, with the £30,000 that was provided for the line, it would give the settlers some hope. It seems a damnable thing that these people have to go on year after year only to find that the repeated promises for the construction of the line continue to be unredeemed. Now they are in the soup again. There are other matters to which I desire to draw attention, but I will deal with them on the items. Perhaps hon. members may not regard my speech as being on the same high plane as that of the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson).

Mr. Teesdale: At any rate you have not run down the country as he did.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not think the people who are waiting for the construction of this line would appreciate a speech on a lofty plane on this question. I feel very keenly the absence of any provision for the Yarramony-Baandee railway. When a large number of people met me at Quellagetting they asked me if I thought anything would be done. I told them that from the way the Premier had spoken at the deputation I thought they were quite safe, that something would be done although perhaps not in the near future but when the Loan Estimates were brought down. I am bitterly disappointed to find that no provision has been made for the line, and I have written to the people concerned to tell them that they have no hope. I expect a storm of protest from one end of the State to the other.

Mr. Thomson: And rightly so, too.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It is damnable to think that this sort of thing can go on. The people have to cart their wheat over long distances and yet this £30,000 remains unexpended! I cannot find words in which to adequately express my indignation.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.53]: I recognise the disabilities that the settlers in the district referred to by the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) are labouring under and I deeply sympathise with him in his

disappointment at finding no provision on the Loan Estimates for the Yorkkrakine railway.

Mr. Thomson: Unfortunately sympathy will not help them to get their produce away.

Mr. SAMPSON: I recognise that, but I regret that the unceasing efforts of the member for Avon have not been crowned by provision on the Estimates for this railway.

Mr. Hughes: Why did not your Government carry out the work?

Mr. Teesdale: Because they did not have time.

Mr. Lindsay: They were in office for only eight or nine years!

Mr. SAMPSON: There is no doubt that under their existing conditions the people of Yorkkrakine must find that wheat production is unprofitable. It is satisfactory to note that the policy of the Mitchell Government with respect to the settlement of the group areas is to be continued by the present Government and that funds are provided for that purpose on the Loan Estimates. On Friday I inspected part of the Bateman Estate, which is really part of the Peel Estate, and I was delighted to note the progress made there. The way subterranean clover, paspalum, couch, and other grasses have been established is extremely gratifying and furnishes something of which the people of Western Australia can well be proud. Results have shown that what was formerly regarded as land not worth worrying about has proved wonderfully productive and has fully justified the optimism of the Leader of the Opposition. Regarding the question of railways, I am sorry that the Brookton-Armadale proposition has not received practical consideration. The line is needed, and if it were constructed it would result in more country being opened up and the cost of transporting wheat and other produce would be materially reduced. In addition, the haulage would be less costly owing to the fact that the proposed route traverses an ancient river bed, thus providing the advantage of gravitation. There are some matters in connection with the Loan Estimates on which we may congratulate ourselves. One is the provision of funds for additions to the power station. Our secondary industries are increasing, and more power is needed. The output of the power station is at its peak, and the installation of additional machinery is justified. The erection of more hospitals must go hand in hand

with the development of the country, and wherever there is settlement to any marked extent, a hospital is required. Although some provision has been made for that purpose, there are many places where hospitals are required but where facilities cannot yet be provided. I notice that a small sum appears in the Loan Estimates for the purchase of land for a pine plantation. That is a work in which prison labour could be profitably used. I have always wondered why men should be held in prison in comparative idleness. I met a man recently who had been a prisoner for a period of two or three years and he told me he was looking for work. He had had a job as a labourer for three days, but as he developed blisters on his hands he had to give up the work. This man is not a tradesman, and it was inevitable that on his release his only opportunity of employment would be at unskilled work. He secured a job and lasted for three days at it, but the main result was a crop of blisters and he had to give up the work.

Mr. Lindsay: You do not say he was honestly looking for work and gave it up because of blisters.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is so.

Mr. Lindsay: Then he deserved to have to do without it.

Mr. SAMPSON: This prompts me to say that men in prison should be given work they are qualified to do and work that will enable them to hold a job after they are released. The man I have mentioned has a wife and family, but he has no work today. Having been in the Fremantle prison for two or three years, he is no longer able to stand up to a day's work. That is a sad commentary on our prison system. It is of no use holding men in prison in an apparent attempt to reform them and give them an opportunity to rehabilitate their characters if they are to be reduced by a system of comparative idleness to a state of inability to work after their release. An amount is provided on the Estimates for accommodation at the Cave House. I do not know to what extent that amount will provide the accommodation so necessary. At present it is impossible to obtain accommodation there. The rooms have been booked up to at least the end of January. People who would like to enjoy a holiday at our beautiful Cave House, so well conducted and amidst such delightful surroundings, may possibly be

compelled to go East. In our Tourist Bureau, we have an officer, Mr. Hayward, who is continually preaching the gospel, "See Western Australia first," and many people would like to follow his advice, but unfortunately the lack of accommodation prevents them. I regret that the Minister is not present to let us know exactly what accommodation is likely to be provided. The question of water supply for country and outer suburban districts is always with us. In the outer suburban districts comparatively little progress is being made. There has been an agitation at Parkerville for many months with the object of securing a supply of water. I am advised that until the settlers are prepared to guarantee the payment of interest, sinking fund and other charges, there is no hope of their securing an extension. If the extension were made, I am sure Parkerville would immediately advance, and that the amount required would soon be forthcoming. These remarks apply with equal truth to Kalamunda, which is one of the most noted of our health resorts, but is without a water supply. Those who require water at Kalamunda must sink wells, cart water or rely on tank supply. That is a shocking state of affairs for a district otherwise well served. The Minister should regard with some degree of sympathy the reasonable requirements of the people in those districts. I did intend to refer to the clearing of land by Government tractors, but as this comes under the department of the Minister for Lands who is absent in the Eastern States, it would perhaps be wiser to arrange a deputation on his return instead of ventilating the matter here. With other members, I regret the loss of the Primary Products Marketing Bill. It was hoped by a section of growers that that measure would become law. It was within the power of the Legislative Council to make amendments to the Bill, and I regret that that course was not adopted. I recall that one member suggested that the Bill might be referred to a select committee. Had that suggestion been adopted, the evidence taken would have enabled the Council to make of the Bill a satisfactory measure.

Mr. Mann: They did you a good turn by rejecting the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: They would have done the growers a better turn had they given them an opportunity to organise their markets. The Estimates disclose no attempt on

the part of the Government to provide a method whereby fruits may be processed. I do not ask for the establishment of a State trading concern, but assistance on co-operative lines would be welcome. The only method by which growers can help themselves is that of co-operation. The feeling is growing that co-operation which will produce results must be compulsory. If the voluntary effort now being put forth at Osborne Park proves successful, well and good. I hope it will be successful, but judging by the many failures that have resulted from voluntary effort, I have little hope of success being achieved there.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [10.10]: I am not sufficiently acquainted with the requirements of the Government to know exactly what loan moneys are necessary. I am disappointed with the amount provided for railways.

The Minister for Railways: So am I.

Mr. BROWN: The amount allocated is very small; in fact, most of it is for work in progress. I am disappointed that no amount has been provided for the Brookton-Dale River railway. I am not referring now to the Brookton-Armadale line. Some time ago a deputation discussed with the Premier the construction of the Brookton-Armadale line, but he told us the Government had not the money to build that railway immediately. The people of the Dale have been waiting for a railway for 17 years. They arranged deputations and conferences and are working very hard at present, and they will be disappointed that the Government have not seen their way clear to provide sufficient money to start the 26½ miles of track already authorised by Parliament. Governments in the past have made the mistake of authorising railways without having the slightest intention of building them for many years. The Brookton-Dale River Railway Bill was introduced by the previous Government, but members should realise that Parliament would not have passed the measure unless it had been satisfied that the building of the line was an absolute necessity. It is needless to emphasise how good the district is. Ministers have paid several visits to the district, and have agreed that the people have a very strong case. When it is proved that the construction of a railway will develop new country and benefit the State generally, and Parliament authorises its building, the Gov-

ernment should adopt a vigorous policy of construction. On the Estimates £30,000 is provided for surveys, but I think that amount appeared on last year's Estimates. None of it will be used during the present financial year, and there is no indication that the Dale River railway is likely to be commenced. I congratulate the Government on what they have done to provide water supplies for country districts. A tremendous amount of money will be required from loan to complete those water supplies, and a good deal will be needed for the metropolitan supply. Probably the people generally will have to bear the brunt of that, but the Minister for Works has indicated his intention of increasing the rates to users and making the scheme self-supporting if possible. I know the water rates in the towns are now very heavy. Probably they will be very heavy in the farming areas also. However, there is no need to cavil at the rates so long as the Government pursue a vigorous policy of providing water for the country and also for the town. The vote for Development of Agriculture touches a big question. More than half of the total amount of these Estimates, £2,250,000, is to be spent on group settlements. I recognise that the country is pledged to a scheme of group settlement in the South-West, and that the present Government have to fulfil contracts entered into by their predecessors. Still I consider that the present Government are not paying the necessary attention to out-back districts where land is still available for wheat growing. That land could be made reproductive in a very short period, whereas the South-West is likely to go on swallowing up considerable amounts of money. I do not know what the production in the South-West is going to be, but I sincerely hope the scheme will turn out all right. Any practical man used to dry farming and sheep knows that land in the wheat belt can be made reproductive in a year or two. Doubtless with the progress of time the South-West will prove successful. We want more population, however, to make the South-West successful, because its products are altogether different from those of the dry areas, which look to the markets of the world. As regards the State trading concerns, their balance sheets show an estimated loss of £32,000 for the month. I would not like to see much more money put into those undertakings if they are going to prove losses. On the other hand, if the expenditure of a

little more money, by furnishing up to date machinery and enabling more economical methods to be adopted, is likely to turn them into successes, there would be no harm in providing the funds. I was struck by the remarks of the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) that the Opposition and the Government were to some extent in collaboration, and that there was not that strong opposition to Government proposals which existed in former years. Every member on this side of the House would oppose any Government Bill which was not in the interests of our constituents. I consider that members opposite have made a mistake in not meeting us more in regard to amendments moved by us. Neither side is infallible. We of the Opposition are here to do the best we can for our constituents and the country as a whole. When we propose desirable amendments, the Government should meet us. But for another place, probably not one half of the people would be satisfied with the legislation. The Government should not forget that though they are in power, they represent probably only half the people. They are in power only by a small majority, and they should realise that it is their duty to cater for all classes. Greater attention should be paid to the reports of select committees and Royal Commissions. If the Government considered the Opposition more, affairs would go better and not so many Bills would be rejected by the other House. The Government have to try to make ends meet, and the Treasurer alone is in a position to know exactly what the country will stand and what the loan requirements are. Undoubtedly people living in the country look to the Government for everything.

Mr. Clydesdale: You admit that, do you?

Mr. Thomson: The country people are very disappointed with what they get.

Mr. BROWN: Probably that is so. If the Treasurer finds that the deficit is increasing, he must take steps to check it, as such a state of affairs does not redound to his credit. However, Western Australia has turned the corner, and it is quite possible that when the year is out we shall find that instead of having a deficit we are two or three hundred thousand pounds to the good. There is no doubt that the Federal Government will make an annual grant to this State of £450,000, and that will be a considerable help to Western Australia. I have no other object than to see all our people

flourish, and every possible industry flourish here. If our finances straighten themselves, the Premier will no doubt announce a bold policy of development. I have indicated my disappointment that people who have been waiting for so many years to have a railway built will not find provision for the work on these Estimates.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [10.26]: Looking through the Loan Estimates I have been disappointed to find no adequate provision made for the improvement of Bunbury Harbour. I realise the difficulty of the Government and of the Minister, who cannot be expected to place on these Estimates a specific amount for harbour improvement at Bunbury until a harbour improvement scheme has been drawn up. The difficulty is added to by the fact that there has been so recently a change in the occupancy of the office of Engineer-in-Chief. I hope, however, that something concrete will be done promptly in the direction I have indicated. It is absolutely essential in the interests of the trade at Bunbury and the export of fruit and wheat to improve the Bunbury wharves so that double handling may be avoided. The South-West has a great future, and Bunbury will play its part in the development of the South-West. When its harbour has been adequately developed, Bunbury will become the great port for the shipment of South-Western produce. I notice an item of £20,000 on these Estimates for Bunbury Harbour.

The **CHAIRMAN**: The hon. member must not refer to items. He must speak generally.

Mr. WITHERS: I realise that the item of £20,000 on these Estimates is for the general maintenance and dredging work required at Bunbury during the next 12 months. The fact of portion of the amount being debited to the overhaul of the dredge "Sir William Matthews" makes me question how much of the amount is debited against the Bunbury Harbour Board, and how much work the dredge will be permitted to do at Bunbury in order to compensate for that charge. I hope she will remain there until she has dredged the bottom of the harbour, which work cannot be done by a suction dredge. After the "Sir William Matthews" has completed that part of the work, the suction dredge

may be able to cope with the softer siltage, and the sand accumulating around the mole. Certainly the berths should be kept clear of the mud accumulating there to-day. Another matter which appeals to me on these Estimates is the provision for improvements to open railways. My mind turns to the alteration of the Bunbury railway yards. I see nothing specific for that particular work. Certainly improvement is required in the accommodation available for the men who have to make use of the Bunbury railway barracks. These barracks are in a deplorable condition, though they have to be used by the traffic and locomotive running staffs and also by the boilermakers. They are placed immediately alongside the engine sheds, where all sorts of machinery is working. The Commissioner of Railways himself realises that the barracks are not suitable in their present position. I shall be grateful to the Minister if he will give consideration to the question of providing the necessary money for Bunbury.

MR. MANN (Perth) [10.30]: Members have an opportunity on the Loan Estimates to draw attention to matters that have been overlooked, and to air grievances. I wish to refer to the parcels office at the central railway station. The work is conducted in an office that is not large enough to make a decent lavatory. If employees were expected to work in such conditions by a private firm I am confident that the Health Department would prosecute any such private firm. The office is under the William-street bridge; the walls are not more than 8ft. or 9ft. high; it is crowded with parcels and the railway employees are unable to carry out their work efficiently. With the progress that the State is making and the improved position of the railways, it is time that provision was made for more adequate accommodation for the despatch and receipt of parcels. The men complain, but they get no redress; the public complain and they, too, get no redress. I hope the Minister will take the necessary steps to remedy this evil. Under the Health Department's regulations, proprietors of timber yards and other premises where timber is used, are compelled to instal means by which the dust and shavings are drawn off in the interests of the health of the employees.

Complaints have been made that no such provision has been installed at the Midland workshops. The Health Department has compelled the necessary equipment to be installed in various timber yards, yet no similar action has been taken at the Midland workshops.

Mr. Hughes: Who made the complaint?

Mr. MANN: The Health Department, and rightly so too. The railway employees there are compelled to work under the existing unhealthy conditions. Thus we have one law for one class of employer, and another for the Government themselves. Again, I hope the Minister will take steps to see that the necessary provision is made at the Midland works. Last session a select committee was appointed to inquire into the question of establishing markets in Perth. A report was furnished to the House and the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) moved an amendment the effect of which was to prevent the Perth City Council being granted the power to establish markets and to transfer that authority to the Westralian Farmers or some co-operative company to be formed. He practically undertook that if his amendment were carried those markets would be established immediately. A year has gone by and we are no nearer to the accomplishment of that objective.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You should quote correctly.

Mr. MANN: I am doing so.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You must not say that sort of thing.

Mr. MANN: I am saying what you told the House.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I said I wanted a trust, the same as the City Council was to get. Give us that and we will go ahead.

Mr. MANN: All the City Council wanted was the right to borrow money to establish the markets.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Well, give us that right.

Mr. MANN: You have not applied for it. You have not made any move at all. You came here and you pressed the House to oppose the recommendation of the select committee and you got them to give the Westralian Farmers an opportunity to establish the markets.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot discuss that question on the Estimates.

Mr. MANN: No provision has been made for the establishment of markets notwithstanding the necessity for them. Had the recommendation of the select committee been given effect to, we would probably have had the markets by now. Regarding the abattoir question which is receiving so much attention now, when the abattoirs at Midland Junction were being altered, the plans were changed and the two freezing chambers that were to have been provided were not installed. The result is that we have a powerful plant installed, but not sufficient freezing space.

The Minister for Agriculture: What do you want freezing space for?

Mr. MANN: Well, chilling space.

The Minister for Agriculture: But what for?

Mr. MANN: At present those using the chilling rooms have to handle their goods three or four times.

The Minister for Agriculture: But they say the chilling space is no good to them.

Mr. MANN: They have not said anything of the kind.

The Minister for Agriculture: I am glad to hear that.

Mr. MANN: Those who use them appreciate the chilling space and the benefit it is to the trade.

The Minister for Agriculture: I am glad to have that admission at long last.

Mr. MANN: The Minister has known that all along. Although the Minister has been led astray regarding the figures relating to work at the abattoirs, I am sure he will do the right thing in the end.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you mean that attempts were made to lead me astray?

Mr. MANN: No, not on our side. I wish to disabuse the mind of the member for Guildford who said that the butchers using the abattoirs desired to have the work carried out at no additional expense to themselves. That statement is not borne out by the facts.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They showed that when the regulations were disallowed.

Mr. MANN: That is not correct and I am forced to say that the hon. member knew that when he made his statement.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member knew then and knows now that the butchers were and are quite willing to pay advanced charges,

even to the extent of 100 per cent. The hon. member was wrong in saying that they desired to have the money done without any increased charges.

The Premier: This is entirely out of order in a discussion on these Estimates.

Mr. MANN: I will not press the point any further at this stage, more than to say that frequently public works in this State have suffered by the alteration of plans after they have been put into operation. That is what happened at the abattoirs on this occasion.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [10.40]: This is the one occasion on which we can see what money is to be spent in our electorates. I should like to refer to some remarks by the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson). As a new member I have often found members on the Government side doing their best to stop me when I have been in critical vein. After listening to the member for Guildford to-night I am coming to think that I should have criticised far more often than I have done. I admit that we as an Opposition have not been as effective as we might have been. A few days ago one was forced to stand up at 5.30 a.m. to deal with important revenue Estimates. The member for Guildford's remarks have given me some heart to do what in future I may conceive to be my duty.

The Premier: You have not been too modest. There is a great deal of "T" about you, you know.

Mr. LINDSAY: I am entitled to express the views of my constituents. There is here a Vote for the development of agriculture. Under that, presumably, I may discuss light lands. These light lands, we are told represent 9,000,000 acres. If we could bring them under production it would mean a great deal for the State. Some time ago the Government appointed Mr. Bostock to inquire into the subject of light lands. He has reported in favour of their development. I have here a report of the Light Lands Committee, reading as follows:—

I feel confident that the scrub lands I have seen, and which have a clay subsoil, will grow a payable crop of wheat if suitable settlers are placed on them, but I consider they should have a certain amount of capital, and that the Agricultural Bank should be safe in advancing them pound for pound.

A few nights ago I was dealing with the treatment meted out to a couple of settlers,

and on the day after this committee's report was laid on the Table I received a report from the Minister for Lands in the terms—

The matter was submitted to the Hon. the Minister, who decided that the amount previously asked for, namely £20 and £24, must be paid prior to the issue of instructions for survey. The Minister has agreed, however, that if on approval of their applications the settlers can succeed in securing advances from the Agricultural Bank, the cost of survey will be included in the price of the land.

The Premier: All this has nothing to do with the Loan Estimates.

Mr. LINDSAY: It is just as I say. Other members can speak on these subjects, but I am not allowed to do so. Surely the development of our light lands means the development of agriculture!

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must proceed.

Mr. LINDSAY: The day before I received this letter from the Minister the report of the Light Lands Committee was laid on the Table. The suggestions of that committee are that the land should be given free for ten years from rent, and also that only 10 per cent. of the first survey fees should be charged. I am again bringing this before the House because the fact that the committee has made these recommendations vindicates my earlier remarks. I hope the committee's recommendations will be put into effect. The member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) dealt with the Yorkrakine railway. For the last 19 years I have lived alongside the people to be served by that line. Last Sunday I met a number of those settlers, and, as on many former occasions, they asked me when I thought they would get their line. Thinking that the Loan Estimates would contain provision for the starting of the railway, I told them that probably they would be satisfied next week. Now we find from the Estimates that they are in exactly the same position as they were in last year, that is to say, only the sum of £30,000 is provided. One of the settlers mentioned that a certain man was sick. I asked what was the matter with him, and was told he was suffering from the Yorkrakine complaint, waititis. They have waited so long that it has made a number of them sick and they are leaving their property. Some effort should be made to start the Yorkrakine railway without delay. Also I am disappointed in the item for water supply.

plies in my district. I believe the Honorary Minister in charge of water supplies has done all he can do. Although an item is given here, I am afraid the amount provided will not go far in respect of that water scheme. We have waited for some years, we are prepared to pay for the scheme, and I believe that if it were proceeded with it would do a great deal for the development of the district. There are certain other items here, but they are lumped together and I cannot determine exactly what they mean. If the Minister for Justice were present he could tell me whether or not he has been able to carry out the promise to establish police quarters at Beneubbin. The sooner we tackle the light lands problem the greater revenue we shall have for our railways, and the greater the wealth produced in the State generally. Our unoccupied lands constitute the greatest problem with which we have to contend, owing to the fact that dingoes and rabbits are breeding there. If we can put into operation the scheme recommended by the committee, it will be a fine thing for the State.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [10.50]: The Leader of the Country Party has dealt with the Loan Estimates very fully. I think the large sum of 4¾ millions provided has been very judiciously allotted. It is pleasing to see that one-half of the total is to be spent on agricultural development. Right through, the Loan Estimates show that the Government have given fair consideration to the various parts of the State and to our great industries. I wish to urge the Government to see that full value is received for the expenditure of this large amount. If the money is as wisely expended as it has been wisely allocated, this loan bill will do a great deal for Western Australia. During the last 10 years I have annually had to voice a complaint on the Loan Estimates. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Government for having removed the cause of complaint by the fact that during the last few months a good start has been made with the construction of the Narrogin-Dwarda railway. Therefore I do not expect to have to refer to the subject in future. A sum of £100,000 is provided on these Estimates for the work, and the details show it is expected that the amount will suffice to complete the building of the line. It is only

a little over 18 months ago since the Premier, then Leader of the Opposition, visited Narrogin. It was on the eve of the election, and he prophesied to a very large meeting at Narrogin that after the election he would be Premier and that he would build the Narrogin-Dwarda railway. That was about the only occasion on which the hon. member visited Narrogin that I was not pleased to welcome him to the town as he was supporting my opponent at the poll. His prophecy proved correct, for he became Premier, and it must be pleasant for people in high office to have an opportunity to carry out their promises. The Premier went to England, and I think the first public announcement of importance that he made on his return was that the building of the Narrogin-Dwarda railway was to be put in hand. It was put in hand in a thorough way and the work is proceeding satisfactorily. I think about 300 men are employed. After waiting since 1911, when the Railway Advisory Board first recommended the construction of this railway, and since 1914 when the line was authorised by Parliament, I am pleased to congratulate the Government on having carried out the promise made to the people of that great district so many years ago. I thank the Minister for Works for the energy his officials are displaying in constructing the line. A sum of £97,126 is provided on the Estimates for public buildings. In the town of Narrogin the public buildings are a disgrace. Not one public building used for administrative purposes was built for the department occupying it. The I.A.B. is carried on in a place that used to be a school building; the court is carried on in an old building that was originally an agricultural hall, and the Lands Office, with its highly professional officers, licensed surveyors, computers and others, are housed in a building that 20 years ago was condemned as unhealthy and unsuitable for a schoolmaster's residence. In view of the large departments that have their headquarters at Narrogin, I hope the Government will take an early opportunity to build a central block of Government offices. The present Lands office could then be handed over to the town to be used for the purpose for which in appearance and in every way it is most suitable. We have no morgue in Narrogin, and if the Government erected central offices there, the old cottage now used by the Lands Department should be handed over to the

town as a gift for a morgue. It is not suited for any other purpose.

Progress reported.

BILL—BROOKTON RECREATION RESERVE.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Friday, 4th December, 1925.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Paper: Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill, Opinion of Mr. Keenan, K.C. | 2435 |
| Bills: Vermin Act Amendment, 3a. | 2435 |
| Industries Assistance Act Continuance, 3a. | 2435 |
| Roads Closure, Com. | 2435 |
| Bush Fires Act Amendment, 2a. | 2435 |
| Parliamentary Allowances Act Amendment, 2a. | 2435 |
| Reserves, 2a. | 2445 |
| Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act Amendment, 2a. | 2445 |
| Motions: Police Force Pension Allowance | 2443 |
| Railway Dining Cars. withdrawn | 2451 |

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPER—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Opinion of Mr. Keenan, K.C.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin, the opinion of Mr. Keenan, K.C., upon Clause 57 of the Arbitration Act Amendment Bill was laid upon the Table of the House.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and passed.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Read a third time and passed.

BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

In Committee.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1-6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Closure of a way through land of Muresk Agricultural College:

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I understand this road closure has not been consented to by the local authority. Is this a road in direct communication with Northam and York along the river?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have laid the plans on the Table of the House. The local authority has not been consulted. This Bill will not come into operation until it is proclaimed, and it will not be proclaimed until the local authorities have been consulted.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. W. Hickey—Central) [3.12] in moving the second reading said: It has been recognised that a Bill of this kind is necessary to tighten up the laws relating to bush fires. Experience teaches those who have been responsible for the control of these matters that a measure of this kind is absolutely necessary. Great damage has been done by irresponsible people who are not fully seized of the proper methods for handling fires. Consciously or unconsciously they have been the cause of great damage to crops and feed, and in some instances to homesteads. In order to guard against occurrences of this kind or minimise the risks that are run, the Government have decided to introduce this Bill. Instances have been reported to the department of people who have burned off scrub and rubbish with a view to bringing on the grass. The fires have got away from these people and the neighbours have suffered considerably. It has been reported in some cases that even when farmers and