

ships to meet the shortage of shipping we have to-day. This will also help in other directions in getting our surplus food stuffs away, which have already been accumulating too long. When I speak of two ships I think I am within the mark. Ours is the first and last port of call for ships coming from and going overseas, via South Africa. Every boat that comes from the Eastern States on its way to Europe, via South Africa, will be able to carry so much more cargo by reason of the fact of its being able to bunker coal from this State, and if each boat can do this it is only a matter of calculation to show that this becomes a national and not a local question. There should, therefore, be no further delay than can possibly be helped. I am glad to see that this South-West port is one of the public works which it is the intention and policy of the Government to go on with. I am satisfied there will be no cause for regret if the work is done immediately. We shall then be able to obtain a depth of water of from 30 to 33 feet, which will enable any boat of any size coming to Australia to call there and get its coal. That in itself is a natural increase of our assets. There are other minor matters in which we might all assist if we would. I think we are suffering to-day from a lack of co-ordination amongst the various Government departments. I am speaking as much as possible in the abstract when I say that in our public departments we have sometimes one department refusing to do something on the ground that this is a matter affecting another department, and vice versa. It should be recognised that our departments stand in much the same light to the people as our finances stand to the State as a whole. We must regard the finances as being the total aggregate finances of Western Australia for the moment. Similarly our Government departments must regard themselves as being in existence for the benefit of all the people of Western Australia, not in their own interests or in the interests of any of their officers. I am also satisfied that there is a great want of economy in the administration of our local affairs, and that there is too much centralisation. We should do very much better if we could split up our Public Works Department into different districts, and have more local management of local affairs.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We already have district inspectors. What more do we want?

Mr. MONEY: As a rule the inspectors come from Perth. This means delay, and very often the work has to be inspected again. We are suffering from too much centralisation and should have more local management.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You will increase the cost considerably if you have offices in each place.

Mr. MONEY: We have the offices there already in the shape of our roads board offices. When I speak of local administration, I do not mean an agent from the head office in a country district. I mean that the people of

the State must take more interest in their local affairs, and that the roads boards must have power, if necessary, to take a bigger hand in the management and construction of their own works, instead of paying 30 per cent. more than they should pay owing to the system of administration from a central body.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I thought you were talking about the Public Works Department.

Mr. MONEY: It is no good bringing ideas forward in this House if they are not going to be taken any notice of. We have suffered too much in the past from delays. The object of parliamentary reform is to avoid this parliamentary delay, and these delays in despatch of Government business and the business of the country. I hope that some notice may be taken of the speeches which have been delivered on the Address-in-reply.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

House adjourned at 9.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th September, 1918.

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

ELECTION RETURN—CLAREMONT.

The SPEAKER announced the return to the writ issued for the election of a member for Claremont, showing that Mr. Thomas Duff had been duly elected.

Mr. Duff took and subscribed the oath, and signed the roll.

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

BILL—INTERPRETATION.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [4.43] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to amend the existing Interpretation Act of 1898 in two particulars: firstly, in respect of the provision in Section 11 of the existing Act that any by-law or regulation shall continue to have the force of law until disallowed by both Houses of Parliament, and, secondly, in respect of the absence in the existing Act of any provision for continuing a temporary Act during the passage through Parliament of a Bill for continuing such temporary Act. Opportunity has been taken to re-enact the principal measure and its amendments in consolidated and revised

form, and to incorporate in it some additional rules of construction, which have been taken from the Acts of the Commonwealth and of the Eastern States. As regards the new rules taken from the Commonwealth Interpretation Act, 1901-1918, and the South Australian Act, 1915, most of these are sufficiently obvious rules of construction, and introduce no new principle of any kind. They are expressed in the introductory part of the Bill. The clause enabling the continuing Act to operate as from the expiration of the continued Act so as to prevent the continued Act from lapsing pending the passing of the continuing Act of 1918, is taken from the South Australian Act. Clause 31 provides that any future acts creating an offence punishable on summary conviction shall be deemed to provide that an attempt to commit the offence shall also be punishable as if the offence had been committed. That provision is new and is also taken from the South Australian Act. It also appears in the Commonwealth Act, 1904. An attempt to commit a crime, under the existing law is punishable as a misdemeanour. Clause 33 removes any ambiguity there may have been in the use of the words "may" and "shall." This, too, is new and is taken from the South Australian Act. Provision is made by Clause 38 to enable regulations made in the past to be validated where formerly through inadvertence they may not have been operative. The measure altogether is a formal one. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. T. Walker debate adjourned.

BILL—CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [4.50] in moving the second reading said: Hon. members will notice that in the forefront of this Bill there is a memorandum explaining in plain terms the meaning and objects of the Bill. I purpose prefacing each new Bill submitted to the House with a memorandum of this character, which I hope hon. members will appreciate, because it will enable them at a glance to learn the purport of the Bill and really its effect. The Bill before hon. members differs in only a small material from the Bill which I had the privilege of introducing to the House during last session. The effect of the Bill as then introduced generally was to deal with the amendments of the law relating to offences against morality. The treatment of habitual criminals, the application of indeterminate sentences and the detention in reformatory prisons of offenders other than habitual criminals, and I would refer hon. members to "Hansard" of 1917-18, vol. I., page 354 and following pages, for the speech that I then delivered to the House explaining the provisions of the Bill. I will, therefore, content myself with drawing attention to those portions of the Bill as now presented which differ in any way from the Bill as submitted to the House during last session. Hon. members will see that Section

188 of the Code instead of being amended as was purported to be done last session, is by the new Bill repealed and two new sections are to be substituted in its place. The section as it now stands deals with two classes of offences, namely, those against idiots and imbeciles and those against girls under 16 years of age. As these are essentially different kinds of offences, it is thought that they should be dealt with in separate clauses. Therefore, the Bill as now introduced substitutes for Section 188 to which I have referred, the two new sections which will stand as 187 and 188, the former dealing with defilement of girls under 16 years of age and the latter the defilement of idiots and imbeciles. The amendments made by the law in the two new sections are practically the same as those made by the amendment contained in the Bill of last session. They are, however, set out in the present form for the sake of clearness. There is a further amendment in connection with this matter, the period of limitation within which the offence must be prosecuted being extended in cases of the completed offences against girls under 16 years of age to six months. This was put on the Notice Paper last session, though it was not in the Bill. I will refer hon. members to Clause 7. An amendment is also made in connection with Section 189 of the Code whereby it is provided that prosecution for an offence of indecent dealing, if the girl be under 16 years of age but over 13 years of age, must be commenced within three months after the commission of the offence. The offence defined in Section 190 of the Code will be made a crime in place of a misdemeanour as it now stands. By the Bill of last session the punishment was to be increased, but it was left as a misdemeanour. To be consistent it should be called a crime, and so the Bill provides. In lieu of amending Section 594 of the Code, a new clause has been substituted. This, too, will bring about clearness, because the effect will be practically the same as the amendment proposed last session. There is a slight amendment in the indeterminate sentences provisions. This is contained in Clause 26. This amendment provides that licenses issued for the release on probation of persons detained in a reformatory prison may prescribe as a condition that the released person be placed and shall remain under the supervision and authority of any society named in the license, which society will be willing to take charge of the case. Such society shall, whenever required by the Governor or by the Controller General of Prisons, report on the circumstances and condition of the released person. This amendment was placed on the Notice Paper last session to be moved in Committee. The other amendments in the present Bill which were not contained in the Bill of last session are of the merest detail. For instance, the latter part of Clause 20 in the original Bill disappears as being unnecessary. The amendment set out in Clause 21 is sufficient in itself to effect that which is required. A provision appears in Clause 11 which only affects that which everybody understood to be the law, though it is here inserted in order to prevent any possible misunderstanding. The other amendments hardly at this stage require any

special reference from me. Attention, however, may be called to Clause 30 of the present Bill which substitutes the word "eighteen" for "sixteen" in various sections. The clause in the Bill of last session, No. 29, only amended one clause. That is to say, the word "eighteen" was amended in only one clause. The effect of the amendment on the various clauses is set out in the memorandum which appears on the face of the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. T. Walker debate adjourned.

BILL—PRISONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: This Bill, like the previous one, was introduced by me during the last session of Parliament and I do not propose to go over again the same explanation I gave to hon. members at the time. The remarks that I then made will be found in "Hansard" of 1917-18, Vol. 1, page 357. However, I desire to give a little further explanation of the Bill than was then made, and to indicate to the House that the object of the Bill is to enable reformatory prisons to be established, and an indeterminate sentences board to be appointed in view of the amendments proposed in the Criminal Code Bill relating to habitual criminals and preventive detention. If the amendments to the Code are approved, the indeterminate sentences may be passed not only on habitual criminals, but discretion will be given to the judge to pass such a sentence on persons who have not been previously convicted, if in view of the antecedents, character, age and mental condition of the offender, the judge thinks this should be done. In other words, both the Code and this Bill aim at reform purely. The Bill, therefore, provides for the establishment and government of reformatory prisons necessary to carry out the scheme of the reformatory treatment which I have outlined. There will be an indeterminate sentence board of three persons appointed by the Governor to co-operate with the Comptroller General of Prisons. The board will inquire into and report from time to time on the working of the Act, and will make such recommendations as they think fit as to the release of persons in reformatory prisons on probation. The Bill will enable prisoners generally, apart from those under indeterminate sentences, on the recommendation of the Comptroller and the board to be transferred to the reformatory prison if that be deemed desirable, and in such case the person so transferred will not be detained in the reformatory prison for any period longer than that of his unexpired sentence, that is to say, in the case of those prisoners who are not under indeterminate sentence. Provision is also made for the working of persons detained in reformatory prisons at some trade or vocation, and for a prescribed proportion of the proceeds of the sales of that work being credited to the prisoner

himself. On the report of the board being received through the Comptroller General the prisoner may be released on probation, and the provisions of the Code relating to release on probation will then apply. This will be seen by reference to Section 666, page 8, of the Code. The board, with the concurrence of the Comptroller General, will have power to allow a person detained in a reformatory prison to be released temporarily, with the object of testing the reform of such person. Other provisions relate to the transfer of prisoners from one reformatory prison to another and enable the Comptroller General, on the report of the board, to allow the prisoner to have temporary leave for the purpose of, say, treatment in hospital, or some other urgent occasion. The opportunity has been taken of inserting a clause for the regulation of the procedure for the attendance of prisoners in court on the hearing of criminal appeals. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. T. Walker debate adjourned.

BILL—FORESTS.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL and MINISTER FOR WOODS AND FORESTS (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [5.3] in moving the second reading said: In regard to this Bill also, I have endeavoured to carry out the procedure adopted in respect of the Criminal Code, namely, that of attaching to the Bill a memorandum shortly explaining the provisions, which I commend to the attention of hon. members. Since 1836 Western Australia has been engaged in mining her forests, that is to say she has striven, regardless of the future, to get as much as she possibly could out of the areas of timber country that lie scattered within her borders. Timber men have been encouraged to take up forests for saw-milling purposes, and the terms under which concessions have been granted were of the most advantageous character. The object of each successive Government has been to exploit as much timber as possible in the shortest possible period. The time came, however, when the number of saw-milling leases increased to such an extent as to awaken a strong public opinion throughout the country. The Government of that day appointed a skilled expert forester, Mr. Ednie Brown, to advise as to what course should be adopted. Unfortunately for Western Australia, Mr. Brown died very soon after his arrival in the State, and the Government that appointed him went out of office. Before Mr. Brown died, however, he managed to awaken in the public a sense of their duty and he drafted a Forests Bill, a Bill which differed very little from the one now placed before hon. members. Had that Bill become law I feel sure that the management of the forests of the State would have been placed on a sound foundation. Alas! with Mr. Brown's death died also the Forests Bill, an

the country once more threatened to sink back into a slough of apathy regarding forestry. A small band of men who had been associated with Mr. Brown in his work and had learned from him something of his ideals, and of the theory and practice of forestry, strove hard to keep alive the spark of enthusiasm which he had kindled, and they so far succeeded that in 1903 a Royal Commission on Forestry was appointed to investigate the whole subject. I will have occasion to read many recommendations from that Commission. This is what the Commission had to say about the appointment of an expert forester—

Evidence afforded by the experience of other countries, as well as that of this State (as indicated by evidence given before the Commission) seems to prove most emphatically that no forest conservation worthy of the name is practicable until the forest lands shall have been placed by Statute under the control of a well-manned and properly equipped Forests Department. And later, in the second portion of their report, the Commissioners say—

The evidence attached hereto supplies much information on the questions raised in this second reference to the Commission, all of which has strengthened the opinion of the Commission as to the utter impossibility of making adequate provision for conserving the forest interests until they shall have been placed under the administration of an Inspector General qualified by experience and scientific training. This is what the Commission recommended regarding the Advisory Board—

Realising, however, a possible delay in obtaining an officer qualified to fill the important position of Inspector General, the Commission is of opinion that no time should be lost in securing the legislation necessary to put the administration under the effective control of a board as suggested. Such a Board would find ample occupation in establishing some degree of order out of the present destructive chaos, preparatory to the appointment of an Inspector General.

The Advisory Board was duly appointed, and this body carried out excellent work in connection with saw milling. It introduced the system of saw-milling permits, instead of leases and concessions which had been in vogue up to that time. On leases, the lessee paid £20 per square mile per annum, and on permit areas the permit holder was and is required to pay for the timber he cuts, at so much per load of 50 cubic feet, measured in the log. The amount then fixed was 1s. per load, whereas the amount now required is 2s. per load. The board also introduced regulations which put restrictions on the getting of timber. Amongst those was a regulation which holds good to-day, limiting the felling of timber to trees over a certain girth. This is the first sign that can be discovered in the legislative enactments of the State that the possibility of our forests being a permanent asset was recognised. The Advisory Board, however, knew nothing of forestry. It was appointed to advise the clerical

head of the Forests Department regarding technical saw-milling matters. The board realised, however, that our jarrah forests could be made everlasting by a sound forest policy, and as a step in that direction the timber getter was limited to cutting jarrah trees over 90 inches in girth. For the last 12 years only mill logs over that size have been cut, and the younger ones below that size are, all the time, growing up. The board, therefore, deserves high praise for having introduced this regulation, for it has taught the people that the mining of timber is a crime against future generations and that only the timber that belongs to this generation may be cut, while the rest belongs to our children's children. The board, no doubt, would have continued to do good work, but it, too, came to an untimely end. The board had been appointed on the recommendation of the Forestry Commission. The members of that Commission, it is interesting to note, were Messrs. Newton Moore—now Sir Newton Moore—Chas. Harper, W. Atkins, Robert Hastie, and W. V. Fitzgerald. Of those, perhaps, Sir Newton Moore took the most active interest in forestry as a member of the Commission, and later as chairman of the Advisory Board to which I have referred. Unfortunately, however, for forestry, Sir Newton Moore was made Minister controlling the Lands and Forests Department, and when this was done the Forests Advisory Board perished. I want hon. members to take particular note of this disastrous occurrence, as I shall revert to it when I come to discuss that part of the Bill which provides for the removal of the Forestry Department from political control. The Forestry Commission strongly urged that the Forestry Department should be taken away from the Lands Department. The Advisory Board urged the very same thing, and almost succeeded in obtaining its object, but the hand of the politician intervened, and the country sank back into that slough of apathy from which it did not emerge again until the year 1913. Sad as it is to have to relate, it is at the door of politics that must be laid the murder of forestry 12 years ago, and it is indeed gratifying to be able to state that in the year 1913 we owed its resurrection to the same influence. To the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) and the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loghlin) the country owes the removal of the Forestry Department from the Lands Department, and, rapidly upon that, we have to thank the member for Boulder, the then Minister for Mines, for the appointment of a trained forester. The year in which the Mines Department took over the Forestry Department there came to Western Australia with the British Association a forester of great scientific ability and wide experience. I refer to Mr. Hutchins, who was an Indian forester. He had gone to Cape Colony as a young man, and became Conservator of Forests there. That colony has a climate very similar to our own. He established there vast forests of our own eucalypt timbers. It was he who founded the Transvaal Forestry Department, and another in British

East Africa. Having reached the age when most men are content to spend the evening of their lives in the quiet contemplation of deeds well done—and this was certainly the case with Mr. Hutchins—he commenced a tour of the world, stopping at all places which interested him from a professional standpoint. He came to Western Australia, and again we have to thank the member for Boulder for the arrangements which were made for Mr. Hutchins, not only to see Western Australia but to write a report on the forest problem. That report has since been published under my authority, and I have had the privilege of distributing it amongst hon. members of the House. The report deals not only with Western Australia but with the whole of the forestry problems of the Commonwealth. It is a voluminous compilation, and there is not one page in it that I would wish to see deleted.

Mr. Pickering: When was it circulated?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think before the hon. member's time.

Hon. P. Collier: It was early in last year.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The report was published in book form. Hon. members who have not read this work should certainly do so. I shall be glad to supply any member with a copy if he has not got one. A perusal of that book will give any man an insight into forestry if he had not one before. It was this report that finally decided the Government of the day to appoint an expert forester to take charge of the forests of the State, and to advise as to what course should be pursued in order to establish them, and the timber industry dependent upon them, on a sound basis for all time. I have briefly outlined the history of the forest question in the State up to recent years. It is not a pleasant story, and is not one that Western Australia can look back upon with pride. We have done our best to destroy what is probably the most valuable heritage with which a bountiful Deity has endowed us. Fortunately, the case is not yet beyond remedy. We have time in which to put matters right, but of necessity the measures which must be taken are of a serious, if not a drastic, character. Hon. members know how greatly the subject of forestry has interested me, even before I entered politics. When I attained Ministerial rank, as Minister for Mines, I was gratified to find that forestry was also placed under my care. When the present Cabinet was formed, and Industries were included in my portfolio, the Forestry Department remained with me. I esteem it the greatest honour and privilege to be Minister for Forests at this present time. The parting of the ways has now been reached, and the country must decide whether the policy of drift in forest matters is to continue, or whether an active forest policy for the regeneration of our depleted areas, and the better cutting of our saw-milling areas, is to be embarked upon. The Bill has entailed a considerable amount of labour. I have endeavoured to study the situation from every standpoint, and have tried to hold the scales justly between the

warring interests that surround our timber assets. I have given every consideration to the rights of the timber industry of to-day, while safeguarding the heritage of our children. In my opening sentence I said "We have been mining our forests." Let me hark back to that simile, which I think explains the situation pretty clearly. Forests are not mines, and any attempt to treat them as such spells their destruction. The course of a gold mine is clear. There is so much gold in a mine. We say, "Let us get it out as fast as we can and make as much profit as we can upon it." When the gold is exhausted the mine is finished. With forests the position is different. Here we have a mine of wealth, but, unlike a gold mine, it is inexhaustible so long as it is worked properly. It is not so much a question of how much timber there is in a forest, and how quickly we can get it out and turn it into money—this, unhappily, has been the point of view of early Governments—but it is a question of how much we can take out without impairing the continuity of the supply.

Hon. J. Mitchell: There is a fair amount of old matured karri.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is clear that if we treat our forests as gold mines we will get a great deal out of them in a short time, but once the timber is finished there will be a long wait before any more is forthcoming. It is here that the forester steps in, and lays down the maximum amount of timber that can be cut as being so many loads a year, saying that if this is done, it will then be possible to go on cutting for ever. The advantage of this system over the other is, of course, obvious. All those who have seen the deserted mill villages of the South-West, the burnt mill sites, and the abandoned cottages, will realise the advantage of continuously working over the forests. Again, in a country such as ours, which is only on the threshold of its development, and has a population to-day of only a fraction of what it will be in years to come, the mining of our forests results in a great destruction of wealth. I will make this clear. The saw-miller working into the virgin forest cuts up the timber to the sizes that will readily find a market, and since the population of the State is so small as to be incapable of absorbing more than a fraction of the output, over 90 per cent. of the timber that he cuts is cut for export. The export trade demands timber of certain sizes and of certain quality. It requires no scantling or small sizes, and no short lengths. All the timber must be of the highest quality.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Scantling will find a market in the Eastern States.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: True, but I am talking of what has happened. The result is that all timber which does not make up into export sizes goes into the fire chutes and is burnt.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Hon. P. Collier: I wish I had some of it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The saw-millers themselves estimate that what is burnt

annually in the mills amounts to no less than half a million tons of timber.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The mill that is in close proximity to Perth uses up most of that timber now.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This is exclusive of rotten wood, and fuel for boilers, etc. This half a million tons of timber, which would be utilised for a hundred and one purposes here, were the population large enough, is wasted. This waste is a direct outcome of the policy of the past, which aimed at mining our forests instead of working them on conservative lines.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If we had the best system in the world we would have no market for a great deal of the timber unless we had the population.

Mr. Harrison: Freights should have been reduced so that the settlers in the outback country could have obtained this timber.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The situation is a very serious one, and it is a thousand pities that the findings of the Royal Commission years ago were not given effect to at the time. The Royal Commission said—

Your Commission is of opinion that, in the interests of the State, it would be a wise policy to discourage any increase in the rate of timber cutting till the consumption of scantling is fairly apace with the export of larger sizes. State acquiescence in the destruction of good timber, only because the export trade demands it, is a crime against coming generations, and any attempts to increase the export in the interest of foreign companies, or with the object of inducing more men to join in timber getting at the expense of posterity, need wise resistance.

Hon. P. Collier: They did not follow any course of wise resistance.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: But what did successive Governments do?

Mr. O'Loughlen: What have your Government done during the last three months?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In the year 1903 there were held in round figures 816,000 acres of country under saw-milling tenure. To-day that area has been increased to 1,696,000 acres. In 1903, that is the year of the Commission, there were exported 154,000 loads of timber valued at £619,000. Ten years later, in 1913, the year before the war, this export had increased to 272,000 loads, valued at a little over one million pounds. It is quite impossible to estimate in pounds, shillings and pence, the loss of actual wealth that this exploitation of our timber has meant to the State; we cannot blame the sawmillers, for their action was sanctioned and encouraged by Government after Government, but when we hear them tell of the wonderful good they have done for Western Australia, of the large moneys they have spent, and the employment they have given, do not let us forget that their work has really resulted in the destruction of the State's wealth. And whilst we cannot interfere with the rights given by past Governments, indeed it is our duty to safeguard the rights of existing sawmilling companies and a special

section of the Bill provides for this, no such rights must be granted in the future. The terms under which sawmilling will be allowed on the small areas of virgin forest yet remaining, which members will see delineated on the plans on the walls here, and on the cut-over areas, will be such that a continuity of working will be assured. With the continuity of working we have a continuity of the supply of timber for the market, whilst the woodworking and wood-using industries can look forward to their supplies annually without apprehension. To arrive at this result we must establish a continuity of forest policy, and this is the main object of the Bill. Forestry is not a science like agriculture, which deals with annual crops, for forests take many long years to grow. And if a forest policy does not subsist right through, but changes with each successive change of Government, then the growing forests suffer, and the object aimed at, namely, the continuity of working, is not attained.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There has been continuity in the past.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I agree with the member for Forrest that there has been continuity of destruction in days gone by. The Bill provides for a continuity of policy. In the first place let us consider what this policy is. The policy may be summarised under three heads. The first is the permanent reservation of all prime timber country; the second is the restriction of the cutting of timber to that quantity which the forest will reproduce naturally, and the third is to carry out sylvicultural operations in the cut-over areas in order to assure the regeneration of the best species for future use. Dealing with the first principle, that is, the permanent reservation of prime timber country, the Bill provides for the classification of all timber country, and this work, I may say, has already begun. Two camps of classifiers have been engaged in classifying the jarrah belt. These two camps are composed of surveyors and foresters. The surveyor marks out the transverses and reports to the Lands Department regarding any agricultural land he may find, whilst the forester makes a detailed and complete valuation of the timber growing on the land. Copies of the classification plans have been laid on the Table of the House for the inspection of members. When that classification is far enough advanced the boundaries of purely forest country may be laid down, and the boundaries of agricultural land, too, defined. Thus the reservation of the prime timber belt will be effected, and this reservation will be permanent, that is to say, the land within that forest area will be unalienable except by the consent of both Houses of Parliament. In addition there will be areas of land which, whilst carrying what we call marketable timber to-day, are not what we call prime forest land. These will be temporarily reserved from sale until the timber has been removed, when the land may be dealt with by the Lands Department as it thinks fit. It will be seen, therefore, that there are two kinds of reservation, the permanent reserve, which in this Bill is termed

State forest, and the temporary reserves which in this bill are designated timber reserves. Members will realise how necessary it is to permanently reserve the prime timber belt when I explain how we stand to-day. The total area of all timber in the State worth considering from a forest standpoint does not exceed three million acres. This area includes jarrah and karri belts, tuart, and wandoo. Hon. members will be surprised to learn that there are no permanent reserves for forestry purposes in the karri and jarrah belts—no permanent reserves. These forests, which are estimated to have yielded over 25 million pounds' worth of produce to the State of Western Australia, have been at the mercy of all and sundry who wished to purchase land. Temporary reserves, too, have been on many occasions made, but these have been cancelled whenever sufficient pressure was brought to bear.

Mr. O'Loghlen: That does not apply to all.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There are gaps in this country that make one's heart bleed to see. That cannot apply to all, but there are parts of Western Australia which, if members were taken to see, they would wish to annihilate the perpetrators of the outrages. I would like some day to take members through the forests of the south, to get the forests into their hearts and souls, and to realise the destruction that has gone on. A drive through the jarrah belt will convince the most casual observer and the most ardent believer in land settlement of the error of giving away any jarrah land. Blocks of a thousand acres have been alienated where only ten acres of land suitable for agriculture existed in a valley, the remaining 990 acres being ironstone jarrah country. In many cases this land was taken up purely for the timber, and as soon as the selector sold the timber to the milling companies or to hewers, the block was abandoned. Other blocks have been taken up by immigrants with only a slight knowledge of farming, and it would have been a kindness indeed to have kept these men away from the jarrah forest. But they were encouraged by politicians in the past to take up that country. The officers of the Agricultural Bank hold the purse strings, and are therefore in a position to speak with authority on the subject of the alienation of the jarrah country. This is what the officer who has had charge of the bulk of the settlement in the jarrah belt says in his report for 1915—this is not bygone days—

An alteration is urgently required in the method of surveying holdings. Generally the physical features of the country with which I am dealing are hills covered with a laterite capping with good flats between them. These laterite, jarrah or ironstone hills, whichever they should be called, are mostly quite useless to the farmer, but are all well worth reserving permanently for timber, although there is no marketable timber on them at the time of subdivision. Even in cases of survey before selection holdings of much more than 100 acres are found to contain relatively a great deal

more hill than flat. Three very detrimental results follow the acquisition of such blocks, firstly, the selector has to pay a lot more rent than he need, and so has less money to spend on improvements; secondly, the inexperienced man wastes his time and capital in ringbarking the hill, thereby only getting a thicket in return and depriving the State of a good jarrah forest.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He said there was no timber there.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No marketable timber. The report goes on to say—

And thirdly, the security is lowered in value from the point of view of the Agricultural Bank, and, perhaps to the exclusion of the selector from the benefits of that institution.

I want now to read to members the remarks of the Royal Commission on Forestry which I told members sat in 1903, and what it says about the alienation of forest land for settlement—

In most countries the forest lands have two distinct bands of enemies: First the timber trader, whose only aim is to get all he can out of the forest, heedless of its future; the second enemy is the agriculturist, who is interested in the uprooting of the forest for the sake of the rich soil beneath. It is not surprising, therefore, that under the united strength of these two influences, that the interests of posterity in timber supplies have been so long ignored in many lands. Fortunately, however, our best jarrah lands have only the one class of enemy—the timber trader—the soil upon which the tree reaches its highest degree of perfection being unfitted for agricultural purposes. This encourages the hope that no effective hostility should be encountered by the future forest administrator in his work on behalf of jarrah. It is true that throughout the jarrah forests there are valleys containing rich pockets suitable for fruit culture upon which the orchardist may cast covetous eyes, and which doubtless might in time be granted for this purpose. But the Commission is strongly of the opinion that these lands should be dealt with only by the future forest administrator, and not by the Lands Department, it being manifestly important that the Forest Department should first establish its working plans, providing the best lines of access to the forests for all time, without any hindrance through the prior alienation of lands.

The Forestry Department did their best to prevent the alienation of such lands. I was looking round the Chamber to see if the Honorary Minister for Lands (Hon. F. E. S. Willmott) was here, because I know that on many occasions he, as a forest officer, has interfered in this direction.

Mr. Munsie: And on many occasions he did not interfere.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It all depended on who made the application.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Subordinate as the Forestry Department was to the Lands Department, the Forestry officers found themselves in a difficult position. All local opinion and feeling were against them. The district surveyor and his assistants viewed them with apprehension. The Government, engaged as they were purely on a policy of land settlement, exercised such power over the clerical head of the Forestry Department that it is little wonder he was forced to give in and allow the alienation of forest country.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is there on any files a record that the forest rangers entered a protest?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. Let the hon. member listen.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I hope you will produce the protest.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Conservator of Forests in his report for the year 1913 wrote—

The timber is the most valuable crop that will ever grow on a large proportion of the land, particularly that within the jarrah belt; and it is, obviously, the most absolute folly to allow country with a crop of timber on it worth £50 per acre to be alienated under the conditional purchase for 20s. or 30s. per acre.

That report was laid on the Table of this House.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Was that report from Mr. Richardson?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

Mr. O'Loughlen: But I was speaking of the forest rangers. Some of them take a good deal of credit to themselves for what they did.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know about the matter, but I believe there are such protests on record. How blind was this country to the true state of affairs is shown by the fact that the Department of Surveys under the Surveyor General again and again advanced the argument that lands should be alienated because the marketable timber had been removed; and this in spite of the fact that the Forest Advisory Board in 1906 framed a regulation under which only jarrah over 90 inches in circumference could be cut. The regulation was framed with the object of preventing the cutting of immature timber. The smaller trees were to be preserved so as to ensure the timber supply of the future. It is therefore very hard to understand the attitude of the Survey Branch. Matters, however, were very much improved when the Forestry Department was removed from the Department of Lands and Surveys; and since then no forest land has been alienated. But the danger is still before us, and the reservation of our forests is our safeguard, and there is only one way in which that can be done—to permanently reserve the prime belts of timber. It is possible that in such timber areas the classifiers may find stretches of country suitable for agriculture, which country is possibly, for the time being, so far away from the lines of communication as to be of no present value for agricultural purposes. Such lands

will be differently coloured on the plans from the country actually timbered, and will remain outside the four corners of this measure, and may be alienated at any time. That is to say, we have no desire to shut out from use, in a forest reserve, lands primarily suitable for agriculture. Hon. members will see, too, that the Bill provides for every safeguard to ensure the development of agricultural land, whilst preserving the forest asset. Pending the completion of the classification work, which it is anticipated will occupy another year, all applications for timber country within the South-Western Division should be referred to the Forestry Department as heretofore. Once the classification is completed and the permanent timber reserves have been made and the agricultural land alienated, then this reference of applications to the Forestry Department will no longer be necessary. Thus the first principle of the forest policy will be carried out, and the prime timber country will be forever dedicated to forestry. Before leaving the question of reservation, let me correct a most erroneous idea held by the majority of the Australian people—that the area of forest country in Australia is greater than that in other countries. It is generally recognised by statesmen and economists that the minimum area of forests required by a country to supply its own timber needs is 25 per cent. of the total area of that country.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is a matter depending on population, and on the density of forest growth.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Let us take a look amongst the countries of the world. New Zealand has a total forest area—I am speaking in round figures—of 26,000 square miles, and that is 25 per cent. of her total area. France has 36,000 square miles of forests, which is 17½ per cent. of her total area. Germany has 53,000 square miles, which is a percentage of her total area of 25. Switzerland has 3,000 square miles, a percentage of 20. Italy has 17,000 square miles of forest, a percentage of 15. Italy is the poorest country of all in respect of forests, with the exception of our country. Austria has 37,000 square miles, a percentage of 31; and Hungary 84,000, a percentage of 29; Roumania 10,000, a percentage of 21; Sweden 90,000, a percentage of 22; Norway 26,000, a percentage of 21; and Russia in Europe 859,000, a percentage of 39. The United States has 860,000 square miles of forest, a percentage of 24; and Canada 625,000, a percentage of 17. Japan has 60,918 square miles of forest, equal to a percentage of her total area of 56. From these figures it will be seen that every civilised country in the world retains for forestry purposes an extent of country approximating 25 per cent.; the sole exceptions being Italy and our own country. New Zealand, as I have previously mentioned, has 26,562 square miles of forest, representing 25.6 per cent. of her total area; so that New Zealand has a sufficiency of timber supplies. The Commonwealth of Australia is estimated to contain 159,000 square

miles of forest. This represents only 5.32 per cent. of her total area—5.32 per cent. Small as this percentage is, it is really an exaggeration of the true percentage of forest country, for in this 159,000 square miles are included large areas of swamp country valueless from a timber point of view. I understand that at the forestry conference held in Perth during October last the area of prime forest country within the Commonwealth was estimated, by these expert foresters, at only 20,000,000 acres; that is to say, $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the total area of the Commonwealth. Now let us look at Western Australia. We find that the most we can expect to be able to reserve is 3,000,000 acres of prime forest country. The area of this State is approximately 1,000,000 square miles, but of this there is, of course, a large proportion which cannot be developed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We could do a lot in Western Australia if we had a population of 5,000,000 instead of 300,000.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We are using our timber assets irrespective of population, because we are exporting them to the countries which are teeming with population. We are not exporting to-day, of course, but we were doing so up to the outbreak of war, and when the war is over and shipping is available that exportation will continue. The question of our forests has no relative value as regards the population of the State, save so far as the consumption of small scantling within the State is concerned.

Mr. O'Loughlen: But, as regards these comparisons, you will agree that we have here an enormous area of country incapable of development.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have allowed in Western Australia for only one-sixth of the total area, which is a very conservative estimate. At least for two generations we have been misled by politicians and by administrators, who have considered our timber resources inexhaustible. We had thought, and the administrators may have thought, that Western Australia contained huge areas of timber, whereas, in reality, the percentage of prime forest country here to the total area of Western Australia is only .31 per cent. Hon. members will be surprised to learn that Germany, with her teeming population, has no less than 30,000,000 acres of forest country. Under sound administration, her forests are employing no less than 7,000,000 men. It is the secure forest administration that has built up this marvellous asset of that country. In order to arrive at a sound and permanent administration for the forests of this State, I have provided in the Bill for a Forest Department, not a department of tax collectors, such as we have to-day, but a department of foresters. Dealing with the second principle, this has reference to the restriction of the cutting of timber to the amount that the forests will grow. The Bill provides for this under several sections. The procedure in the future when a timber company wishes to operate, will be that the Conservator will select the area of forest and will lay down a forest working plan. A forest working plan is a

detailed written scheme of the work to be performed in a given area of country. In it will be laid down the position and area of each cutting section, the quantity of timber that may be removed, the location of the mill and its size and output as well as the locations of the tram lines, and so on. In short the whole scheme of operations will be drawn up prior to the sawmiller being granted the area. The next step will be to put the area up to tender or to auction. Until recently there has been a flat rate of royalty for jarrah and karri and this was imposed regardless of the position and nature of the forest. The timber in forests 100 miles from a port or market was rated the same as timber 20 miles from Bunbury. The timber from the finest virgin jarrah country near Pinjarra paid the same royalty as that obtained from twice cut-over forest on the edge of the jarrah belt near Wilga. By the new system the true stumpage value of the timber will be established in each case. The Conservator will assess the upset price and it will be for sawmillers to tender above that in open competition. The sawmillers will have access to the working plan; they will be able to critically examine the scheme outlined therein, and after inspecting the country will be in a position to tender the price they can afford for the timber. The successful tenderer will be granted a permit and this permit will be in the form of an agreement entered into between him and the conservator. This agreement will contain the main provisions of the working plan and will provide for the necessary penalties for breach of the agreement. Thus the great objection that sawmillers have raised up to now will be done away with. The royalty that they will pay will be the true stumpage value, and in lieu of general regulations which can never be made to meet the requirements of each case, the proper exploitation of the timber will be provided for in an agreement. This system of putting up permits to auction or tender will not, however, apply to small permits such as firewood and other minor forest produce. It has been the custom for many years for small men to supplement their earnings by working in the forests cutting firewood or collecting other minor produce such as tan barks or red gum. These men will continue to work as before, only, instead of taking out a monthly license, they will take out an annual registration certificate which will entitle them to work in any part of the South-Western division of the State as timber workers. In this way the small firewood cutter at Mundaring will be able to continue his operations, for the Conservator will grant to him a permit to obtain the forest produce over a given area of land, and he will acquire and exercise his right over that permit without competition. As I have already explained, we have been over-cutting our forests to a tremendous extent. Hon. members will realise how great has been the over-cutting by examining the map, which is hanging on the wall of the Chamber. This map shows the total extent of virgin jarrah country in the prime timber belt. It will be seen that there are no large

areas of virgin country remaining; indeed, the bulk of the maiden bush is within the land already held under sawmilling tenure. We must see to it in the future that the small remaining areas are worked by economical small mills and not by the large wasteful plants which though dubbed saw mills are in reality timber butcheries. How wasteful is the big mill is shown by the comparison of the figures of recovery. By recovery is meant the amount of sawn timber which is recovered by the saw mill from the round log. First take the case of a little mill in the Collie district, cutting five loads per day in a piece of very second-rate cut-over forest. The average recovery of this mill over a year's cutting was 63 per cent. Now take one of the big mills working in the finest jarrah timber that can be found north of the Dwellingup line. It cuts 35 loads per day and its recovery is 47 per cent.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Quote Jarrahdale.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have not the figures with me at the moment. I have contrasted the two mills. Jarrahdale stands alone.

Mr. O'Loghlen: By reason of its proximity to the market.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The small mill recovers no less than 16 per cent. more than the big one. The vice of cutting to tally, that is, attempting to get the largest output possible in a day's work, is at the bottom of this extraordinary difference. Timber which the small sawmiller gladly passes on from the big bench to the smaller bench, is in the case of the big mill thrown into the fire chute. Thus it is that we allow annually 500,000 tons of wealth to be burnt, and that is why, in the future, the size of the mills must be restricted to that size which will permit a maximum of efficiency with a minimum of waste. As hon. members will notice, the map showing the extent of our virgin forest is a very sad index to the lack of proper management in the past, but hon. members must not think from this that our timber assets are exhausted. The large saw-mills of the past and present have in many cases cut the eyes out of the forests. The classification plans show that in many instances there are 12 to 18 loads of marketable timber left on the ground. The forests are not cut out but are cut over, and there is sufficient timber for all time, provided the cutting is regulated on the lines I have indicated and the mills are small in size. Another wasteful form of exploitation which now must cease in prime timber country is the conversion of round timber into sleepers by the process known as hewing. Here is what the Royal Commission had to say on the subject:—

Are the reports of the enormous waste accurate? An exhaustive test was subsequently made, however, to ascertain the facts with regard to the comparative waste involved in the two systems of timber cutting, namely, milling and hewing, the result being that from a number of selected logs from virgin forest, it was found that the hewing process yielded a percentage of 57.12 of marketable timber against 72.73 per cent. by

the milling process, or a loss in hewing of 15.61 per cent. This test was carried out with the fullest opportunity for the representatives of each method to obtain the best possible results, the Mornington mill being efficiently equipped with modern machinery and appliances while the hewers were represented by experienced axemen of their own selection. The result definitely proved that sleeper hewing in high class virgin forest involves enormous loss to the State (in nearly one-fourth more marketable timber being obtained by milling than by hewing).

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Before tea I was referring to the report of the Royal Commission on the exhaustive tests held under its auspices. Those tests were carried out on the one side by the best picked hewers, and on the other side by a well equipped mill. The hewers went much farther than they usually do in their cutting, for they turned out, in addition to sleepers, other sizes of timbers. I need hardly say that this is not done in ordinary practice. With hewers cutting jarrah into sleepers, only one-fourth of the cubic contents of the log is recovered. The views of the Commission, which I have read to the House, are held by all men who have a knowledge of the subject.

Mr. Holman: The hewers use a lot of timber which would not be used for anything else.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It may be so. No one who has visited the forest areas and seen the destruction of magnificent jarrah by the hewer can fail to realise the extent and magnitude of the waste. The conversion of a straight jarrah log into sleepers by hewing is a direct destruction of wealth. Take, for instance, a sound four-load jarrah log. This will yield, even at one of the most wasteful of our mills, about two loads of sawn timber. This is worth to the State in royalty, wages, taxes, rail freight, etc., at least £3. If the same log is converted by the hewer into sleepers only, the timber recovered is only half the amount, or one load, while the value to the State is still less. Comparing hewing with saw-milling, it is estimated that there is an actual destruction of wealth amounting to a little over £1 for every load of round timber hewn. It has been advanced as an argument for hewing that it is impossible to cut out the bush without the hewer, that after the main logs have been brought to the mill it is economical to let the hewers into the forest to deal with those that are left. While this practice may be economical to the present day big mills, it results, as I have shown, in a direct loss of wealth to the State. That must cease. The small mill that will be established in the future will operate over the country cut over by the large mills, and will convert those logs to the best advantage.

Mr. O'Loghlen: How long will it be before they are operating, and how will they compete with the big mills?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Some that are operating to-day are competing successfully. However, one cannot talk of competition while the war is on. If the hon. mem-

ber will tell me when the war will be over, I will tell him when the competition can be successfully encountered. I have very great respect for the hon. member and his views, but at this stage I do not wish to do more than place my own views before the Chamber. The hon. member, it is well known, is an advocate for hewing. The Bill does not seek to stop hewing, except in the prime jarrah forests, where, as I have shown, a direct destruction of the State's wealth results from allowing the hewer to operate on straight jarrah logs capable of going to the mill. It may be asked, what is going to happen to the hewer?

Mr. O'Loughlen: A very pertinent question.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The asking of that question by the hon. member, together with a remark by the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering), shows me that the shoe pinches when I say that the hewer has been in the habit of working in the prime jarrah forest.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Some of them have, but not in recent years.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: They must not be allowed to work there. There is plenty of opportunity for the hewer to work in other country surrounding the prime jarrah belt, in timber reserves and other places. The hewers, by forming themselves into co-operative associations, for which they have shown an aptitude, will be able to establish and operate spot mills.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The hewer will not take on milling work.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I need not, I think, expatiate on the advantages of the hewers following this course. The hewer at present is a nomad, a wanderer.

Mr. Holman: It is not the first time they have been called that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The term is not offensively applied. It is the intention of the department to foster the co-operatively worked mill, and so establish the hewer in more permanent employment and make him a citizen with some stake and standing in the country.

Mr. Holman: He is just as good as the best of them now.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Man for man, yes, and those at the Front are probably better. However, to those who have not seen the awful destruction wrought by hewers in maiden bush, I recommend a visit to the Marradong-road. There will be seen a sight which will convince the most sceptic of the undesirability of this method of converting timber.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That has been abolished now for three or four years. I do not object to that, but I object to your wiping out the hewer altogether.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not the intention of the Bill to wipe out the hewer altogether. But to allow him to cut indiscriminately in our State forest will be as wicked as if we permitted him, with his axe, to come in here and demolish the walls of the Chamber.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The whole of your argument is against his existing at all.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I hope the hon. member will allow me to put my case.

In future, hewing, under the Bill, will be prohibited in all State forests, that is in all permanent forest reserves in the prime jarrah belt. The hon. member says it has ceased there already. If that is so, there is no difference between us. "State forests" means practically all that forest reserve in the prime jarrah belt. The operations of the hewer will be confined to forest reserves and other Crown lands, and then only where it is obviously more economical to bring the axe to the tree than the tree to the mill. Much of such country exists on the fringe of the jarrah belt.

Mr. Pickering: Can you give us the area of that country?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The classification which is at present proceeding, and which will be finished in another 12 months, will define those areas exactly, and if the hon. member will but attend to the plan on the wall of the Chamber he will see there how the land is being defined.

Mr. Pickering: That is not giving the area.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There are some three million acres, or thereabouts, of prime jarrah country which will be State forests. Beyond that it is difficult at present to say. I come now to the third principle embodied in the Bill, namely, the carrying out of silvicultural operations in order to assure the regeneration of the best species on the areas that have been cut over. I have said some rather hard things about the sawmillers, and the wasteful method of cutting our forests. I have now to show hon. members the other side of the shield. We have been mining our forests and have encouraged the sawmillers to cut all that they could. But the sawmiller has in this process developed the South-West district; his were the first rails laid; his locomotives and trucks were the first to carry freight to the ports. Except in the case of the five early concessions, the Government never gave the sawmiller any assistance. He has not benefited at all from the advance of settlement or by the progress of the State. Other industries like gold mining have staffs of Government experts to advise, State geologists to show what nature of rock may be met with, State chemists to analyse, and research officers to help in the development of the industry. The large community of agriculturists has also been well served. Railways have been built to far out blocks, while the State finances the farmer through his early pioneering days, and in his days of difficulty and distress. It matters not to which primary industry we turn. We see the Government helping and assisting in every possible way, except in one industry and one industry alone, and that an industry without which the development of the country within our assured rainfall would have been impossible. Not only was the timber industry left entirely out of it when the Government fairy godmother was bestowing her favours, but worse has happened; the State has taxed this industry to the extent of close on half a million of money. The sawmiller not only has to pay his taxes like every other citizen, but he is compelled to pay a royalty on the timber he

vuts. There would seem to have been a strange confusion of ideas in the minds of those responsible for the administration of our forests. On the one hand, they encouraged the sawmiller to cut all he could. This would seem to be evidence that the forests were regarded merely as a passing form of wealth, and that, like our mining industry, once all the richness was exploited, nothing further would be left. On the other hand, legislators by limiting the felling of trees to those above a certain dimension, would seem to have realised that the wealth of our forests was eternal, that the trees would grow again, and would renew the crop which was being cut. And yet, they imposed a tax or royalty, a tax on a primary industry. What argument can be advanced for such a tax?

Mr. O'Loughlen: You advance a pretty effective one when you ask us to abolish hewers' licenses.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There can only be one answer. The imposition of a tax on timber from uncultivated forests, that is to say, forests which grew here naturally and are not the creation of man, can only be justified if the money derived from such a tax is expended on the forests themselves. Is this the case in Western Australia? Alas, it is not. Here are the figures. Since the inception of the Forestry Department the revenue collected amounts to £615,401, while the expenditure amounts to £137,203, leaving a surplus of £478,198. On what has the sum of £478,198 been expended? Has it been spent in any work in the forests? The answer again is unfortunately in the negative. The sums expended by the Forestry Department have been utilised solely to defray the cost of administration in the collection of the revenue. Not one penny piece has been spent in the regenerating of our forests. Certain small sums from loan money have, it is true, been spent on the establishment of pine plantations, but the improvements of the cut-out jarrah and karri forests, from which not less than 25 million pounds worth of timber have been obtained, has been wholly neglected. I wish to give the House some figures regarding our primary industries for the year 1913. These are illuminating. The export of wheat amounted to £763,000, the export of wool to £976,000, the export of forest produce to £1,183,000, the production of gold to £5,581,000, and the production of coal to £153,000. These amounts are in round figures. It will be seen, therefore, that timber ranks second next to gold among our assets. What did we expend in 1913 on these very industries? Neglecting loan moneys, of which there have been many, the Department of Agriculture and Industries is accountable for £126,000.

Mr. Pickering: Is that on wheat?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: And the like. The Department of Lands is accountable for £77,000, the Department of Forests for £12,000, and the Department of Mines for £236,000. Where is my friend the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green)? I would ask hon. members to consider these figures and ponder over them. Here is our third most important industry, which has produced 25 million pounds

worth of gold to the State, and we have spent nothing upon its development. Our Forestry Department, up to date, has been purely a tax gathering institution. Its work might well have been entrusted to the State Taxation Department, which would doubtless have carried it on more economically, and perhaps with greater honesty. For two generations successive Governments have deceived the public, have taught them to believe that the forests were being worked on conservative lines, and that the wastage of the timber miller was being made good. Instead of that, the whole of the revenue, less the cost of collecting it, has been engulfed in the Treasury.

Mr. Holman: Where is the Treasurer?

Hon. P. Collier: Where has the money gone?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This revenue has been used for the purpose of bolstering up other Government enterprises—

Mr. O'Loughlen: Jam factories.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Which benefited the forests and the timber industry not a whit. Is there any industry in the world that can exist under a system which aims at taking all the profits, and putting back nothing to consolidate the business and ensure its permanence? Had the revenue from the forests been expended on the work of improving them as they were cut out, then they would be to-day in a position to yield a larger supply of timber than ever. Virgin forest, with its excess of over-mature useless timber, contains only a fraction of the timber which can be grown on the same area of country under forest management.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That has to be demonstrated yet.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I propose to demonstrate it to the hon. member, and, so that he shall not miss my sentence, I want to say again that virgin forests with their excess of over-mature useless timber contain only a fraction of the timber which can be grown on the same area of country under forest management.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is having regard to time.

Hon. J. Mitchell: And expense.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Again, virgin forest is somewhat in a state of equilibrium; it is growing only as fast as it is dying. As the old trees die, new ones take their place. Under forest management all this is altered, and an even aged crop of timber is aimed at. Useless over-mature trees, now only encumbering the soil, are got out of the way, and room is thus made for the younger ones, and little by little a forest of timber of all ages is converted into an even stand of trees of about the same age. Let hon. members not mistake me. There is no planting. This stand of trees is obtained solely by the art and by the craft of the forester. The difference in the growth of a neglected forest and one under silvicultural treatment is absolutely astonishing. For instance, it is generally reckoned that 16 loads in the round is a good yield for jarrah in the prime timber belt, and 40 loads for karri, both per acre. Taking the age of maturity at 100 years, this means that the virgin forests grow and die at the rate of 0.16 loads for

jarrah, and 0.4 loads for karri per year. There are some official figures on record of the growth of certain eucalypts under sound forest treatment. They represent, karri three loads per annum per acre, jarrah two loads per annum per acre, and the Tasmanian blue gum at four loads per annum per acre. These figures for jarrah and karri are the result of 30 years of careful measurement in the plantation of Cape Colony, while those for Tasmanian blue gum are the result of 60 years of investigation in the Nilgiris of India. From the last report received from both places there would seem to be no falling off in the rate of growth. It is expected by the Forestry Department that in the case of karri and jarrah the age of maturity will be more nearly 80 years. At that age in the cultivated forests of South Africa there will be a stand of 240 loads per acre in the karri area.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why are you up in the clouds so much?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am giving some figures to hon. members.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are only estimates.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: And there will be a stand of 160 loads in the jarrah areas, as against the stand of 40 loads of karri, and 16 loads of jarrah, which we find in our virgin forests to-day. To come to a practical illustration: I recently had the privilege of inspecting a piece of forest in the karri country which had been taken up some 50 years ago by Mr. DeCourcy Lefroy. He cleared it, cleaned it, ploughed it, and cultivated it, and then abandoned the farm. The re-growth on that area was recently measured by officers of the Forestry Department, and it was found that the timber had grown at the rate of 121 cubic feet per acre per year, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ loads. From this it will be seen that in its own country, as good results may be expected from this timber as in Cape Colony, or even better results. It must not be forgotten that this patch of re-growth has been frequently swept by fire, and that it has not had the hand of a forester to care for it. Under proper forest management we may, then, expect stands per acre of marketable timber of between 150 and 240 loads in our main timber belt, in lieu of the 16 to 40 loads we possess now. It will be many years before we arrive at this result, but this is all the more reason why it is imperative that we should without further delay set to work to put our forests in such a state of order that this object may be attained. We have wasted 50 years and half a million of money, and it behoves us to see that in future a sufficient part of the revenue of the State shall be allocated to forestry, so that not only may the areas in process of being cut out to-day be regenerated, but also the cut-out areas which we have neglected in the past. It is estimated that there are now $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions of acres of cut-over forest crying out for silvicultural treatment.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is all that area back in the hands of the Crown again?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you know the proportion?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. As a beginning, the Bill provides that one-half of the gross revenue derived from royalties, lease rents, and other forest sources be set aside as a special fund for forestry work.

Hon. P. Collier: Is that an actual provision in the Bill?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes; the same as in New South Wales.

Hon. P. Collier: You will not get the money by any other means; the Treasurer would grab it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This sum will not be nearly sufficient to make good the wastage of the past, but it is hoped that the sum will lay the foundation for the work, and that as the benefit of the foresters' operations is felt a larger sum will be provided from the general revenue to meet the cost of the full programme. Whilst the improvement of our great indigenous forests of hardwoods will form the main work of the Forestry Department for all time, we must not shirk the duty we owe of replacing our enormous softwood importations by timbers locally grown. A fourth principle should, therefore, be added to the three I have already laid down as the foundation of our forest policy, and this fourth principle may be set out thus—the formation annually of a sufficient area of pine plantations to supply the softwood needs of the State. Before the war we imported annually from America and northern Europe no less than £144,000 worth of softwood, all of which might be produced here. Taking into account the growth of our population, it is estimated that an area of one square mile of country should be planted with pines every year. Here again, the importance of continuity of policy is well shown. Once the pine planting scheme is initiated, it must continue until the timber on the first square mile planted has reached a marketable size. It is clear that, if the continuity is broken, if for one year we fail to put in our square mile of pine, then, when the time comes to reap the crop, there will be a blank in the corresponding year at the end of the rotation, and the many local industries dependent on the timber from the plantations will find themselves without work for that year, or else be compelled to have recourse again to American softwood. The rotation must be established, and there must be no break in the continuity of the work. The question will be asked, how is the cost of this plantation work to be defrayed? The cost will be about £10,000 a year. Is it to come out of the revenue from our hardwood forests, or from where? The formation of pine plantations is work from which future generations will draw the most benefit. In all probability, the cost of the work will be wiped out by the sale of thinnings in our own time; but the main softwood crop will be for our children. The item is, therefore, a Loan Estimates item; and I do not think anyone can challenge the expenditure of loan money on such work. There have recently come to my hands the official figures of the cost and value of similar work in South Australia; and hon. members

will, I feel sure, be surprised to learn that the net revenue derived from a pine plantation is as much as £10 18s. per acre per annum.

Hon. P. Collier: That is better than wheat growing.

Mr. Harrison: But there is no comparison between pine grown in Western Australia and that grown in South Australia.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The pines of South Australia were planted by an expert forester. Here, the pines have largely been planted in an experimental way, in order to ascertain the particular soils which would best grow the various classes of pines. Now that we have a trained officer who has been engaged in plantations of a similar character in other countries, we may hope to avoid the mistakes of the past. By "net revenue" I mean the revenue after deduction of the cost of the land and the cost of plantation, counting compound interest for the whole period of growth of the plantation, namely 33 years, and also superintendence, maintenance, and depreciation charges. Again, the cost of felling the timber and converting it into boards is also deducted. After all these deductions have been made South Australia still has from its pine plantations a net income of £10 18s. per acre per annum. Even if we were to obtain only a fraction of this revenue per acre, or even if the timber only paid all costs and interest charges, it is difficult to see to what finer reproduction work loan money could be devoted.

Mr. Holman: Those costs and those profits were only estimated.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: They were actual.

Mr. Holman: They are only estimated.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: As it is, we may expect a very pleasant profit from our future pine plantations. I have rather emphasised the importance of making good our economic position so far as soft woods are concerned, for I am most anxious that hon. members should be seized of the position when the financial clauses of the Bill come to be debated. The Bill provides for half the gross revenue to be devoted to the work of improving our hardwood forests. The cost of making pine plantations must come out of loan, and will form an annual appropriation from those moneys.

Mr. Duff: What would be the age of that plantation you refer to?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Thirty-three years. But thinning will come along before then.

Mr. Pilkington: What did you say the profit was?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: A sum of £10 18s. per acre per annum.

Mr. Pilkington: From what time?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: At the end of the 33 years the sale of the produce showed the profit which I have mentioned. The only difficulty is the length of time you have to wait for the trees to grow. I want to talk now about fires. I well remember during the first week or two when I was Minister for Forests, I spoke rather nervously perhaps in the presence of a man who has devoted all his life to forestry work just as the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen). Half the battle of

regeneration was the prevention of the spreading of fires which my friend the member for Forrest said is the very thing which makes the forests grow.

Mr. O'Loughlen: When did I say that?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Years ago. The hon. member said that year after year fires swept through the forests and cleaned out all the rubbish without doing any harm.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You cannot produce that in "Hansard."

Hon. P. Collier: That was his theory.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It may be that other hon. members who have not had the lifelong experience of my friend have met many gentlemen in Western Australia occupying some of the highest positions in the land who have put forward the same theory.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): And I contend it is right, so far as the first fire is concerned.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is about as right as to contend that it is good for the human body that the ordinary man should have typhoid fever every three years.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): I say the first fire.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: My object in dealing with the question of fires is to once and for all explain to hon. members the effect fires have on the forests, and how it is proposed to counteract that dreadful influence. I have attempted to show how the forests of Western Australia have been destroyed by over exploitation and how they have been alienated. These two interests have certainly played fearful havoc with our timber assets. But there is a third scourge, worse even than unrestricted saw milling and hewing worse than land settlement, which is yearly eating up our forest capital, and that scourge is fire. Experts are agreed that the continuous fring of the forests can but lead to one result, and that is the total extinction of the forests.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): With continuous fires.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Already the signs are only too apparent. The forests are not reproducing themselves as of old. The old cut out areas in such early timber areas as Jarrahdale are very disappointing.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the blight of early management.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Instead of a fine stand of 40-year old jarrah regrowths, we find a poor lot of crooked, gnarled, hop poles, wretched things that will probably come to nothing, and the sole cause of that condition is fire. Let me explain what happens in our jarrah forests, and hon. members will readily see how serious is the position. The fallers work through a piece of forest, the mill logs are taken to saw mills, and the ground is left littered with the crowns and branches of the felled trees. As soon as it will burn a fire is put into this brushwood, and the intensity of the fire is such that frequently it kills every standing tree. If even the Minister for Works, who shakes his head, will take the trouble to look at those pictures on the opposite wall of the Chamber he will see the exact effect in five instances that a fire has had on forests.

Mr. Foley: Were they placed there to catch the votes of members?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: They were placed there for the information of members. The fire sweeps on and dies out, the winter comes on and in the spring there comes up on the blackened area a carpet of jarrah seedlings. This is bountiful nature's way of restoring the conditions, and she does it most lavishly. Foresters from all parts of the world who have visited our forests are astounded at the marvellous reproductive power of our eucalypt timbers. The young seedlings, as we who live in the country know, grow fast and strong, and at the end of the third year form a fine sight, standing as they do 10 to 15 feet high. Then at the end of the third year comes along our enemy the fire, once more, and though he has not the strength or intense heat of the first fire, he is quite hot enough to kill the bulk of the seedlings, and the few that remain are indeed a sorry sight. Their fine tapering leading shoot is burned right back to about five feet in height, and all the leaves and twigs are burned off. How could any intelligent person therefore say that fires are good for forests?

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): I say that one fire is good; I do not say continuous fires.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Then comes another winter and the blessed rain which does so much good to the agricultural districts and makes our hearts glad and puts money into our pockets, tries hard to heal the wounds the fire has caused. The seedlings that were burned to the ground re-start from the root stock, but this is so feeble that the little clumps of suckers make little headway. Those few saplings that have escaped send out a fresh leader from the charred stump five or six feet from the ground. This also is a feeble growth and sometimes two leaders are formed, a condition which makes the tree useless for any purpose. The sixth year sees our groups of weak ground suckers taking some shape, while our saplings have established their leaders. There is a distinct kink where the fire burnt the original leader back, and the heart of the young tree is at this point sick, as is shown by the formation of a gum pocket. However, the little scorched saplings, which should be between 25 and 30 feet high, have attained to the same height as they were when three years old, namely, 15 feet, and would, all being well, make trees in time. Alas, they are never given a chance. The enemy, fire, rushes through again, and again the leading shoots of our saplings are burnt back, this time to between 5 feet and 10 feet from the ground. The groups of ground suckers, wretched remnants of what was once a perfect regeneration, are burnt back to the ground. Again the old rotation works round. The rains come and year follows year until another three years have passed, when the fire fiend again destroys the work. If hon. members will take a walk through any part of the jarrah belt, anywhere between Mundaring and Albany, they will see that what I say is true.

Mr. Pickering: It is not quite so bad down the South-West.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The fires do not run so fiercely in the wet South as in the warm region about Perth. Look at the young pole woods growing up, and one will see as many as four kinks, one above the other, the lowest about 5ft. up and the highest some 15 feet. Each kink represents the destruction of the leading shoot and the loss of nearly three years' growth. Each kink means a gum pocket and a bad heart. In many cases the young tree, strong as it is, fails to get its head sufficiently above the triennial fires, and so dies. Only the tree that, through some lucky chance, is standing protected by a road, river, or whim track, and so escapes a fire for perhaps five years, succeeds in retaining its leading shoot and so holds its own. But it escapes with such a scorching that its growth is greatly retarded. The destruction of the re-growth is not all the damage that the fires do. I have already said that the fire which follows after the fallers have done their work is frequently of such intensity as to kill large jarrah trees outright. Those photographs on the wall of the Chamber have been taken on an area near Dwellingup. They demonstrate better than any words of mine the damage caused to large trees. When those trees are not actually killed they are frequently defoliated to the topmost branches. Hon. members who have traversed the jarrah forest will doubtless have observed large areas where all the trees are blackened right up and not a green leaf is to be seen. The bushman will tell you that this is all right and quite natural, and that the trees will throw out fresh shoots after the winter. Let us go through the same area in the spring of the year, and what do we see? The scorched trees are trying to put out leaves from the top branches; but they cannot, for the twigs have been burnt back, and so the tree sends forth tufts of leaves along the branches, while the ends remain black and charred. What is still more serious is that the whole of the trunk, from a few feet from the ground, sprouts out with tufts of branchlets. This is how Nature keeps the tree alive. All up the trunk, under the bark, there are dormant buds, and if anything occurs to the crown, so that the leaves, which are the lungs of the tree, are destroyed, Nature causes those dormant buds to sprout. The tree is saved, but at what cost? Inspect the same area the following spring and it will be observed that the crown, though of a staghead appearance, owing to the host of dead twigs, is now covered with green leaves which have sprung from new branchlets. The tufts of green up the trunk are still there, though their work is in reality done, and they now only serve to retard the growth of the tree. That is why they are generally called greedy branches. In the following year the greedy branches fall off and, to the untrained eye of the bushman, the trees are normal once more. An examination of the tree, however, reveals the fact that not only has the fire retarded the growth but that all up the trunk, wherever a greedy branch grew, there is a gum pocket. Everyone familiar with the timber trade is, I think, aware that our great trouble in converting jarrah into sawn timber is due to the presence of gum pockets. Fire

is principally the cause of those pockets. Again, after the faller's work is done, it always happens that many of the crowns of the trees that have been felled lie against the sound standing trees which should form our future forest and yield timber to the coming generation. The fire that burns up the crown in many cases scorches the bark completely off one side of the standing tree and chars the wood itself. The fire that follows three years after bites in still further, and so on. Fire follows fire, each one penetrating further to the heart of the tree, until finally the trunk is converted into a veritable chimney, and all the wood in the interior is destroyed. I have tried to show hon. members some of the evils that follow the firing of our forests. Fires are responsible for nearly all the faults that our timbermen show. They are responsible for crooked trees, double crowns, gum pockets, lack of re-growth, poor stocking, slow growth, and one hundred and one other troubles. It is quite impossible to set out in pounds, shillings and pence what has been the total loss to Western Australia through forest fires. It certainly far exceeds annually the value of the timber cut. But your bushman will say, "We have always had fires." Your bushman is wrong. There would never have been any jarrah forests at all if this country had been swept by fire down all the ages.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You say that the quantity destroyed is more than the timber cut. How is the estimate arrived at?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: By expert investigation. Any man who knows one-tenth of what the hon. member himself knows about our forests should be aware that the statement is a correct one. I am quoting the best expert advice of the Forests Department. I am not making any statement on my own responsibility. Even in the blackfellows' time general fires must have been of infrequent occurrence. An inspection of the sheoak stumps in the hills above Perth will show this. To-day one may ride through the length and breadth of the jarrah country and not find an unburned sheoak, while nowhere will one find any up to the size of those from which the early settler shingled his roof. The explanation is that the white man's fires are far more frequent and far more intense than the blackfellows'. The blackfellow himself is only a newcomer when compared with the age of our forests, and it is logical to assume that before he brought fire this scourge only occurred at very rare intervals, and was then caused by lightning. It will be said, however, that, granting that all I have stated is correct, it is of no use attempting to better the situation, that bush fires are here to stay and that they cannot be controlled. Here again speaks the bushman, and again he is wrong. All over the world he has said the same thing. I commend hon. members to read up the history of fire control in Canada, in the United States of America, in Cape Colony, in Spain, and in the South of France. Everywhere it is the same story. "Fires cannot be controlled," say the bushmen, and yet to-day we see the forests of the Mûres et Esterelles, in the sandplains of the South of France, fire protected. That region is generally accepted as the worst fire

centre of the world. The undergrowth will burn annually. The forests consist of pine, and there is from six to seven months of complete drought every year. When we can protect inflammable pine forests how much easier is it to protect our much less inflammable eucalypt forests? In Cape Colony, and indeed all through the Union of South Africa, from Cape Point to the Limpopo River, there have been established vast areas of plantations of different species, but chiefly our eucalypt. It does not all sound right, but it is proved to be all right. The Transvaal farmer who has his prototype in Western Australia burns his country every year, and yet the Forestry Department of South Africa continuously grows successfully plantations of eucalypts. Indeed, these Australian trees are used as fire breaks planted round the more inflammable coniferous plantations. Canada and the United States of America have reduced the fire scourge in their pine forests from what was regarded in the past as an inevitable calamity to what is characterised by them to-day as an insurable risk. Fires can be controlled in Western Australia more easily than in any other part of the world, on account of the rainfall and the climatic conditions in the country where the prime timber exists. This work will be the first work that the Forestry Department will undertake. How is to be done? In the first place, the main source of danger must come under the Forestry Department's jurisdiction, that is the grazier. All through the forests there exist to-day scattered pastoral leases, and the Bill provides that, where these occur in any prime timber country, that is, in State forests, they shall be transferred from the Lands to the Forestry Department. The rental will be the same, and the duration of the lease will be the same, but there will be a new landlord. The Forestry Department will then set to work and take in hand little by little the forest areas and improve them. As these forest areas are improved, fire patrols will be established and fire breaks will be opened, and the area which has been improved and will have cost the State a certain amount of money—

Mr. O'Loughlen: A big amount.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Will be protected from its worst enemy.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Has the Conservator abandoned the idea of stacking the tops?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think that has gone. The pastoral lessee will be requested to co-operate with the Forestry Department in the work of fire prevention. Slowly, quietly, and surely the work will go on, and yearly a larger and larger area will become improved, and be added to that which has already been protected. Of course, it will take a very long time to work over the whole of our forests in this manner, but the policy must be laid down, and we must strive to carry it out as effectively as possible. Until an area of forest is improved, and is therefore worth protecting, no hampering regulations will be imposed on the graziers. Hon. members will, I think, all agree that when once we have spent money on a piece of forest, and so improved it, it is worth many times more than the capital

value of the grazing industry in this, from a cattle standpoint, poverty stricken country. It would be sheer lunacy to allow the grazier to destroy the forest. He will have to conform to certain rules and regulations, and he and the foresters will co-operate to protect the most valuable asset this particular part of Western Australia will ever produce. I now want to deal with the administration. At the beginning of my remarks I related the early history of the forest question in this State, and I showed how, about 20 years ago, we had a magnificent opportunity of putting our house in order, but Western Australia failed to grasp it. We allowed Mr. Ednie Brown's sound advice to pass unheeded, and later the advice of the Forestry Commission received the same lack of consideration. Finally, when a Forest Board in 1907 began to make some headway, and bade fair at any rate to put a stop to the unrestricted cutting of timber, we killed that Board. I say "we" advisedly, for it is the Government with their responsible Ministers of the Crown whose duty it is to safeguard our national assets. Politicians, instead of fostering a forest conscience, instead of accepting the advice of the experts—

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you indorse all these attacks on past politicians?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am making a statement. Instead of laying the foundation stone of sound forestry and erecting thereon a permanent edifice, the income from which would endure for all time, they have continually disregarded every word of warning. They have set their hands to the task of encouraging what I would call the reckless exploitation of the forests to the utmost limit of their power. It was Sir Alexander Peacock, speaking at the forest conference in Adelaide in 1916, who pointed to the real cause at the bottom of the lack of a forest policy in Australia. He said "the trouble about forestry is that trees have no votes." Unpalatable as it may be, I venture to suggest that this is the true reason. Wherever the interest of a living man entitled to a vote clashed with the national forestry policy, the policy was broken. If it were a hewer wanting to destroy virgin country, he got that country. If it were a saw-milling company requiring vast areas of timber country at an almost peppercorn rental it got it.

Mr. Harrison: Shame!

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If it were a land hungry immigrant wishing to take up a bit of jarrah country to starve on, he got it.

Mr. Pickering: It was his misfortune that he got such country.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Is it any wonder that there soon was no forest policy whatever? Is it any wonder that trees and forests came to be regarded as irritating excrescences on the world's face to be ring-barked and destroyed? Seeing that forestry was subordinated to the Lands Department, is it any wonder that schemes were laid down, which had for their object the tearing down of the vast karri forests and their conversion into dairy farms?

Mr. Harrison: Where are they now?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: They were only in the imagination of the politicians. It was a member of the Forestry Commission (Brigadier-General, the Hon. Sir Newton Moore) when raised to Cabinet rank, who caused to be ringbarked those large areas of karri forest around Manjimup. It is estimated that through this act of vandalism the State lost wealth to the amount of £80,000.

Mr. Pickering: Was that not to find work for the unemployed?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: How much has been lost in mad survey work, in checker-boarding the forests with farms which will never be farmed? I cannot say, but the sum must be an immense one. Will hon. members look at the plan in the corner, and see the farms established there on the checker-board system, in hill and dale, over river and road, so long as they conformed to the system, irrespective of the country itself or other conditions? Thousands and thousands of pounds of money belonging to the State have been spent by these same politicians under this checker-boarding system, which all has to be undone to-day. As the Prussians have taught their people for 70 years and more that brutal aggrandisement is the sole aim and object of a nation, so have we taught from the start of this colony that the destruction of forests by axe, by saw and by fire was not only a legitimate occupation, but a high ideal to live up to. The first church service held in Western Australia was held under a large jarrah tree, and to commemorate the event the democracy of that day cut the tree down. Ever since then, we have continued to destroy our national wealth, and in the years that have gone we have never made a single effort to restore it. As I have said, we have reached the parting of the ways. Again, we have an expert forester to advise us how to set our forest house in order. We have come to a time when we have learnt, it may be in war's hard school, that we must conserve the natural resources that a bountiful providence has showered upon us. The war has taught us, as nothing else could do, that we owe a great duty to posterity, that we cannot go on mining our forest resources, but must work them on conservative lines, restricting the cutting to what the forests will grow, cutting the income, as it were, and leaving the capital intact. Everywhere this principle is being recognised, but how long will this trend of thought last? Are we again through some change political or otherwise—

Mr. O'Loughlen: Anticipating.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Are we to allow ourselves to fall back once more into that slough of apathy in which we have been engulfed for the last 20 years? This is what we have to guard against and this is why the forest administration of Western Australia must be firmly secured under a legislative enactment. Given a secure forest administration consisting of a small number of professional foresters and a general staff of foresters, not tax collectors, such as we have had up to now, but foresters trained in the care and management of forests and we need never again fear the blighting influence that

has so wrecked our timber areas in the years that have gone. Such an administration must and will justify its existence in a very short time. The least, if I may say so, important result but one which probably will have the strongest influence with the majority of people will show itself first of all, and that is in the income derived from the forests. Then will follow the better utilisation of our timbers and the initiation of wood working industries. Finally as the working plans come into force and forests are improved the permanent mill sight with its permanent village of timber workers will take the place of the shifting fallers' camp, and the deserted mill cottages of to-day. The department under the Minister of the Crown, who for the time being administers the Act, will have charge of all matters of policy and all matters connected with the forests, their proper utilisation and their sylvicultural treatment. The permanent head—the Conservator of Forests—will be removed so far as it is possible to remove him from political control, from political influence. He will be appointed for a term of seven years and will have the powers of a commissioner, and will have the whole administration of the forest policy in his hands. His staff will consist of men who have been trained in the science of forestry and who have gained their experience in every sphere of the practical work of the forester, sowing the seed, thinning the crop, protecting it from its many enemies and marking the felling sections for the mill. Power is taken to enable the conservator to establish training schools for his foresters and to take youths as apprentices to learn the art and craft of the foresters' profession. And it will be for him to build up his department from the magnificent material that this State possesses in its strong young men, so that the main principles of the forest policy will be established, maintained and carried through in perpetuity, I hope, by West Australians in our own country. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion of Mr. O'Loughlen debate adjourned.

PERENJORI HOTEL LICENSE.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [9.5]: On Thursday of last week the Honorary Minister for Lands, I understand, promised to call for a report from the Under Secretary for Lands about the Perenjori application for license. I understand it was his intention to make a statement to the House to-night. I shall be glad to know if the Minister intends to make that statement now or will give any statement to the House regarding it.

Mr. SPEAKER: With the permission of the House the Honorary Minister may make a statement.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister—Nelson) [9.6]: The facts are these: On 2nd September, that is, after the sale of this block by public auction, Mr. E. B. Johnston and Mr. Connor called to see the Under Secretary for Lands with regard to the Perenjori Lot 9. The Under Secretary knew the

block had been sold to Messrs. Johnston and Connor and believed that Mr. E. B. Johnston was either one of the purchasers or the agent for one of them. He told Messrs. Johnston and Connor that he would advise the Commissioner of Police of the conditions of the sale. After Messrs. Johnston and Connor left, the Under Secretary, as he had not the file before him, and as several other callers were waiting, asked Mr. Morris to get the file and write to the Commissioner of Police giving the conditions under which the land was sold in order that the Commissioner could, if he thought fit, communicate with the inspector in charge of the district. Mr. Morris did not see Messrs. Johnston and Connor and in sending the letter to the Commissioner of Police acted on the instructions of the Under Secretary for Lands. As I stated on Thursday last when speaking in the Assembly, this letter was sent without my knowledge; had I sighted the letter it would not have been sent. I was not aware that any departmental officer had been approached by anyone; no one either in the department or outside mentioned the matter to me in any shape or form. The first knowledge I had that such a letter had been written was eight days afterwards when the file came before me on my calling for it. There is no danger of a recurrence as I have expressed my views very strongly on the matter.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [9.8]: I wish to ask the Honorary Minister whether he will attach any further papers in connection with the matter to the file now on the Table; any reports by Mr. King or Mr. Morris or any papers that passed between the Minister and himself on the matter. Will he attach them to the file to-morrow?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister—Nelson) [9.9]: I have no objection; I have the papers here.

House adjourned at 9.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 18th September, 1918.

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

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

QUESTION—PERENJORI HOTEL LICENSE.

Hon. P. COLLIER (without notice) asked the Premier: Will he lay on the Table the Police Department file dealing with the application for the Perenjori hotel license?