

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think the amendment would destroy the efficiency of the clause. The £20 penalty provided is a maximum, and it is altogether improbable that any court would impose a fine of £20 because a man did not exactly follow the advice of his practitioner. I do not think there is any likelihood of the words causing hardship to any person.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Some amendment is certainly required, because there is no provision that the advice given shall be in writing. Either the words objected to by Mr. Dodd should be deleted or we should add the words "in writing."

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I am inclined to agree with Mr. Dodd. One might carry out the advice of the practitioner as far as possible and yet might find it altogether impracticable to exactly carry out that advice.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The leader of the House said that when he came to these contentious clauses he would report progress. I received the report and evidence of the select committee only this afternoon, and I have not yet had an opportunity of looking into it. I do not know what this clause means. If the Minister is going to rush the clauses through I wish to enter a protest against this haste. I have no idea as to what the effect of the amendment will be. I hope the Minister will carry out his undertaking to report progress.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I intended reporting progress on Clause 44, which I regarded as the beginning of the contentious clauses. However, I am prepared to do it on this clause. The words proposed to be struck out are not new in the Bill, but are contained in the existing Act. The only respect in which the clause alters the provision of the Act is that it strikes out "once in every four weeks," which is regarded as being entirely inadequate in a number of cases. I have no desire to rush the Bill through.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am inclined to support the amendment. A patient might consult one medical practitioner and, not being satisfied with the treatment, might consult another, whose advice might be totally opposed to that of the first practitioner. Which advice is to be carried out?

Hon. J. E. DODD: I find, as the Colonial Secretary has said, that the provision is in the existing Act. I was not aware of this. However, it seems to me a big power to place in the hands of medical men who are, after all, only human.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.14 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 5th March, 1918.

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

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

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with an amendment.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1917-18.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 28th February; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Vote—His Excellency the Governor, £1,573—put and passed.

Votes—Executive Council £45, Legislative Council £929, Legislative Assembly £1,748, Joint House Committee £3,895, Joint Printing Committee £5,039, Joint Library Committee £400—agreed to.

Vote—Premier's Office, £1,714:

Item, Clerk £240.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I notice a new position, that of a clerk at £240. It appears that there has been a Treasury clerk in the Premier's Office doing work for the Premier's Office. But now that work has passed away from the Premier's office. Therefore, I move—

"That the item be struck out."

Mr. SMITH: I support the member for North-East Fremantle, as there has been no increase in the work of the Premier's Office. The Secretary to the Premier, it appears, is receiving a salary of £550 under this vote; and I believe he obtains an additional £200 or so from other departments. I think hon. members will agree that, considering the times, the Secretary to the Premier is very well paid. Instead of increasing the expenditure of the Premier's Office, we ought to be cutting it down.

The PREMIER: The work of the Premier's Office in this State has not decreased. On the contrary, like the work of all the Premiers' offices in Australia, it has increased. The item of £240 for a clerk is an item which has been on the Estimates previously, but was then included in the Treasurer's vote, although the clerk was really doing no Treasury work.

Hon. T. Walker: He did some Treasury work.

The PREMIER: He simply dealt with matters which came to the Premier from the Treasurer. The Premier's Office, however, still continues to do a good deal of work for the Treasurer, who has no clerk and no typist. All that work is being done for the Treasurer by the Premier's Office. Although hon. members might believe that the work of the Premier's Office has not increased of late years,

it has, in fact, increased considerably, because all questions connected with the war, such as coal shortage, shipping shortage, and so forth, pass through the Premier's Office. From inquiries made in the East I find that the work of the New South Wales Premier's office has, owing to these various new subjects connected with the war, increased by 75 per cent.; and replies of a similar tenor have been received from the other States. I can assure hon. members that all the officers of the Premier's Department are fully employed. The work devolving upon that office is very considerable indeed, because everybody in the State thinks that by approaching, or writing to, the Premier's Office he reaches the fountain head. This item is absolutely necessary.

Hon. T. WALKER: I understand that there is no new clerk, and no new typist, and that these are not offices created this year but that for the first time they appear on the Premier's vote. From my knowledge and observation of the Premier's Department for some years. I am aware that these officers were formerly paid out of the Treasury vote. The original appointment of these officers took place when the Premier was also the Treasurer. As far as I can recollect, there has always been in this Chamber a complaint against the expenses of the Premier's Office. To keep down the expenses of that office, these two officers, who are now to be paid for the first time out of the Premier's vote, were permanently borrowed from the Treasury. They do a little Treasury work, or, as the Premier has said, the Treasurer having no secretary and no typist, work of that nature is done for him in the Premier's Office. Thus these are not new officers, but officers who have been there for years. That is the point.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The point is that you do not want to make the economy.

Hon. T. WALKER: There is work for these officers to do, and they are necessary for the proper conduct of the business of the State. Therefore I do not favour a reduction.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is yet another clerk in addition to this one, and another typist is also provided. The clerk referred to in this item was previously doing the work of the Treasurer, because that Minister had not a clerk of his own.

The Premier: I said a good deal of the Treasurer's work was done by this clerk.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In that case, the clerk should go to the Treasury.

The Premier: There is not enough work for him there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I want to see men in the Premier's office actually to do work there, and not just to wait on the Premier.

The Premier: They work all right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is an increase, and an unnecessary increase. I agree it is necessary that the Secretary to the Premier should have a typist.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If it were correct, as the hon. member says, that this is an increase, I should vote for striking it out. The fact is, however, that taking the Estimates for the Premier's office in conjunction with the Esti-

mates for the Treasury, and comparing them with those of last year, it will be seen that no increases whatever are shown. This particular item is shown correctly this year for the first time. It should have appeared in the Premier's vote in years gone by. It has always been the desire of the Premier's office to keep down their vote, and in the past they charged to the Treasury vote items which were properly chargeable to the Premier's office. This particular item is one and the item "typist" is another.

Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—London Agency, £7,832:

Mr. SMITH: I would like to know whether this vote includes any expenditure on immigration.

The PREMIER: There are no expenses at all in connection with immigration at the present time.

Item, Temporary assistance, £250.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Considering the existing conditions, I am of opinion that the London Agency should be able to carry on its work with the permanent staff and without employing temporary assistance. Last year £210 was voted for temporary assistance and £267 was spent. This year £250 appears on the Estimates. There are three permanent clerks as it is in this particular branch of the office, and very little indenting can be done at the present time. We know that it is impossible to get stuff sent out. I move—

"That the item be struck out."

Mr. HOLMAN: I intend to support the amendment. We should bring about a decrease in the expenditure of this department seeing that the country is going back at such a rapid rate. The amount of work previously done when immigration was being carried on and when indenting was being done was considerable, but at the present time there cannot be either immigration or indenting, yet the expenses are as high as they were before. We should certainly be able to reduce the expenditure of the indenting office, and later on it is my intention to move for a reduction in the total vote.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Although there is not the same amount of indenting done as was the case in years gone by, a good deal of work still has to be done, and the indenting office in London is kept busy in ordering goods for Wyndham and for our railways, etc. It is necessary now to get permission from the Imperial Government to allow material to be made and when that permission has been granted and the work has been completed, there are many formalities to be gone through in connection with the shipping. Even when material is shipped, that is not the end because the Huns have been very busy, as we know, in sinking vessels, and so far as material for the Wyndham works is concerned, quite a great deal of it has been sunk, not only once and twice, but in some cases three times. The result is that we have had to pay considerably more each time when we have had to replace the orders, and naturally the staff in London has been kept busy.

Mr. SMITH: The Minister would have us believe that the cost of repeating orders has been increased each time two or threefold. Nothing of the sort has happened. If that has been the case, there has been a bad business arrangement. In connection with any private concern, if a consignment is sunk, a repeat order is placed and the material is sent without any trouble.

The Minister for Works: It all has to be inspected and that costs money and takes time.

Mr. SMITH: I cannot see why the inspecting engineer and his three permanent clerks cannot do all the work. We must start somewhere to cut down expenses and a reduction can be effected here.

The PREMIER: In spite of the fact that we had to pay the travelling expenses of Mr. Kessell and his family to the State to the extent of £358, the Agent General's vote this year is £1,090 less than it was last year.

Mr. Holman: It is up to last year's estimate all the same.

The PREMIER: The Agent General states even now that he has not the assistance that he really requires because some of his staff have joined the army.

Mr. Lambert: Has the Agent General joined the army?

The PREMIER: The Government have been resisting all attempts to decrease expenditure in this department.

Mr. Munsie: It is time the Government took a firm hand and wiped out the department altogether.

The PREMIER: The Agent General assures the Government that he is short-handed. The Inspecting Engineer, it must be remembered, is now the Secretary to the London Agency and he requires some additional assistance. Every inquiry has been made in regard to the matter, and we have come to the conclusion that it is absolutely necessary that this officer should have assistance. In this time of war, owing to the fact of such a large number of West Australians being in London, as members of the expeditionary force, there must be a considerable amount of work passing through the Agent General's office, as well as a number of inquiries being made in the ordinary way. This money has been paid for eight months, and I trust hon. members will not interfere with the item. The Government are taking every step possible to reduce expenditure and will continue to cut down expense in every possible way.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not dealing with the Agent General's office as a whole, but with this item in particular. The indenting office practically does no work to-day and the Government have said that the inspecting engineer, owing to the falling-off in work, can now do the secretarial work as well. The Minister for Works also stated that the indents had fallen off considerably. Temporary assistance cannot now be required in the indent office.

Mr. MUNSIE: I hope the Committee will agree to strike out the item. The Government are trying to lead the House to believe that there has been an enormous saving because the position of secretary, carrying a salary of

£528, has now been wiped out, but, as a matter of fact, the amalgamation of offices only represents a saving of about £230. No matter how much money is put on the Estimates, some means will be found of spending it. I admit that there are many Australians in London to-day, and that they have a right to get some assistance from the Agent General's office. I know, however, of several returned men belonging to this State who have been repeatedly to see the Agent General but have not been admitted.

Mr. Harrison: Do you mean members of the A.I.F.?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, men in uniform.

The Minister for Works: Do you know what reasons were given?

Mr. MUNSIE: I know that attempts were made to see Sir Newton Moore without result. In one instance, a soldier was told by Mr. Kessell that he could not see the Agent General and Mr. Kessell was brushed aside, in true Australian fashion, and the soldier in question had an audience with Sir Newton Moore. I know that the Agent General cannot be expected to see everyone who desires to see him, but I do not think this can be taken as an excuse for the employment of temporary assistance.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Much of this money has already been expended. We might reduce the item, but the result would only be an excess at the end of the year. If, however, the item is reduced, the Government may take it as an indication that it should be reduced next year. This is a class of vote which can well be cut down. The practice of a department is to fight for as high an allowance for temporary assistance as possible. On the Estimates for 1915-16 there was no vote at all in connection with this item, but the sum of £318 was spent without authority and that money having been spent once has appeared on the Estimates since as a permanent item. The Committee would not be wrong in reducing the vote, and the Agent General could be cabled to and notified that there would have to be a reduction for next year. It will be found from Estimates of previous years that items have been exceeded, in some cases up to £1,000. There is no emigration, and no indenting, and there are no loans to give work to the Agent General's office and, in spite of that, the expenditure has been growing out of all proportion to the extent in other departments of the State. I am not criticising the Government in this matter, but I do think this is one of the departments which might be substantially cut down.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I sent a cablegram to the Agent General that he must reduce his expenditure by £500, and we got a reply stating that he was doing this. I agree with the leader of the Opposition in regard to the necessity for economy in that office, and we are going to see that the vote is reduced.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	28
Noes	..	..	..	..	11

Majority for .. 17

AYRS.

Mr. Angelo
Mr. Angwin
Mr. Broun
Mr. Brown
Mr. Chesson
Mr. Durack
Mr. Foley
Mr. Green
Mr. Harrison
Mr. Holman
Mr. Lambert
Mr. Lutey
Mr. Maley
Mr. Money
Mr. Mullany

Mr. Munsie
Mr. Nairn
Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Pilkington
Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. Roche
Mr. Smith
Mr. Stewart
Mr. Thomson
Mr. Veryard
Mr. Walker
Mr. Willock
Mr. Jones

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Davies
Mr. Gardiner
Mr. George
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Mitchell

Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hardwick

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Item, Incidentals, £2,768.

Mr. SMITH: Is it fair to expect members to give intelligent consideration to an item which embraces postages, stationery, travelling, rent, fuel, and British income tax? Would any company of shareholders pass a balance sheet with such an item as this? We ought to have the details. I move—

“That the item be reduced by £500.”

Mr. LAMBERT: The Committee are justified in refusing to pass an item until we know the details. What is the amount of travelling expenses? The idea seems to be to make the Agent Generalship a spectacular affair, travelling about.

The PREMIER: There is no such thing as spectacular travelling on the part of the Agent General. The inspecting engineer has to travel about the country to inspect work done for the Government and the Agent General has to travel about on duty. He is allowed his expenses the same as a Minister of the Crown is allowed expenses here. The chief amount of this item would be for cables. On one occasion a cablegram costing £80 was despatched. This cannot be avoided at times. The amount has been considerably reduced this year by £904. It is impossible to give the details as the office is situated so far away. The State has always paid the British income tax on officers' salaries, and at the present time income tax in England is considerable.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Does the Agent General pay State income tax?

The PREMIER: I suppose he does, but he does not pay British income tax.

Mr. FOLEY: As the member for Boulder has stated, if an item on the Estimate is set down at £3,000, or whatever the amount, the item is exceeded by several hundred pounds if it is possible to do so. The Treasurer has informed us that the Agent General has been instructed to cut his vote down and it must be done. On the amount expended last year, there will be a saving, but more money was spent last year than was passed by the Com-

mittee. We must see that items are not exceeded and officers should be made to estimate their requirements better. The amount estimated last year was exceeded but we must see that it is reduced this year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know whether I can support the amendment to reduce the item unless I have information as to the progressive expenditure to date. I quite recognise the inability of the Premier to supply the details of this expenditure, seeing that we are so far from London. But I have not much confidence in the reduction of the expenditure as shown in the Estimates. Such a reduction only tends to lull members into a sense of satisfaction. The Estimates show a reduction on the expenditure of last year, but when we get next year's Estimates we shall probably find that the item has been exceeded. In 1916 the vote was exceeded, and again in 1917. Now we are showing a reduction of £904 on this item, but the Premier, if he inquired, would probably find that the amount set down has already been exceeded. I have known a vote to be exceeded when only five months of the year had gone. If the Premier could inform us as to the progressive expenditure to date we would know how the vote stands, but in the absence of that information it is of no use reducing the vote, because if we do it will merely be exceeded.

Mr. LAMBERT: Why should the State pay the British income tax for the officers of the Agent General's Department? I have heard Mr. Connolly declare that sacrifices were necessary at the present time. I do not think it would be asking too much if we requested him to pay his own income tax.

Mr. Smith: There are others; there are the clerks.

Mr. LAMBERT: Well, let the clerks pay it also.

The Minister for Works: But it is paid for them under agreement.

Mr. LAMBERT: If Mr. Connolly knew that it was the wish of the Committee that he should pay his own income tax, no doubt he would be prepared to do so.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Would you let him pay two income taxes?

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not see why we should pay his income tax for him. If for no other reason I will support the amendment, and I hope that, if it be carried, the Premier will at once cable the decision to London.

Mr. HOLMAN: While it may be reasonable for us to pay British income tax for our officers in London, I think they should certainly be compelled to pay the State income tax. The Premier has said that they do pay it, but I am doubtful about it, and I would like to know from the Attorney General whether they are liable for the payment of State income tax. I think our London officers should pay State income tax.

The Premier: I think they do.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not think the Premier is in a position to assure us of this. Personally I do not think they are even lia-

ble. It is a legal question, and the Attorney General should be able to enlighten us upon it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It seems to me the reduction shown in these Estimates is very satisfactory indeed.

Mr. Smith: If real, yes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not see how we can run the London agency without some expenditure. Certainly we cannot reduce the rent or even control the postage account or the cabling expenses. To my mind the fault of the London agency probably lies in the fact that the officers do not get about as much as they should. If the work is to be done someone must travel about. A few years ago we had several officers of the department travelling all over England.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Their expenses were not charged to this vote.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I see no other vote under which they could be charged. I think the reduction is very satisfactory. It seems futile to reduce a vote the items in which are more or less fixed. I do not know what the rent is, but no doubt it is fairly substantial. The work of the London office depends upon the expenditure shown in the Estimates. It would be a pity to reduce the activities of the office.

Mr. Holman: There is no intention of doing anything of the sort.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The London office has done good work. It has sent us a great many people, and to my mind it should now be actively arranging for people to come here after the war. It is from England that we expect immigration to fill up our vast territory. It would be wrong to reduce the vote.

The PREMIER: The payment of income tax has always been a vexed question with those concerned. It is only during recent years that we have had any income tax in Western Australia, but income tax has been in operation in the other States for many years, and it has always been a sore point with officials who, on retiring, have gone to live in the old country, that they had to pay income tax at both ends. The Colonial office has been approached on several occasions in regard to this matter, but the British Government have always held that such officials had to pay British income tax in return for the benefits derived from the protection received there. I feel sure that the Agent General must be liable for State income tax. I think the Act provides that the taxable income is the income derived from any source within the State, no matter where the person deriving it may live. I am sure that all the Australian officers in London pay the State income tax. The British income tax has always been paid by the State.

Mr. HOLMAN: I understand that the Treasurer has information that all the officers in the Agent General's office pay State income tax. If that is so I am content that we should pay the British income tax for them. It would be unfair to lay a double burden on those officers merely because they are carrying out their duties in England instead of in Western Australia. I support the Government in paying the British income tax in a case like this. The question of whether I shall support the con-

tinuance of the Agent General's office is another matter altogether.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member has asked whether the Agent General is liable to pay the State income tax. I find that Section 16 of the Income Tax Assessment Act provides that the tax is payable on all incomes earned in Western Australia, no matter where the person liable for the tax may be residing. There are certain exceptions to this provision, but the Agent General and his officers are not amongst those exceptions.

Mr. SMITH: I quite agree with the member for Murchison, but the Premier referred to another class of employee—the civil servant who, having retired from the service of this State, is living at Home. I do not consider that we should pay the income tax of such a civil servant.

Mr. Holman: Certainly not.

The Premier: We do not.

Mr. SMITH: The Premier referred to retired civil servants, such as judges.

The Premier: That does not apply.

Mr. SMITH: I was thinking of the case of Captain Hare, who lives in London.

The Premier: This refers only to officers in the Agent General's department.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item, Travelling expenses of Mr. Kessell and family returning to the State, £358.

Mr. THOMSON: I move—

“That the item be struck out.”

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That cannot be done.

Mr. THOMSON: I know members will tell me that the amount has been paid; but, if it is struck out, it can be deducted from Mr. Kessell's pension.

Mr. MULLANY: While I agree with the member for Katanning to this extent, that the amount of the item should be reduced, I consider that he is not going the right way about it. When an officer is sent on behalf of this State to England, there is always an understanding that upon the termination of his appointment he shall be sent back to this State. But I want the Premier or the Treasurer to let the Committee know what official in England or in Western Australia was responsible for the expenditure of £358 in bringing back Mr. Kessell and his family to Western Australia. I consider the amount utterly excessive. In the past, I believe, Agent Generals have been allowed the sum of £70 to return to Western Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: But that was before our prosperous days.

Mr. MULLANY: This discussion may be of value if it results in the fixing of a specified amount for such cases, instead of the amount being left to the whim of some official. I shall be prepared to move that the item be reduced by £200.

Mr. TEESDALE: The subject of Mr. Kessell and his family has been worn threadbare. I want to deal with the amount granted to the Hon. J. D. Connolly for expenses to London.

Mr. Holman: That refers to last year's Estimates.

Hon. P. Collier: You are a year too late for that.

Mr. TEESDALE: With the leader of the Opposition, I think this discussion is largely

farcical. There is a good deal of effect about this business. Apparently a member can rise half a dozen times.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member discussing an item, or discussing other hon. members?

Mr. Holman: The hon. member is imputing motives, which is highly disorderly.

Mr. TEESDALE: To my mind, I am confining myself to the question.

The CHAIRMAN: A point of order has been raised. The matter which the member for Roebourne has brought up is not under discussion at present. The hon. member must confine himself to the question before the Chair.

Mr. TEESDALE: It appears that this money has been spent, and that the present Government are not responsible for the expenditure.

Hon. P. Collier: They are entirely responsible for it.

Mr. TEESDALE: It is something that has been done and cannot now be rectified. I hope Ministers will see that such a thing does not occur again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The discussion on this item may prove of service. In view of the expenses incurred in sending Mr. Kessell Home and bringing him back again, it should be a matter for the gravest consideration of the Committee and of the Government how far the sending of civil servants from here to England is justified. The case would be different if an engineer, acquainted with the wants and circumstances of this State, were sent Home. But when it comes to the sending Home of merely a superior clerk—

Mr. O'Loughlen: Shocking! He is a facilitator.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It cost £358 to bring him back again, and if it cost the same amount to send him Home the expense is enormous. I am speaking on the principle; Mr. Kessell is merely a peg on which I hang my argument. Can we afford such heavy expense? Mr. Kessell is a superior clerk, and nothing more. He had gained considerable experience in the Premier's office, and from correspondence he knew a good deal about the working of the Agent General's office. But was his extra knowledge in these respects worth the £700 or £800 spent in sending him Home and bringing him back?

Mr. Smith: He was sent Home because it was necessary to get rid of him.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is for the Committee and the country to ask themselves whether the expense of sending Home first an Agent General, and then a secretary to the London Agency, and afterwards bringing them back, is justified.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot concur in the remarks of the Minister for Works. The general impression among members of Parliament, and also among people outside, is that it is to the advantage of the State that a man in the London Agency should know something about Western Australia. Further, if a man puts in a few years in the London Agency and then returns to this State, he may be of greater value to the Government here, as to matters affecting the Agent General's office,

than he would be if he had never been in that office at all.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In my opinion the amendment of the member for Katanning is not a fair one. I may be wrong, but I think he is taking advantage of the present unpopularity of the officer.

Mr. Thomson: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Whether a previous Government were right or wrong in sending this officer to England cannot now be discussed. No objection was taken to it at the time. It is customary, when an officer is sent away from the State, to pay the travelling expenses of himself and his family. The Premier stated that when he returned from England he was allowed only £70. The Premier's family could not have been with him.

The Premier: Yes, they were.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then that shows that the Premier dealt generously with the State.

The Premier: If I had put in a claim I could have got more, but I did not do so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is not Mr. Kessell's fault that he retired from the Agent General's office.

The Minister for Mines: He had to return via America.

Hon. T. Walker: He could not get back any other way.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Every endeavour was made to get the officer out as cheaply as possible, having regard to safety, and it was arranged that the fares of himself and his family would be paid before he left England.

Mr. Thomson: I understood that there was an arrangement that he should not have his return fare paid.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not think that is so. At any rate, it would not be fair to delete an item of this kind when it was understood that the return fares would be paid.

Mr. SMITH: The Minister for Works protested against the expenditure of this money but I would like to go further and ask why the services of the officer were dispensed with.

The CHAIRMAN: That question is not before the Committee and I cannot allow a discussion on it.

Mr. SMITH: A proper understanding was arrived at in regard to the payment of this officer's travelling expenses. It might be worth mentioning at this stage that Mr. Gilbert, a former officer in the London Agency, had the fares of himself and his family to Western Australia paid by the State and his family are still in England. I think there is something wrong there.

The PREMIER: I do not know anything about the ancient history the hon. member has referred to.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not before the Committee.

The PREMIER: The amount which the member for Katanning desires to strike out has been paid, and I think justly paid. It is

very seldom that an officer goes out of the State. The secretary before Mr. Kessell occupied the position had been in that office ever since the establishment of the Agency in London and Mr. Kessell was the first secretary to return to Western Australia. It is provided in the Public Service Regulations that if an officer is moved from one place to another he shall be paid his travelling expenses and, in this case, there was no logical reason why his expenses, and those of his family, who accompanied him, should not be paid. Communications passed between the Agent General's office and the former Treasurer with regard to the allowance to Mr. Kessell's family, and the Agent General was ultimately authorised to pay Mr. Kessell a certain amount. That was done. It was found, first of all, that he was offered a certain sum to come out to Western Australia, but then there was a difficulty experienced in securing a passage. The Agent General was instructed to pay the fares by the least expensive route and, after going into the matter, it was discovered that the only way to return would be via Vancouver and the Eastern States. The fares came to £279 2s. 8d., and £70 was allowed for furniture. The amount has been paid, and it would, therefore, be idle to strike it off the Estimates. When Agents General return to Western Australia after completing their term of office their return fares are paid. Sir Malcolm Fraser remained in London and died there. Sir Edward Wittenoom returned to Western Australia and his fare, amounting to £70, was paid. When I returned a similar sum was paid to me. Sir Edward Wittenoom's case was taken as a precedent, I suppose, and what was allowed him was allowed me. I had my family with me but I made no claim against the State.

Mr. THOMSON: I admit that it would be useless to strike the item off the Estimates because I recognise the amount has been paid. It was suggested that I should move to reduce the amount by £1 or £2, but my object in moving to delete the whole item was to have the matter discussed. I know that the money has been paid but I suppose in most cases the votes have been expended, therefore what is the use of dealing with the items separately? I am not endeavouring to make an unfair attack upon this officer. I have only met him once. It is the principle I am attacking, not the individual. There is something lacking in the business acumen of our departments which allows any particular person to collect so much money from the State. If the Committee determine that this kind of thing should not happen again, the Government will see that on future occasions of this sort an agreement is drawn up so that such expenditure will be rendered impossible. I can see nothing unfair in the amendment I have moved for I have no personal interest in the matter. At the same time Mr. Kessell and his expenses have cost this country much more than they should. That is why I moved that the item should be struck out.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. HOLMAN: This vote has already been reduced by the deletion of one of the items but it is my intention to test the feeling of the Committee by moving for a reduction of the total amount of the vote. My object in doing this is to ascertain if the Committee are desirous of bringing about a reform in the matter of expenditure. One of the directions in which we can effect an economy is in connection with the London Agency. I do not desire to criticise past Agents General, but it is a matter of regret that it costs the country £600 or so to send an Agent General to London, irrespective of the £1,500 a year which he receives as salary. One wonders whether the office is worth this expenditure. We also have the Commonwealth represented in London. We have had the question raised as to whether State Governors are necessary, and it is very questionable in my mind as to whether Agents General are necessary. We might enter into a working arrangement with the other States and the Commonwealth, by which we could cut down by at least half the expenditure in connection with our representation in London. I can see no reason why the various States and the Commonwealth should all have indent officers of their own in London, and surely by some mutual arrangement a good deal of saving could be effected in this direction. A commercial agent might be selected by the States as a whole and paid for by the States as a whole, but because we have a commercial agent representing us there is no reason why he should be surrounded by a large staff. The Premier said we were reducing the Estimates this year to an amount considerably below the Estimates for last year. This is an unfair way of putting the question. If we go back to the amount which was voted last year, we will find that the total amount in connection with this vote, with deductions, was £7,407, whilst this year the vote is £7,382, or a reduction of only £25. We are told that we should not put these high officials on the labour market. I wish there was half as much consideration given to the ordinary labouring man, who does work for the money he receives. We hear a good deal of criticism about one individual who was connected with the Agent General's office, but I daresay there are many other individuals of the same type who are living at the expense of the State to-day. I do not blame this gentleman for having had push enough to get along in the service, but I do blame those who made it possible for him to be such an expense to the country. It is said that if we join with the Commonwealth agency we are going to suffer a disadvantage. The sooner we realise that by joint action we will reduce expenditure all round, not only in this department, but other departments, the better it will be for us. The desire appears to be to kill the tom-tits, and allow the larger birds to go along as they have been for years past. I believe if a select committee were appointed to deal with the various departments, one by one, and point out the officials who were useful and those who were not, and recommend certain legislation to override the present Public Ser-

vice Act, a very necessary reform might be brought about. The time has come when we should join with the other States in regard to our Agents General. We must save every penny we can, and when it comes to a question of economy we should not deal so much with those in the lower ranks, but consider whether those enjoying high salaries and getting big pensions when they retire are really necessary in the service of the State. I move—

“That the vote be further reduced by £132.”

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: When attending the Treasurers' conference, I thought there were three or four departments in which I could well talk about effecting a reduction. I said that we should not lose sight of the fact that both the Commonwealth and the States are touching the same people, and keeping up dual establishments. I raised this question of amalgamation of the Agent General's offices very strongly, but I had no assistance at all from the other States. The member for Murchison spoke about working in with the Commonwealth, but that was anathema. I suggested that we should have an amalgamation such as suggested by the hon. member. I said, “Why not let one man do the whole of our work in certain directions.” That, however, did not meet with any support. The furthest I could get was an agreement that all these officers should be housed in one building, but that did not take me very far forward.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That would cost more than it does now.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Quite possibly. The time has come when we will have to amalgamate these offices. So long as we have the feeling that the Commonwealth are treating us as they are treating us now, so long will it be difficult to arrange a method by which this can be brought about. We have the right to see that these things are cut down, but I cannot cut them down. There is a difficulty in dealing with a place so far away as London on account of the infrequency of the mails. There is a good deal of force in what the hon. member said. I want to see this item reduced substantially, because we have to reduce it if we are to live within our means. This is probably one of the cases where at present there is not that volume of business which hitherto obtained. It may be necessary to have a commercial agent there and pay him as such. Victoria did away with her Agent General and made Mr. Taverner act as a commercial agent. He did nothing else but look for business for Victoria. I do not know that anything very much will be gained by reducing this vote, but the reduction which has already been effected can be accepted by the Government as an expression of opinion from this Committee that still further economy will have to be effected. I do not in the least mind this protest being entered, but the Committee have already struck out a sum of £250, and that in my opinion should be a sufficient protest.

Mr. FOLEY: We should reorganise our London agency and do as they did in Victoria, substitute a commercial agent for our Agent General. At present we need no immigration officer. The man who would attempt to bring immigrants to Australia at the present time would be guilty of disloyalty. Every Government have stated that if their policy was not the best one at least they had spent the most money in immigration. If the vote was reduced by £1,000 and the Government were told not to pay the money, something might be done, but if the item is simply reduced by £132 the Government will exceed the vote. I believe the money paid to the Agent General is too much for the services rendered to the State.

The Colonial Treasurer: The Agent General must be paid the amount he is now receiving until the end of his term.

Mr. FOLEY: That is so. Still, we should get a fair return for the money that is being paid. It has been said that the Agent General was many months away from his office on military duty. I believe that unless a man is on active service the Government should not grant leave to an officer on full pay whether inside the State or out of it. If the work of the Agent General's office was done without the Agent General being there, then more money was being paid than was necessary. I support the reduction of the vote, and I am sure the Government are going to do their duty and see that the items are reduced, and when the Estimates are brought before us again we shall find that something has been done.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Very little thought and attention have been paid by the Federal authorities in the past to Western Australia. If we relied upon the High Commissioner to do our work in London, then God help this State. We want, for a State like this, to encourage trade, and to find markets for our produce. Therefore we must have proper representation in London. The time will come when it will be necessary for this State to go on the London money market again, and then proper representation will be required in London. It is said that there has been a reduction in the cost of this office. True, there are four or five clerks less than there were two or three years ago; but the immigration work recently was carried out from the loan vote, and the officers were paid out of loan money. A good deal of work was done by the Agent General which he has not been given credit for. A good deal of time was spent in travelling round the country attending agricultural shows and gatherings, placing before the people of the old world the advantages of settling in Western Australia, and advertising the products of this State. If this work was left to the High Commissioner, New South Wales would get all the benefit before Western Australia, so would Victoria, because there is a larger population in those States. We are in the minority, and we have to fight to our utmost to receive what we do get. I hope the Government will think twice before they place the Agent General for this State

under the wing of the High Commissioner, for we must look to the future. In every instance where the Commonwealth Government has amalgamated offices and carried out similar work with that of the State, the Commonwealth has had the control. If a Federal office is brought into existence in this State to do work similar to that which is carried on here, a Commonwealth officer is sent here to take control. It is not so long ago since New South Wales and Victoria joined together to carry out an immigration policy. They wanted to wipe out Western Australia, but what was the result? Up went the fares £2 per head. But we got the passengers coming to Western Australia, while there were empty berths being paid for at £2 a head more reserved for the other States. If we want to make Western Australia known in England we must be represented there, for the time is not ripe for us to hand over all our affairs to the Commonwealth.

Mr. GREEN: The Agent General is not required simply to entertain visitors in the old country from this State, or to distribute literature. What the member for Murchison desires to see is that the office in London should be remodelled with the idea of decreasing the expenditure, at the same time increasing the utility. I maintain that with a live commercial agent who did not regard himself as an ornamental figure-head representing Western Australia, but who took a similar view of his duties to the views entertained by American consuls in different parts of the world, we should get much better results. His leading idea should be to push trade. The mere entertaining of visitors from Australia should be the function of the Commonwealth. People at Home fail to distinguish between the different States of Australia, and therefore I contend that the ornamental functions of the London Agency should be taken over by the Commonwealth. This would cut out useless expenditure, and the whole of the efforts of the London office could then be directed towards pushing Western Australian trade in the Old Country. That was the idea that animated Mr. Taverner when representing Victoria in London. The duty of the Committee is to assist the Treasurer, who has already done a good deal. Unless the Treasurer gets the backing of the Committee, it will be impossible for him to act as decisively as he would like. I trust the proposed reduction will be agreed to.

Mr. LAMBERT: I support the amendment. There should be a desire on the part of members to at once increase the usefulness of this department and lessen the expensive social status which has grown up around it. If the present Agent General's usefulness is to be gauged by the amount it cost to send him to London, namely, £558, he should be a very serviceable officer. It is a great pity that the Government who appointed him did not instruct Mr. Connolly to keep his expenses down. It is wicked to spend £558 on the sending of an officer Home.

Mr. Green: Mr. Kessell's expenses nearly came up to it.

Hon. P. Collier: That is only an evidence of its extravagance.

Mr. LAMBERT: Under present conditions it was a shame to allow Mr. Connolly to spend £558 in getting Home. If the present agreement under which Mr. Connolly is working cannot be terminated, at least we could ask him to do something more than he is doing for the State. He should be there as a live commercial agent. If some reasonable effort is not made to increase the efficiency of this department, the Committee ought to wipe out the department.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What do you think the department should do which it is not doing?

Mr. LAMBERT: The Agent General should be more of a commercial agent.

Mr. Brown: Do you think a commercial agent would be as successful in raising a loan as is the Agent General?

Mr. LAMBERT: Mr. Taverner, of Victoria, was highly successful as a commercial agent, yet he was appointed at only £1,000 a year for five years. I do not wish to depreciate what Mr. Connolly may be doing, but I hope the Treasurer will take this discussion as an indication that the Committee desires that the efficiency of this department should be increased while its cost is decreased.

Mr. HOLMAN: The member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) said that we should move for a very much larger reduction. But seeing that nine months of the financial year have gone, that would be absurd and would merely leave the door open to excessing the vote. My motion can be carried out if the Government are desirous of effecting economy, and it would serve as an indication that something must be done towards bringing about reform. The late Agent General, Sir Newton Moore, was absent from the office for nearly two years, during which time the work seems to have gone on just the same and without any loss to the State. Then Mr. Moss, a stranger to the office, stepped in and took up the business without difficulty. Do not these facts suggest that the office could very well be run on a less costly scale? If this were the beginning of the financial year, I would gladly move for a much bigger reduction. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) remarked "God help us if the Commonwealth High Commissioner were carrying on the business of Western Australia." In the same breath the hon. member explained how he had insisted to a Federal Minister that Western Australia was part of Australia. The sooner we realise that we are a part of Australia, and drop some of our parochial ideas, the better for us all. Our resources are equal to those of any other State in the Commonwealth, and the one thing we require to make the State prosperous is the building up of our industries. If we keep aloof from the Commonwealth and refuse to act in conjunction with the Commonwealth or the other States, we shall only make our situation worse. Of what use is it our attending Premiers' conferences every year if we believe that we cannot get any consideration either from the Commonwealth

or from the other States? We were told that presently we shall have to raise loans in Western Australia. We have done it before. If the Agent General is indispensable in the raising of a loan in England, why have we spent thousands of pounds in sending, first Mr. Wilson and then Mr. Scaddan, to England primarily to raise loans? Quite recently we had the example of the Premier of New South Wales going Home to raise a loan. I think it is time we instituted a better system of representation in London. We have been told that the State must be advertised. How have our Agents General advertised it? Two of them, after living luxuriously at Home at the expense of the State for six or seven years, have declined to return to the State on the expiration of their term of office, preferring to remain in England. It suggests that they used their positions as Agent General not so much for the benefit of the State as to secure to themselves guinea-pig positions in England. As the chairman of directors of various big concerns one has since come out here and made considerable money at the expense of Western Australia. To my mind it is the worst sort of advertisement the State could get when our Agents General refuse to come back on the expiry of their term of office. No Agent General we ever had has given Western Australia so much good advertisement as the men who have gone from Australia and shown what Australians are made of. I do not think we could possibly hope to get any useful advertisement from men like Sir Hector Rason or Sir Newton Moore.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have done good work.

Mr. HOLMAN: In all probability they have.

The Attorney General: Would you like to have those gentlemen back here?

Mr. HOLMAN: If they were worthy of the positions which they held there before becoming Agents General, they should come back to Western Australia and help to "push the old chariot along." I am satisfied that reforms can be effected in the direction I have indicated. If necessary, I shall press my amendment to a division.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	34
Noes	..	..	..	3

Majority for .. 31

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Jones
Mr. Broun	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Brown	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Collier	Mr. Maley
Mr. Davies	Mr. Money
Mr. Durack	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Foley	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Gardner	Mr. Nalrn
Mr. Green	Mr. O'Loghlin
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Holman	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. R. T. Robinson

Mr. Roche
Mr. Smith
Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Veryard

Mr. Willcock
Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hardwick
(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin
Mr. Mitchell

Mr. Walker
(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Vote, as reduced to £7,000, agreed to.

Vote—Public Service Commissioner, £1,705.

Mr. HOLMAN: Is it the intention of the Premier to take steps to ensure that very necessary reforms are brought about in the public service?

The Minister for Mines: Legislative, or otherwise?

Mr. HOLMAN: Administrative. Grave allegations have been made regarding our public service. From old traditions a practice has crept in of men, after spending a few years in the public service, being retired on high pensions, while others, because they are not salaried officers, are treated very differently. A full and complete inquiry into the administrative working of our various Government departments is very necessary. After that, other action can be taken if required. Have the Government any policy for improving the administration of the departments and bringing about considerable savings? It may be argued that the present is not a suitable time for initiating reform; but, undoubtedly, reform is absolutely necessary. Unquestionably, in some departments good work is done; but in others the employees are hanging over each other and doing hardly any work at all. Further, it is well known that no sooner does a public servant get to a certain position than he tries to build up a staff under him. What is the reform policy of the Government in this respect? In giving them the current financial year to introduce reforms, we are treating them very fairly.

The PREMIER: I think hon. members know that the Public Service Commissioner, ever since his appointment, has been engaged very closely on the question of reforms and economies in the public service. No one has been more zealous in those respects than the Public Service Commissioner himself, and a large measure of economy has already been effected. The Government intend to continue in this course, and if they find that they have not power, under the Public Service Act, to deal with these matters to the fullest extent they will have to come to Parliament and ask for the necessary power. I hope that will not be required. We have now Mr. Glyde, a thorough accountant, engaged in conjunction with the Public Service Commissioner in systematising the different branches of the service; and we expect good results to accrue. The Public Service Commissioner himself has engaged in this work in a way no other Commissioner has done. The economies already effected amount to about \$42,000 per annum.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is owing to falling off in work; not owing to economy.

The PREMIER: The desire of the Government is, whilst effecting economies, not to impair the efficiency of the public service. I desire to say a word here for the public service of Western Australia. We have in our service a very fine body of men. Though in all departments there are some few men who do not come up to standard, still we have in the State service of Western Australia—and hon. members who have filled Ministerial positions will agree with me in this—a large number of men who do excellent and loyal work, and who use their every effort to assist those in Ministerial control for the time being. Whilst the Government are desirous of effecting all economies they can, we wish to act justly towards all the members of the service. I assure the Committee that the work of the Government will not be relaxed, and if it is found that the power does not exist to deal with sections of the service, that power will be sought from Parliament.

Mr. SMITH: I am pleased to have the assurance of the Premier that the Public Service Commissioner is doing good work, but that does not agree with an instance which came under my notice only to-day where the Commissioner dispensed with the services of an officer because that officer had reached the age of 60 years. He was quite competent to carry on his work and appeared able to do so for another 10 years. The officer was drawing a salary of £342 per annum and was retired on a pension of £76, and a young man without experience of the work was appointed in his place at the same salary as the retired officer was receiving. I contend that the Government are losing by the deal a sum of £76 and the services of an officer who was experienced, and who is now about to start in business for himself.

Hon. P. Collier: The younger man may have been transferred from some other office and a saving will be effected in the office which he left.

Mr. SMITH: On the face of it, it looks a bad business deal. Another matter I would like to refer to is the retrenchment of Dr. Stoward, a very competent officer.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss that on this vote.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I was pleased to hear the Premier's remarks with regard to the civil service. I have had an opportunity of going through as many public offices as any other member of this House and I can assure hon. members that a great majority of our civil servants are men that this State should be proud of.

Members: Hear, hear.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: All are willing and trying to do their duty and when hon. members speak disparagingly of them, as sometimes they do, it is satisfactory to know that the head of the Government offers them that protection to which they are entitled. I hope the Treasurer in bringing forward his retrenchment scheme will see that no person will suffer an injustice. We want to see all treated fairly.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I would like to know whether Mr. Glyde, the assistant to the Commissioner, is attached to the Commissioner's

office or whether he is under the Premier's control. The present Commissioner has been in office only for a short while and before he was appointed we had an officer who had done excellent work. I think that when Mr. Simpson has occupied his new position for some time he too will do good work, but I do not altogether approve of the appointment he made recently to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of the Under Secretary for Lands. In any scheme of re-organisation we should see that no injustice is done to anyone. If the re-organisation is carried on piecemeal, it may happen that one officer might lose his position whilst another officer in a department which has not been reached by the Commissioner may have his services retained and in that way an injustice may be done. I notice, too, that temporary officers are being retained. They should certainly be the first to go. When a man has reached the age of 60 it is not necessary to retire him. It would be advisable to retire younger men who would be capable of tackling some other work.

Hon. P. Collier: The men who should be retained are those who are most efficient.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It seems to me that the Government are retaining the temporary officers and allowing permanent officers to go.

The Minister for Works: The other day I had to put off a man who had been a temporary officer for 27 years and he was a very efficient officer, too.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: He should not have been considered a temporary officer after 27 years of service. I believe that in Mr. Simpson we have a capable Commissioner who will do good work, but we cannot expect him to place the service on an efficient footing in the space of a few short months.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: So far as the Public Service Commissioner is concerned I have been brought into closer contact with him than perhaps any other member of the Government, and I am satisfied that officer, in the work he is carrying out, will look for efficiency and will not do anyone an injustice. I borrowed the services of Mr. Glyde from the Harbour Department and I do not think that borrowing will cost the country more than £200. He has been engaged in his new duties for about a fortnight and already I can see savings which can be effected to the extent of £1,000. I want to systematise the departments. There is no general system obtaining. One department has one system and another has another. I want to bring about what the member for Northam desires to see. If we transfer one man from one department to another there should be a system obtaining by which the officer transferred can walk right into it and take it up immediately. There are many savings which can be effected in small ways. Take the question of motor cars. We want to know what they cost to run, what they cost for repairs, and where they are located. Out of that we can build up a system, but if each individual department has a different system of dealing with them, we have no control. If everything is systematised it will not be necessary to go into the details of everyone's expenditure as is the case to-day. The system of handling stationery at the present time will astound hon. members.

Extravagance exists there. We want to be able to say that we are checking waste. Mr. Glyde acts with the Commissioner, with the Under Treasurer and myself, and the savings that we can effect in general administration will run into a substantial sum.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier said that Mr. Glyde was assistant to the Public Service Commissioner.

The Premier: And so he is.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Now I understand that he is assisting the Treasurer.

The Colonial Treasurer: He is assisting me.

The Premier: He and the Public Service Commissioner are working together.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Now I understand the position.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am pleased that the Government have announced that they have made arrangements for fixing up the various departments. Time after time, either to make work or to delay it, files are brought in and passed through from one officer to the other without any progress being made.

The Minister for Works: And no information supplied.

Mr. HOLMAN: That bears out what I say. That system must be done away with. Men who are responsible for delaying work should be taught their responsibilities, and if they will not carry them out they should be replaced by those who will. I have no desire to decry the public service, but it does seem to me that there are men in that service in high positions who do not treat other men in the same way. A great deal of work is duplicated, and work is done which should not be done at all. All these troubles arise through lack of system.

Mr. Smith: The departments should all be under one roof.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do agree that the buildings should be so constructed that the head of a department has complete supervision over the whole of his staff. In the Agricultural Department there are six or seven persons employed in one room, which is not big enough for two in this weather. There is a lot of useless work being done in the civil service, owing to this lack of system, and departments have been allowed to grow up whose usefulness no longer exists. If the Government were only to systematise and standardise the work of the departments we should have a greatly reduced civil service staff, but very much greater efficiency. I should like to know whether item 1, which provides for a secretary at £312 a year, and item 7, which provides for a special allowance to the secretary of £96 a year, refer to the same individual. If that is so, the two items should appear together, and be shown as belonging to the same official. It would be wise, throughout the Estimates, to show exactly how much each officer received by way of travelling allowances and leave of absence, either for holidays or sickness, or other purposes.

The PREMIER: These two items apply to the same officer, but I do not see why they should be separated. Provision was made this year for the full year, whilst last year the expenditure was for eleven months only. In August, 1917, the secretary was granted a special allowance of £96 a year in order to bring his remuneration up to the average salary paid to other Under Secretaries. The Public Service Commissioner states that he is really an assistant to him, and that the position fully warrants the salary now paid. This also is said to be the lowest salary paid to officers holding similar positions elsewhere in the Commonwealth. I agree that it is better to have the amounts included in the one item.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not in the least know the officer concerned, but I do think it is most unfair to the Committee that these items should appear under separate headings. If the Secretary to the Public Service Commissioner is really worth his salary this should not appear in two places. The officer who comes more closely into touch with Ministers, or the head of his department, always seems to be better treated than those who work at a greater distance from their chief. There should be no reason why these items should not be shown together.

Item, Secretary, special allowance £96.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think I can inform the Committee why this amount does not appear under Item No. 1. The salary that this officer draws is his classified salary, and the salary to which he is entitled. That is why this item is not included in No. 1. No. 7 is an honorarium, a special grant made by the Government.

Mr. Nairn: That is a bad example coming from the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. Holman: The Premier says he is worth that, and that it is going to continue.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No wonder we have the deficit mounting up. An officer holding a fairly high post and getting the ear of the powers that be, and having reached the maximum of his classification, gets behind the Public Service Commissioner and has an honorarium of £50 granted to him. In 1915-16 this officer was granted an honorarium of £50 by the late Labour Government, but it was granted against my wish. The Premier says that this officer was paid a special grant in August of last year, but it does not appear upon last year's Estimates. How is it that this is not shown? There is no mention of this item there at all. In August, 1916, the Government decided to make this officer an annual allowance but it was not shown on the Estimates for that year; however the officer succeeded in getting £88. This year he is to get £96 for the 12 months and the allowance is to continue year after year. This increased allowance is an absolute robbery. It is to bring the officer up to the position of an assistant under secretary. There are only 10 officers in his department and yet the secretary of this department expects to be brought up to the level of an assistant secretary of the big departments of State. This officer has been endeavouring to obtain an allowance year after year. If the Public Service Com-

[The Deputy Chairman (Mr. Munsie) took the Chair.]

missiner goes away on his annual leave the next week in comes a request for an allowance of £50 for having carried out the duties of the Public Service Commissioner. This is how the expenditure is increased and in many instances to a scandalous extent. If this officer is performing duties which are worth more than £312 a year, it is the duty of the Public Service Commissioner to reclassify the position. I move—

“That the item be struck out.”

Mr. MULLANY: The member for Murchison is to be commended for calling attention to this item. There is a tendency on the part of an officer who is appointed to an important position to build a department around him so as to increase his salary.

Amendment put and passed.

Vote, as reduced to £1,609,—put and passed.

Vote—Government Motor-cars, £725:

Mr. HOLMAN: It would be much better if the whole of the Government motor car service was run as a business concern. When we turn to other parts of the Estimates there are contingency items out of which motor car services are paid for. The total vote for Government motor cars is £2,325 less payments by other departments £1,600, making the total £735. I do not say we should do away with the motor cars altogether; that would be unwise. There is a pernicious system in vogue by which civil servants who have cars hire them to the departments. It is necessary to have motor cars in the back country. Inspectors of mines have to travel over large areas of country and cars should be at their disposal. This motor car vote, I believe, only applies to the city.

The Premier: No, all over the State.

Mr. HOLMAN: This motor car service does not include motor cars for the Mines Department, for the Water Supply Department or the Rabbit Department. I think the system in the city is abused.

Mr. Green: Just for joy rides.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not say that. I think officers should use motor cars whenever it is for the benefit of the State or will save time.

The Minister for Works: A record is kept in the Water Supply Department of every mile of motor car service run.

Mr. HOLMAN: I think there should be a system by which there is supervision over all the cars. Wherever a motor car can be used to the advantage of the country, or anyone in the public service to save time and cost to the State, it should be used. But we should see that the system is not abused.

Mr. SMITH: This item is very misleading. I was under the impression that this vote covered all motor services, but on looking through the Estimates I see other items under which motor hire is paid. I think there should be some standardised system of bringing all Government motor cars under one head. The Minister for Agriculture says that that cannot be done, but it is done in other countries and can be done here. The cars ought to be standardised as regards management, and also as regards make, so that the parts

may be interchangeable. There should also be runabouts in order that a large car, with seating accommodation for five or six persons, need not be used to carry one public servant. The present position is most unsatisfactory, and the service costs far more than it should. Possibly the best course would be to dispense altogether with Government cars, hiring private motors when required. Then we would know exactly what the service costs the country. On these Estimates wages and overtime are lumped together, and there is nothing to show how much of the amount of £600 is for wages and how much for overtime. Again, there is an item “General expenses, etc. (including hire of cars), £1,700.” How much of that is for general expenses, and how much for hire of cars? The Committee have no means of knowing.

The Premier: To give all those details would require Estimates of enormous bulk.

Mr. LAMBERT: Standardisation of cars would certainly result in considerable economy. Light, small cars, which would meet the requirements of certain departments, should be adopted. I know of instances of public servants using Government cars on what was certainly not Government business. Having two-seater cars is a temptation to Government officials to use Government cars for other than Government business; and that obtains not only in one part of the State and not only in one Government department. The suggestion of the member for North Perth is a valuable one. I hope that the Minister for Mines, in particular, will take note of the fact that economies can be effected. Possibly the State might save between £4,000 and £5,000 a year.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Attorney General could no doubt give valuable information on this vote.

The Attorney General: A lot of my ideas are being carried out.

Mr. HOLMAN: The fact that the expenditure is just as high as ever, and that, according to all accounts, the service has not been improved, shows how little use the Attorney General's ideas are.

The Attorney General: The cost is £2,000 a year less than when I was criticising the service.

Hon. P. Collier: Nonsense! I contest that with you. The saving is only shown by figure-faking.

Mr. HOLMAN: I would like the Attorney General to show exactly where the saving comes in. I would also like to be informed how much rental has been received by public servants who have cars of their own, because I know that practice obtains. Only juggling is going on in connection with this vote—not saving.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I would not have risen but for the misleading interjection of the Attorney General. The hon. gentleman asserted that two cars less were being used now. No economy has been effected, either. The total estimated cost under this heading to-day is £725, while for 1915-16 it was £768. Where are the two motor cars which the Attorney General says have been done without?

The Attorney General: I did not say that. I said that £2,000 a year was being saved.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I agree that the motor cars save the State a lot of money, but I object to the misleading interjections of the Attorney General.

The PREMIER: Every economy is being exercised in regard to the motor car service, which is always rather a vexed question with this Committee. But the service under this vote is apart from the services of the Mines Department, the Lands Department, and other departments which have cars in the country. This vote deals with the garage here in Perth, and the cars which pass through that garage. The member for Coolgardie suggested that expenditure might be cut down very considerably by the use of light cars. We have two light cars. Moreover, we have a Talbot car which has been in use for some years but is running well; and I do not think it would be an economy to sacrifice that car. Moreover, the Talbot car makes occasional long journeys into the country.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Works Department use the cars in this vote.

The PREMIER: Yes; in the City.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And in the country as well.

The PREMIER: The expenditure now is lower than it has been for some years. Portion of the decrease is due to careful supervision. The officer in charge goes to a great deal of trouble to ensure that every possible economy is effected. Non-official running has also been eliminated. The Government are now awaiting exhaustive reports from all the departments of all cars held. We want these cars, whenever they come to town, to be put into the garage, so that they may be available for use when required for official work, instead of the Government having to hire private cars. This system has been adopted in connection with the two cars used by the Agricultural Royal Commission. I do not think officers who have cars set apart for their use in the public service should use those cars for their private convenience. The expenditure under this vote has been considerably reduced of late years. In 1912-13 the gross expenditure was £3,982; in 1913-14 it was £3,800; in 1914-15, £3,770; in 1915-16, £2,481; and in 1916-17, £2,366. For 1917-18 the gross expenditure is estimated at £2,325, while the gross expenditure for the first half of the present financial year was £856, or at the rate of £1,712 for the whole financial year. This compares with £2,366 for last year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Of course there is not the same work being done now as previously.

The PREMIER: That may be. All accessories are more costly than they were a few years ago and the price of petrol is considerably higher. The cars are not used for private purposes, and it has to be remembered that they have now become a necessity and are no longer a luxury. We have a very good officer in charge and Ministers are endeavouring, as much as possible, not to use the cars unnecessarily.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Premier's Department.

[The Chairman resumed the Chair.]

Lands and Surveys Department, Hon. H. B. Lefroy, Minister, Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister) in charge of the votes.

Vote—Lands and Surveys, £46,131.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister—Nelson) [9.50]: In introducing the Estimates of the Lands Department it is hardly necessary to inform members that the war has had a most depressing effect on land settlement. Applications during the past year have fallen off considerably. Only 637 selections were granted, comprising an area of 235,640 acres. Pastoral leases have also fallen off in number, though there has been an increase in the area applied for. Some 9½ million acres have been granted during the year. There are about 600 pastoralists outside those holding pastoral land in the South-West division and they hold 182 million acres. It will be remembered that the Land Act Amendment Act was passed with a view of correcting certain anomalies which previously existed, and also reducing the maximum price of the land. The idea was that it was not the duty of the department to squeeze every penny, by way of rents, out of the settlers, but to encourage people to go on the land and work their holdings. The State, of course, reaps the benefits indirectly through the railage of products raised by the settlers, and also as the result of activity and business generally. The postponement of the payment of rents has resulted in a large number of applications and this has been of the greatest benefit to many settlers, and of course also to those people who have gone to France and elsewhere to fight for their country.

Mr. Green: Did any of them pay any rents at all?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Yes, a certain number. A large number of applications was received for a reduction in the price of land on account of wodgeil and poison. No fewer than 1,200 persons' applications were attended to. Over 1,000 settlers who have gone to the Front, received protection in regard to their holdings. Then again, a considerable number of settlers, who have held land situated 12 miles from a railway, have been exempted from paying rent under the 1917 Act. The result is that the amount of outstanding rent totals £157,891. This is represented largely by soldiers' holdings and land 12 miles distant from a railway. The amount in each case will be carried on to the end of the lease. In spite of the depression, general inspection work has been carried on. Some 2,370 blocks have been inspected, mostly in connection with applications for Crown grants. A considerable amount of work, unfortunately, remains in abeyance owing to the field staff being unable to cope with it. During last winter the ground was so boggy, and the whole country was in such a state, that it was impossible to travel for weeks at a time. That held up especially in the South-West a great deal of the inspection work. The inspection staff of the Lands Department is

now under the control of the Industries Department. It was during Mr. Johnson's administration of the Lands Department that 17 inspectors were transferred from the Land to the Industries Department.

Hon. P. Collier: How many inspectors have you now?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): One. A large area of Crown land has been surveyed and gazetted as being available, the total being 125,473 acres. This is in various parts of the South-West division. There is also in addition to this a large area of surveyed land which can be made available as required. The district survey offices which were temporarily closed in 1915 have been re-opened with certain amendments as to boundaries. For instance, the Albany district has been amalgamated with Narrogin. The Geraldton district has been abolished and the greater portion of the area included in Perth and Northam district, while a new district, designated "North," has been constituted and embraces the pastoral lands north of the northern railway. While on the question of the district survey offices, I would point out that it will be the policy of the future to let these district officers have the fullest control to report on all reserves in their district, with the view of cutting them up for selection, and it will be found that in the whole of the South-West division of the State there is a large number of reserves which are not required or which are only partially required. The balance can be inspected and cut up with a view to throwing them open either for soldiers, if suitable, or for the public generally. If the local officers are given greater control, it will mean that the exasperating delays intending settlers have experienced in the past will, to a large extent, be eliminated, because it stands to reason that those officers, if they are the right men in the right place, and know local conditions, should be in the position to inspect the land, price it, survey it, and leave nothing for the head office to do but to formally approve. This, I am sure, would have good results so far as land selection branches are concerned. Three of the district surveyors, prior to the re-opening of the survey offices, were engaged on the work of repricing land in the head office. These men have now returned to their local offices. We have district offices now, therefore, at Perth, North, Northam, Narrogin, and Bridgetown. There has been an increase in the revenue in connection with town and suburban lots alienated to the extent of over £2,000. The number of blocks of rural land alienated was 1,041 with an area of 150,455 acres. The total number of pastoral holdings in existence is 53,502, with an area of 204,420,830 acres. There are 8,378 homestead farms in existence, showing a slight decrease owing to forfeitures and conversion into fee simple. While on the question of pastoral holdings, I may say that, owing to the construction of the Trans-Australian Railway, a large area of pastoral country has become available for selection. The total is 23¼ million acres. There are inquiries every day regarding these pastoral lands; in fact, a man came into the office the other day to know if it would be possible for him to take up a small area of 20 million acres. It was

pointed out to him that one million acres was the maximum. However, the fact that such a request was made shows that other people—I understand they were Americans who wanted this land—have their eyes on our pastoral lands and I hope, in the near future, that we shall see those lands adjacent to the Trans-Australian line occupied. When water is found those areas will depasture not thousands but millions of head of stock. In these days of economy it is well to notice that every effort has been made to keep down expenditure in this department. During the past year the expenditure has been £59,519, the lowest for 17 years. Three years ago the expenditure in the Lands Department was £150,000.

Hon. P. Collier: Portions of it have been transferred.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): That may be, but the actual expenditure has shown a drop of nearly £100,000. At the same time the revenue has fallen off to the tune of £48,797, the total amount received being £292,678 as against £336,475 for the previous year. This falling off is due to the fact that it is the first complete year in which the reductions made by the repricing board have taken effect, and also the exemptions from payment of rent which have been granted. Of the decrease £26,000 is due to exemptions to those on military service. We hear a good deal about the deficit. I would like to tell members that the total prospective payments due on conditional purchase holdings alone at present represents three million pounds.

Mr. Munsie: Over what period has that amount been accumulating?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Since the land was alienated. The question of settling returned soldiers on the land has received careful consideration by the department, and land is being declared open for selection for only those persons who have served in the naval or military forces, or their dependents. In many ways inducements have been held out to returned soldiers to go on the land, but although there have been numerous inquiries very few actual applications have been received. To hear some members talk one would think we had been inundated with applications, and had been unable to deal with them. We have had very few applications, for the reason that the men returning at present are discharged as unfit for active service, and therefore many of them are not fit to go and battle on the land. Later on, when peace is declared and the able-bodied, fit men come back, probably there will be a very different story to tell, and we shall have applications rolling in in large numbers. I think the department will be in a position to deal with them.

Hon. P. Collier: Have you got rid of that Osborne Park land for poultry farms?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): That poultry farming has been handed over to private people, who said they could run the business better than could the department. They were given a free hand to show their ability.

Hon. P. Collier: But that is only in respect of the training. You do not mean that the land has been handed over?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): No, I mean the training; whether it has been a success or not members can judge for themselves. The department has received numerous offers from people desirous of selling their properties to the Government as repatriation propositions. Those properties have been and are being inspected by the officer in charge of repatriation. Fifty blocks of land are available at the Harvey at present, and another 50 will be available in the course of a week. A number of small blocks have been surveyed near the timber mills, and these are available to returned soldiers. Five surveyors are at work in the South-West surveying blocks for soldiers and two others are engaged in the classification of timber country. The question of setting apart the Yandanooka, Avondale, and Brunswick repurchased estates is now being dealt with.

Hon. P. Collier: You have more land on your hands than you can get rid of.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): We have a very large area of land on our hands, notwithstanding which it is stated from time to time that we have no land available.

Hon. P. Collier: Then why are you purchasing further lands?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): We have not purchased any yet except a small portion of an estate at Osborne. It will be desirable perhaps to purchase an estate on the Swan for those desirous of going in for the dried fruit industry. I think that will prove one of the most profitable investments the returned soldier can go in for.

Mr. Smith: Why not at the Harvey?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The Harvey is totally unsuited for dried fruits; it is no use sending men down there for that purpose. All reserves and Crown lands along existing lines are being inspected with a view to seeing if they are suitable for returned soldiers. Also the question of the formation of local advisory boards to assist the officer in charge of repatriation is under consideration. Many of the country towns are doing good work in that direction. I need not dwell upon the Yandanooka estate. It was purchased for £140,000, and it contains 61,555 acres of freehold and 76,000 odd acres of leasehold. It is going to be a very awkward estate to satisfactorily cut up if the Government are to get their money back. I am pleased to say that the Avondale estate, which was purchased for £50,000 and on which £2,000 interest has to be paid annually, for the first time has paid for itself. It shows a profit this year of £2,304. This estate also will require very careful handling indeed.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the profit on the actual working cost; not after allowing for interest on the total purchase money?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Yes, after allowing for interest. It is accounted for by the fact that sheep brought a tremendous price this year. Personally I am of opinion that the estate is a very much better proposition as a whole than subdivided. It is a good grazing proposition, and was well worth the money paid for it, but for closer set-

tlement it is not nearly so promising. The Harvey estate is being dealt with, and so too is the Brunswick estate. The Public Service Commissioner has been through the Lands Department and recommended certain alterations, which have been effected. He recommended that certain positions should be abolished, namely, the assistant Surveyor General, the assistant Under Secretary for Lands, the head and sub-head of the lands selection branch, the senior draftsman, another draftsman who had reached the retiring age, and also the head of the deeds branch. The salaries involved approximate £2,270 per annum. The work of the assistant under secretary has been transferred to the accounts branch. The selection and inspection branches have been amalgamated and placed under one officer, who has received the slight increase in salary of £24 per annum. Those recommendations have all been carried out. Nearly all of them were effected since the Estimates were printed, and consequently they do not show here. By the amalgamation of the positions of Under Secretary and of Surveyor General a saving of £500 per annum has been effected. The net salaries for the year total £38,336 as against £38,538 for last year, but of course the full effect of the retirement of those officers I have mentioned will not be shown until next year. Again, some officers who were on loan last year have returned to the department, and, as hon. members know, a special repatriation department has been opened up. Hon. members will admit the importance of this new branch of the Lands Department, and will agree that whatever else is cut down this new department must not be stinted. It is under the control of a man in whom I have full confidence, and I think the results will meet with the approval, not only of the Committee, but of the people generally.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [10.13]: Am I to understand that we are discussing the Department of Agriculture?

The CHAIRMAN: No, the hon. member will confine himself to the Lands Department.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.14]: The Minister said that by the amalgamation of the offices of Surveyor General and Under Secretary, a saving of £500 per annum had been effected. According to the Estimates there is no saving at all. If hon. members will look at the Estimates they will find that there is a new appointment of an assistant Under Secretary at £480 per annum provided for, and that this amount together with the £804 for the Under Secretary makes a total of £1,284. I should like to know where the saving comes in. In my opinion the action of the Government in amalgamating these two positions is not in the best interests of the State, and does not tend to make the other officers of the department take that interest in their work which they would do if they had a chance of promotion. When this position was first advertised, it was the intention of the Government to appoint a Surveyor General. Applications were called for that position, and several well-known and highly respected members of the service applied for it. For some reason or other the Government changed their opinion at an early date.

There was one officer who wrote pointing out that before he would accept, the appointment of Surveyor General, his salary must be fixed at £304 a year instead of the £600 as advertised. That was a condition of his application.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): He was getting more than that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We find from the papers that the Public Service Commissioner went fully into the question. He realised that in the opinion of the Government of the day at the close of the war there would in all probability be a large demand for land settlement. He also realised the necessity for having an officer entirely engaged in attending to surveys. He pointed out, after viewing very carefully the recommendations and the length of service of the various officers, that Mr. Canning was a good, solid and reliable man.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The best in the department.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This officer was spoken highly of by the retiring head of the department. He is a man who carried out his work well in the interests of the State and had devoted practically the whole of his life to his work. The Public Service Commissioner thought it wise to recommend him for the position. We then find that there was a complete change. After Mr. Canning had been recommended the Public Service Commissioner was asked if he could bring about an amalgamation of offices. The Government then changed their attitude in regard to immigration, and decided that in all probability it would be many years before there was any great demand in regard to land settlement here. Without calling for any further applications, or giving notice to the officers of the department or to the public Press, or publishing the fact in the "Government Gazette," as is usual in these cases, the Government approved of the appointment of the then Under Secretary for Mines, Mr. King, to the position of Under Secretary for Lands and Surveyor General combined. It is many years since Mr. King has had anything to do with field work or surveys. With the exception of his theoretical knowledge he has practically had nothing to do with this kind of thing. If Mr. King is of such value to the State, and it was necessary to have him in the position of departmental head of the Mines Department, which—

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is languishing at present.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Is languishing at present, and if he has been in the position of giving good advice after his many years of experience, he should have been left in that position. There is nothing in the papers that were laid upon the Table of the House to show that Mr. King was better fitted to manage the Lands Department than any other officer in it. There is one officer, who is highly respected throughout the State and has done good service, and who has been acting as assistant Under Secretary to the Under Secretary for many years, who would have filled that office very capably and

given great satisfaction. I refer to Mr. Morris. That officer, after a service of many years and after having done excellent work for the State, has been passed over. Other officers of the department, who have spent many years in it and have done good service, have also been passed over without even being given an opportunity of applying for the position. Is that fair, or in the best interests of the State? Is it advisable when there are men in the department such as those I have mentioned, carrying out their duties with satisfaction to all, men whose records show that there has been no complaint against them, that they should be passed over, as has been done in this case? When the appointment was made a new officer was asked for to assist the Under Secretary in carrying out his duties. There is, therefore, appearing on the Estimates a new appointment which has never been there before. We have lost the services of an officer who was in entire control of the survey work of the State, and whose services were necessary in this direction in case there was an increase in land settlement.

Mr. Thomson: Whom have we lost?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Surveyor General. If it is found necessary to appoint a Surveyor General at an early date, because of the work of the two offices being too great for one man, we shall have another officer appointed to look after the surveys, and this will mean increased expenditure. Our duty is to see that justice is done to those who have given the best part of their lives to the State. This appointment is neither fair nor just to the other officers I have mentioned. If it is found that an officer, who has for many years qualified himself for the position, is not able to carry out the duties owing to his health having given way or some other reason of the kind, surely there is some other officer in the department capable of filling the position.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is bad policy to go outside a department to fill a position within the department.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The late Under Secretary for Lands, Mr. Clifton, in his report upon the office of Surveyor General, said—

Mr. Lefroy is a brainy man with original ideas; has had longer field experience than any of the four, and has an excellent record as a hard working and very efficient surveyor. Among other important work that he did I may mention that, in 1906/8, he measured three base lines and observed the necessary connecting triangles to the old triangulation, this work being undertaken to obtain data to revise the old triangulation system, which was known to be defective; the latest modern methods of base line measurements were used, and the whole work is reported to be of a high order of accuracy. In 1910 he carried out a triangulation between Rottneest Island Light-house and Mt. Bakewell at York—a work of considerable difficulty, which was successfully accomplished and has been recently used as a base for the military surveys now in progress in the Avon Valley. When three of the district surveyors were put on to the

work of repricing conditional purchase land, under the Land Act Amendment Act of 1915, it was he who designed the zone system, under which the repricing was eventually carried out. Further reference to the respective claims and qualifications of Messrs. Canning and Lefroy, at the time Mr. Canning was appointed District Surveyor, Perth, will be found in their respective files.

The Public Service Commissioner also said—

Messrs. Lefroy and Canning are practically equal so far as seniority is concerned, but I have been forced to the conclusion as a result of my inquiries, that Mr. Canning is second to none as a surveyor, with a long and valuable experience. I, therefore, concur in the Under Secretary for Lands' recommendation that Mr. Canning be appointed to the position of Surveyor General, at a commencing salary of £600 per annum, as from the 1st January next.

It will therefore be seen that there is not only one officer but that there are two officers fully qualified for the position, and these two officers have given nearly the whole of their life's work to the State. Of course they have been paid for this, but their one object is to seek promotion. The only chance they have of obtaining this is in the case of a vacancy occurring. When the chance comes, however, these men are passed over in favour of an outsider. This sort of thing offers no inducement to officers in the service to do their utmost for the State.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Is it an improvement to the Mines Department that it should lose Mr. King?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not allowed to discuss the Mines Department yet. If Mr. King was such a valuable officer of the Mines Department he should have been retained in his old position in the interests of the mining industry. The recommendation for the filling of the joint position had only been before the Government for a few days when they took steps to fill it. I think I am right in saying that this is the first time in Western Australia that such a thing has been done. In the past other officers of the service have had an opportunity of applying for positions, but in this case Mr. King did not even apply for it. There is no application from him on the file dealing with the appointment to the dual offices. It was practically forced on him at £804 a year. It was a job made for the man instead of the man being brought in to fill the job. The Government could not conscientiously give Mr. King the position at £804 a year when there were other officers in the department better fitted for the position, who would have taken it at £600 a year.

Mr. Davies: He suggested the salary. He put in his application and said it need not be considered unless he was given a certain salary.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The position Mr. King put in for was that of Surveyor General at £804 per annum.

Mr. Davies: That is practically what I said.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But he never applied for the dual position. That position was never open for anyone to make applica-

tion for. For some reason or other—I do not know why—the Government said, "We must have Mr. King there at £804 per annum."

The Premier: The Public Service Commissioner recommended him.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But no applications were called for the position. The procedure is not fair or just to the officers of the Lands Department. If that principle is to prevail, we can hardly blame public servants for not taking that interest in their work which we expect them to take. It is only the possibility of promotion that keeps many men in the public service. If this kind of thing goes on, how can we expect to keep good men in the employ of the State?

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [10.32]: I have been struck by certain remarks of the Honorary Minister in introducing these Estimates. He said there were large areas of surveyed lands which could be made available as required. I wish to know, do those lands bear the hall-mark of Government approval? In my own district, it has come to my notice that lands have been surveyed before selection, that roads have been built to those lands, and that every facility for access has been given, and that then, when the settlers who have taken up the land have applied to the Agricultural Bank for advances, they have been turned down for the reason that the land was not considered, by the Agricultural Bank, fit land to be advanced upon. A good deal of money has been spent in the subdivision of land in the South-West, including Nornalup Inlet. On good authority I learn that the system of survey adopted at Nornalup is very unsatisfactory indeed, inasmuch as the land has been cut up in chess-board fashion, irrespective of its nature. I should be glad to learn whether the lands surveyed, as mentioned by the Honorary Minister, have received the endorsement of the Agricultural Bank, so that settlers on them may be able to obtain advances? The Honorary Minister said that only a small number of applications for land have been received in connection with repatriation. He expressed the belief that the cause of the small number of these applications was that many of the soldiers who returned were medically unfit. But here in this Chamber we had only the other evening the case of five returned soldiers who were fit enough to take on the arduous business of market gardening. As regards the return promised by the Premier in connection with a motion I moved, I should like to know why the return has not been laid on the Table, so that soldiers seeking land may know where to obtain it. The Honorary Minister spoke disparagingly of two re-purchased estates—Avondale and Yandanooka. It is a serious thing to learn that these estates are not worth the prices paid for them by the Government. If that is so, the land in them should be written down, so as to make it a payable proposition to take up. With regard to repatriation, the Honorary Minister said there were many blocks of land available at Harvey. I was shown round that district

recently by the local bank manager and the secretary of the roads board, and they pointed out to me a certain area set apart for repatriation purposes. They assured me that the 50 acres reserved for that purpose were the worst in the Harvey district. If that is the system adopted, God help the returned soldiers! There is, however, excellent land at Harvey, and this should be made available for repatriation purposes. We have had only very vague allusions to the subject of repatriation, and the selection of that area at Harvey when good land is available points to a very unsatisfactory state of things, more especially as we may have our soldiers arriving here in large numbers at any time. Moreover, we have it on good authority that 40,000 men now at the Front are prepared to go on the land. If we wait to do something till those men reach Western Australia, what will become of them? The best land, and improved land, should be made available for them. If the Government have not land of sufficiently good quality to allow the returned soldier to make a living off it at once, other land should be obtained for repatriation purposes. The Government should rather purchase land on some system of bonds—land in juxtaposition to the railway lines, and with every convenience, and ready for the soldier to make a living from the jump. If the Honorary Minister has not now available land answering this description, it should be his business to see that he obtains it at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [10.40]: A lot has been said about the efforts which have been made to settle people on the land in this State and it must be generally agreed that the progress of the State depends largely on successful settlement. At the same time we should go further than we have been doing by keeping the people on the land when we get them there. Unfortunately, in Western Australia, that has not always been the case. My brother and I have had experience of the land in this State for some years and that experience has been that we have not been accorded the same treatment as has been shown to others. All who take up land should be treated alike and all should be given the same chance. We went through all the bad seasons and in one we had 930 acres under crop and did not get a grain. We have not had any assistance from the State; we have worked on overdrafts. During the period of the drought it was impossible to get even a ton of chaff from the Government, although we put our cheque in. At the same time we could not buy chaff anywhere else, and while that position of affairs existed, there were tons of horse feed lying at the siding within a mile of our holding going to waste. Later on a good deal of that chaff was given to people who had not asked for it, and we, who had put in our cheque, were offered a bag of maize. This year we have sold our holding as it was an utter impossibility to go on after the treatment received from some of those in authority. Everyone who has seen our property will admit that it is one of the best improved of its kind in the State, and should be an example for others to follow. This season, unfortunately, things did not turn out as well

as we expected and when we came to place our wheat in the pool we found that we had been heavily docked for a considerable quantity. The wheat was smut tipped, but our bags averaged considerably over three bushels, which showed that it could not be too bad. Yet we were docked 1s. a bushel, I suppose the biggest dock imposed in the State. A sample was submitted to experts who declared that the dock should not have exceeded 3d. or 4d. Then we made an application to sell our wheat outside but this was refused. If such a refusal had been general we would not have objected, but while we were refused the right to sell to poultry or pig farmers, others were given that permission which was denied to us. When affairs are administered like that the position of things is rotten. I have two letters in my possession, one to ourselves and the second to another farmer which shows how affairs are managed. The letter to ourselves, which came through the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., was from the State Wheat Marketing Scheme, dated 16th January last, and read—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 11th inst. with reference to some 500 bags of smut tipped wheat, and in reply have to advise that the Minister is not agreeable to Messrs. Holman Bros. of Trayning, disposing of this wheat privately.

The letter to us from the State Wheat Marketing Scheme on the subject of the docking, dated 29th January last, was as follows—

In response to your letter of even date, I have to advise that, from the sample of wheat submitted by you to the Scheme, the dock of 1s. suggested by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., is a very reasonable one. In reply to your verbal inquiry, I regret to advise that permission cannot be granted for this wheat to be sold outside the pool.

I am in possession of the letter addressed to another farmer, also from the State Marketing Scheme, dated the 14th January, giving that farmer permission to dispose of his wheat. This letter reads—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 3rd inst. with reference to a parcel of smutty and pinched wheat that you wish to dispose of. In reply I have to advise that you are at liberty to sell this wheat to a poultry farmer as fowls' feed, otherwise it must be sold through the Scheme in the usual way. I should be glad if you would kindly forward a sample of the wheat you mention.

The Premier: On a point of order, we are discussing the Lands Department Estimates, and the hon. member is discussing the Wheat Scheme, which should properly be discussed under the Agricultural Department.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am showing why people cannot be expected to remain on the land when preferential treatment is given to some. We could have sold our wheat at 4s. 3d. a bushel to poultry farmers but we were not allowed to do so. Yet others were accorded that privilege. It is no wonder that hundreds of people are abandoning their farms when this kind of thing happens. The administration of the department must be considerably improved before we can expect to get good settlers to go on the land and remain there. Those who are worthy of encouragement should be assisted to remain.

Rosy pictures are painted of what to expect when one settles on the land and what can be made from it. Although we struck very bad times we can go off the land, and probably will realise more than it has cost us. This shows that settlers of the proper type should receive every encouragement, and above all things, should be treated fairly, and that we should not give to Tom or Harry that which we deny to Jack or Bill.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [10.50]: I want to touch briefly on the question of repatriation. I agree with the member for Murchison that people can do well on the land and that they have done well on the land. After all, it depends to a great extent on the individual. With regard to repatriation, I agree with the remarks of the Minister when he stated that in Mr. Camm we had an officer who understood his business. While Mr. Camm may know his business, there is unfortunately a general feeling that the Government, in common with the Governments of other States, have done practically nothing in the way of genuine repatriation.

Mr. Jones: Except Queensland.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not concerned with what Queensland may have done. Our vast areas available for settlement should be ready to receive, not only our own men when they come back, but the thousands of other men who will be looking to Australia for a home. I urge the Government to approach the Federal Government for sufficient money as a set-off against such land as we may be prepared to place free at the disposal of our returned soldiers or sailors. It will be of inestimable value to the State to have thousands of men come and make their homes here. It is the State that is prepared to receive men which will get the population after the war. We should not wait until the war is over before we prepare for those men. Down at Nornalup Inlet, I am credibly informed, we have sufficient land to place thousands of men. I would like the State Government to urge the Commonwealth Government to provide money for the construction of necessary roads and railways, conditionally on our giving the returned soldiers and sailors land for nothing.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 6th March, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Minutes of Proceedings."]

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

The PRESIDENT [4.34:] I have received the following communication from the Auditor General dated 5th March, 1917:—

Sir,—In pursuance of Section 53 of the Audit Act, 1904, I have the honour of transmitting for presentation to the Legislative Council a copy of the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts of the State of Western Australia for the financial year ended 30th June, 1917, together with my report thereon. (Sgd.) C. S. Toppin, Auditor General.

I place the report on the Table.

MOTION—FRUIT CANNING INDUSTRY, LOAN.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.40]: I move—

"That the Auditor General be requested to report—1, On the circumstances attending the loan of £5,500 by the Government to the Fruit Canning Industry, and 2, The present position and prospects of the venture."

Before asking members to accept this motion I think it would be advisable to be very clear in my reasons. In order to put the position fairly and clearly before members I would like to say that there is no hostility to the fruit growing industry as far as I am concerned. So far from there being any hostility I may say that I have been, and am, interested in the fruit growing industry, and nothing would give me greater pleasure, satisfaction, or profit than to see the fruit industry in this country established on a sound financial basis. Secondly, there is going to be no attack made upon the company in connection with this matter. It must be within the knowledge of members that occasionally, at any rate in some Parliaments, advantage is taken of the privileges which we have to make unfair attacks on people who are not able to reply. In this particular case, so far from wishing to make any attack on the two or three gentlemen whose names appear in the transaction, and in the circulars, I would like to take the opportunity of saying that in my opinion Mr. Price of the Illawarra orchard, who is associated with the Fruit-growers Limited, is head and shoulders above any other man in this country in the fruitgrowing business, particularly in regard to apples. I give that as my private opinion, but I believe it to be generally recognised that he stands quite in the front rank of fruit growers. That I believe will be accepted by everybody who knows anything at all about the subject. Similarly with Mr. Loaring, for both these gentlemen live in the district where I live, one at Karragullen and the other at Bickley. If some of the hon. members of this Chamber had an opportunity of visiting these orchards, I believe they would agree that the Illawarra orchard is one of the best apple orchards in Western Australia, and, as far as Mr. Loaring is concerned, that his orange grove at Bickley is one of the best citrus