

of the Government, which, as other members have pointed out, may have certain bad results.

Hon. J. R. Brown: It could not have worse results than we now have.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is for us to consider whether it is wise to pass this Bill into law. What ought to be done is that the Government, if they find the present law is not sufficiently strong to prosecute with success in the case of these alleged offences, should tighten up the sections of the Act so as to prevent these occurrences.

The Honorary Minister: We could not get the witnesses.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It would never do to say that a man should be charged and convicted without a fair trial.

The Honorary Minister: Quite so.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Every man is entitled to a trial. We must not deny any man justice. We would be doing wrong in passing the Bill as it is. The only thing for us to do is to support the amendment.

Amendment (six months) put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	9

Majority for .. 1

AYES.

Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. E. Rose

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. J. R. Brown
Hon. J. W. Hickey	

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Hon. F. E. S. Willmott	Hon. J. E. Dodd
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. T. Moore

Amendment thus passed; Bill rejected.

House adjourned at 9.3 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 28th October, 1925.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—STOCK TRAIN, MEEKATHARRA-MIDLAND JUNCTION.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that the average time occupied by the special stock train from Meekatharra to Midland Junction is 36 hours? 2, If so, will he have investigation made immediately with a view to ensuring a more expeditious service?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, In the summer time-table which comes into operation on the 30th proximo, arrangements have been made for train loads of stock to be conveyed from Meekatharra to Midland Junction in 36 hours and 30 minutes.

QUESTION—JURY, MURDER TRIAL.

Hon. G. TAYLOR (for Mr. Teesdale) asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Is he aware that a section of the Press reported that cheering could be heard from the jury while they were considering their verdict at a recent murder trial? 2, If this is correct, will he arrange a long vacation for those present from again acting in a similar capacity? Will he endeavour in future to prevent such exhibitions in courts of justice at all events?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, No. 2, Whether the occurrence took place or not, in any event it takes about five years to exhaust the metropolitan jury list and then to return to the same jurors. 3, Courts of justice are held with proper decorum, but because as elsewhere nervous tension is, on exceptional occasions, liable to show itself. As regards the jury, on retirement to consider their verdict they are locked in the jury room

and no one can approach them or tamper or interfere with them in any way; and their conversation and conduct are absolutely untrammelled.

QUESTION—STOCK INSPECTOR, APPOINTMENT.

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Were applications recently invited for the position of stock inspector in the Gascoyne district? 2, If so, in what newspapers was the position advertised? 3, How many applications were received from—(a) Returned soldiers with the qualifications of a veterinary surgeon, (b) qualified veterinary surgeons, and (c) returned soldiers unqualified? 4, Was an appointment made? 5, What qualifications had the appointee as to particular knowledge of sheep?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, (a) A number of written applications were received, none of which disclosed that applicants were returned soldiers or had any veterinary qualifications. (b) Answered by (a). (c) Answered by (a). 4, Yes. 5, A thorough knowledge of stock; also of the district. It is pointed out that the appointment was made with the sole object of cleaning the sheep of the district of lice and tick. Veterinary qualifications were, therefore, not essential.

BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT BILL SELECT COMMITTEE.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Mr. Davy, the time for bringing up the report was extended for two weeks.

MOTION—PARLIAMENTARY ALLOW- ANCE, TO INCREASE.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [4.35]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the Parliamentary allowance made to members is inadequate and should be immediately increased. I do not feel called upon to apologise to the public for moving this motion. On several occasions I have been adversely criticised by the Press because I had the temerity or courage when speaking on the Address-in-reply to say that the Parliamentary allowance

was inadequate. After their criticism, I ask them to be fair and publish the reasons that actuate me in moving the motion to-day. I shall endeavour to convince every fair-minded person in the State—as I am sure I shall convince every member of this House—that the motion is justified. I shall endeavour to prove that the allegation that this is a dishonest salary grab from the Treasury is not founded on fact. Like other sections of the community, members of Parliament are feeling the great drain on their resources in consequence of the ever-increasing cost of living and other expenses, and more particularly does this apply to members who do not reside in the metropolitan area. The session each year usually lasts for six months, and during that time country members have to reside in a lodging-house or an hotel. I do not think I am wrong in stating that three guineas per week is the least a member would spend on that account. This means that most country members have to keep two homes going for six months in the year. I am justified in stressing the difference between Parliamentarians and other sections of the community. The people of this State subscribe liberally to charitable and other objects. After a business career of over 30 years in this State I maintain that the business people of Western Australia give more liberally to charitable institutions than do any other section of the community. They give freely and spontaneously. The difference between Parliamentarians and merchants or business men is this: Every business man provides for expenses incurred during the year. His donations to charitable and other causes are added to the cost of the wares he sells, just as are his insurance and advertising costs, but if anyone says that a member of Parliament can pass on his donations to any other section of the community, I should like to know how it may be done. I am not aware of any way in which such calls on a member's pocket can be passed on. That is why I say Parliamentarians are differently situated from merchants and business people. My constituents expect me to keep in close personal touch with them by paying visits to the district at frequent intervals. To illustrate what this involves, at the last week-end I motored between 160 and 170 miles visiting agricultural shows, and I know that other country members have done likewise. Had it been necessary for me to hire a motor car to cover the dis-

tance, it would have cost me at least £10. Fortunately, some friends asked me to accompany them, and so I was spared that expense. During the couple of years that have elapsed since the last election, I have found it necessary to expend considerable sums in order to traverse my electorate from one end to the other. This brings me to a point I wish to stress, namely, the value that the State derives from members visiting the people and seeing the activities in progress in the outback areas of this huge State. All members of Parliament, whether representing metropolitan or country districts, should make frequent visits to other constituencies, because the knowledge thus acquired would assist them materially in dealing with the legislation that comes before the House. I am satisfied that many members have travelled the country largely as I have done during the 13 or 14 years that I have represented Wagin. Many metropolitan members have accepted my invitation and travelled as much as 300 miles to Lake Grace, Newdegate—before it was settled,—Lake Pinstrup and other districts, and each of those members on his return to the city has thanked me for the opportunity to make such an instructive trip. I know that other country members have arranged similar visits. Members of Parliament are unable to engage in other kinds of work, principally owing to the enormous correspondence that a country member has to conduct with his constituents. The people from the country make periodical visits to the city, and it is only natural that their Parliamentary representatives, after having assisted them to transact the business that brought them to town, should invite them to lunch or other refreshment at Parliament House or at one of the hotels. After a member has met all those calls, he has to stand the racket of an election and face the music every three years. I do not know what it costs members individually to fight an election, but I have often heard the amount stated at £99 19s. 11d. In all seriousness, while some members may be fortunate enough to get through an election on that expenditure, I venture to say that in many of the electorates owing to the vast distances to be traversed and the enormously increased cost of transport and other expenses, it would be below the mark. Another phase of Parliamentary life is that the fickleness of public

opinion is sometimes expressed through the ballot box, leading a member outside the walls of Parliament notwithstanding that he has carried out his duties honourably, faithfully, and with much ability. He is thrown on the tender mercies of the labour market, where, after many years of absence from his original calling, he may find it difficult to get back into harness. The payment of an allowance to members of Parliament has gone far past the stage where it can be argued whether the allowance is justified or not. If the people desire representation, they must make the remuneration adequate, so that a member of Parliament shall be enabled to perform his duties in a manner above suspicion. In some countries of the world members of Parliament have been adjudged guilty of dishonourable conduct, by accepting bribes or what is known in America as "graft." I believe there are in this State some men who say that they do not want payment for Parliamentary services. I hope and believe that the majority of the people of Western Australia would not accept members of Parliament without remuneration. I have in mind a concrete case bearing on the point. I was born in the Victorian town of Warrnambool. During the late seventies and early eighties the laws of Victoria were made by a number of men without remuneration. Just about that time the goldfields, which had attracted so many people from the Old Country to Victoria, began to peter out. Having come from agricultural parts of the Old Land, those people were desirous of settling on blocks of their own in Victoria. A good many of them went to the Western District, where, as everybody knew, some of the best land in Australia was to be found. Nearly all the rich land, however, was in the hands of a few men known as squatters, who held it under lease from the Crown at a nominal rental. The people desirous of obtaining some of that land raised an agitation, which eventually became so strong that the Victorian Parliament passed a measure enabling them to apply for blocks on the holdings of the squatters. I was too young to remember all the incidents of that period, but I do well recollect that men like Sir Brian O'Loughlen, and also, if I am right, Sir John O'Shannassy, and other very worthy citizens of Victoria, were responsible for putting an end to the government

of the Victorian people without salary. Some of the men who graced the halls of the Legislature at that time were these particular squatters, and they saw the writing on the wall. However, they showed themselves very cute. They put their heads together—so it is alleged by men of the calibre of Sir Brian O'Loughlin, whom everyone esteemed—and got all their boundary riders and jackaroos to lodge applications on the date fixed for their receipt. I believe the advertisement calling for applications contained an intimation to the effect of "First come first served." The squatters got their boundary riders and jackaroos to dummy for them. After a year or two the jackaroos and boundary riders transferred their right, title and interest in the blocks to the squatters. At that time a section of land in Victoria was 640 acres, being the maximum area any one person was allowed to select. Many of the selectors, owing to the heavy nature of the soil and other expensive features, were glad to take up a half-section, comprising 320 acres. My point is that the land formerly held by those few squatters now carries a very large population. I feel convinced it was the best thing that ever happened for Victoria when payment of members was introduced there, and I hope that any agitation by any section of the people of this State for the abolition of payment of members will meet the fate it deserves. The question whether £400 per annum with uncertainty of tenure and unavoidable expenses is enough to justify any man in coming forward is one I desire to ask the public. How far does £5 go now in comparison with what it would purchase, say, ten years ago? I venture to assert that from 20 to 25 per cent. more could be bought with it ten years ago than to-day. Rents and all other costs have risen. I hire a little cottage in the pleasant suburb of Subiaco, and I pay £2 15s. per week for the use of that cottage. It is furnished very plainly, but it suits me. I think it will be agreed that after one buys the necessities of life on top of paying rent, there is very little left out of one's £8 per week, especially having regard to all the other calls.

Mr. Teesdale: Twelve pounds for a suit of clothes makes a hole in it.

Mr. STUBBS: I come now to Press criticisms, and I desire to stress this phase of the matter. The writer of an article arguing the impropriety of members increasing

their own salaries quoted a hypothetical parallel case. The brilliant writer likened my present proposal for increasing the salaries of members of Parliament to the case of a manager having been engaged by a merchant for a period of three years and raising his own salary during the currency of that term.

Mr. Teesdale: Terrible!

Mr. STUBBS: I contend, and with every justification, that the two cases are not analogous, though the parallel may appear an interesting argument. I claim that members of Parliament have entered into no such contract. Parliament has always fixed its own remuneration, ever since the time that constitutional government was granted to Western Australia. Members have come forward for seats in the Legislature in accordance with the Constitution, under which Parliament has the duty of deciding all public questions. Members of Parliament accept the full responsibility for such decisions, and that means that they do not ask for any dictation. A member would, in my judgment, be just as wrong to vote for an increase in which he himself did not participate as for one in which he participated. In its issue of the 20th of this month the same newspaper criticised the proposal to increase Parliamentary allowances. I answer that criticism by declaring that all members who vote for an increase will answer the question of propriety before their masters at the next election. That is the check, I contend, on all legislation and all administration. If my motion should be carried, no increase can be made unless the Government take the responsibility of recommending it. It is safe to say that the leaders of no party in this State would wreck their party's future and their own future by an action which they thought the majority of the electors would condemn. A review of the various stages of payment of members in this State may be interesting. The first Act for the payment of members was assented to on the 5th December, 1900, and the amount, £200 per annum, was made retrospective to the opening of the session, namely the 15th August. A second increase was made at the end of 1910 or the beginning of 1911, when the amount was increased to £300 per annum. The third increase was initiated on a motion moved by the member for Collie (Mr. A. A. Wilson), and was agreed to on a vote by 20 to nine.

A comparison of the payments made to members of Parliament by the Eastern States and by the Commonwealth is also worth giving. Members of the House of Representatives and of the Senate receive £1,000 per annum. Members of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly receive £875 per annum, while the members of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, which is a nominee House, receive no payment.

The Minister for Works: Let us imitate that here!

Mr. STUBBS: No fear! In Victoria, Upper House members receive £200 per annum, and Assembly members £500. Queensland has no Upper House, and members of the Queensland Assembly receive £500 per annum. In South Australia members of both Houses receive the same remuneration, £400 per annum, and in Tasmania the payment is £300. The Parliament of New South Wales has only recently restored Judge Edmond's fixation of £875, which the Fuller Government reduced. It is interesting to note that the Fuller Government were defeated at the election following the reduction. That may have been a coincidence.

The Premier: The only man in the Federal Parliament who opposed the increase lost his seat. He did not even collect the money, but he was defeated.

Hon. G. Taylor: After he was defeated he drew his back time.

The Premier: Yes, he drew the arrears.

Mr. STUBBS: I would remind hon. members that of the members in our Parliament who voted against an increased allowance, only one remains.

The Premier: And let him beware, whoever he is!

Mr. STUBBS: Of the 16 members who voted against an increase in the Federal House, five are now no longer members. There seems to be an unfortunate curse upon those members who oppose increases in salaries. In moving the motion, I anticipate that the newspapers will endeavour to stir up feeling amongst the electors. For myself, I do not care a twopenny stamp for the criticism of newspapers. After all, the criticism is merely that of one man sitting in an office.

Mr. Marshall: And he is usually well paid.

Mr. STUBBS: Such a newspaper writer is entitled to express his views and he is paid

for doing so. May I ask the writers of such articles in the Press some questions?

The Premier: And without notice, too.

Mr. STUBBS: I would ask the writer of the article in the Press to which I have referred, what was his salary in 1920? I would ask him to tell me then whether he has not agitated for, and received, a big increase in salary since that date. If my information is correct, leader writers and reporters on the newspapers are now receiving much higher remuneration to-day than are members of Parliament.

The Premier: Much more. And we say nothing about the value of our services!

Mr. STUBBS: They are receiving much more than they did in 1920.

Mr. Lindsay: Perhaps they do more work.

Mr. STUBBS: Do newspaper reporters have the same obligations and calls upon their purses as do members of Parliament?

Mr. Teesdale: They cannot sell their papers without contributions.

Mr. STUBBS: I will give the newspapers something else to go on with! I have recollections of the newspaper proprietors notifying the public during the war period that, owing to the high cost of paper, and to other increased burdens, they were compelled to double the price of the daily newspapers.

The Premier: That is the stuff to give them.

Mr. STUBBS: The war terminated seven years ago and the public still have to pay 2d. for their morning and evening papers.

The Premier: Despite the fact that the price of paper has fallen by quite 300 per cent.

Mr. STUBBS: I desire to act fairly. Will the newspapers explain the reason for this position?

The Premier: You will have to give notice of that question.

The Minister for Agriculture: What about the advertisements, too?

Mr. STUBBS: In the course of an article some weeks ago, adversely criticising my reference to the inadequate salaries paid to members of Parliament, the "Sunday Times" said, "If Stubbs is not satisfied with his salary, why does he not get out?" That was what they said, or words to the same effect. Did the "Sunday Times" go out of circulation when the expense incurred in running the paper rose so high? Were they so patriotic? I think not. They passed the increased cost on to the public.

The Premier: And at the price, the "Sunday Times" claims to be the biggest paper of the lot.

Mr. Marshall: The "Sunday Times" would have gone out of business if W. J. George had got hold of them.

Mr. STUBBS: I admit that the "Sunday Times" did not increase the price of the paper to the same extent as the daily newspapers did. However, the increased prices still remain. No one in political life will object to fair criticism. The members of my family told me that I would be foolish to move such a motion. They told me that I would be a marked man. I prefer to believe that the good sense of the majority of the electors in my constituency will not turn me down because I have the courage to say that £1 to-day will not go as far as £1 did 10 years ago. I hope hon. members will support me in that contention. I should like to point out also that on Monday night I was chatting to a group of sensible farmers at Kukerin. I mentioned that it was my intention to move this motion, in order that the salaries of members should be increased. Among the men were two or three who—

Mr. Teesdale: Dropped dead!

Mr. STUBBS: There were two or three who read and think a good deal. They said to me, "We don't blame you, because the present allowance is insufficient, considering the high cost of living and other incidental expenses." Those men expressed approval of the proposition. May I call the attention of hon. members to the opinion expressed in the leading columns of one of the principal newspapers in Australia? I mention this in anticipation of newspaper criticism. On the 15th May, 1920, the Sydney "Daily Telegraph" referred to this question and I ask hon. members to bear the statements of this newspaper in mind because they are significant. This is what the newspaper stated—

We do not support the contention that members have no right to raise their own salaries. There is nobody else to deal with the question of members' pay but members themselves, who are there to treat this matter on its merits, the same as any other coming within the ambit of Parliamentary jurisdiction. As to the demand that they should first get the taxpayers' authority, there is nothing in that either. How could they get any more authority than they receive when elected to do the duty which ordinarily devolves upon a representative of the people. Under our present system of party government, to make this question an issue at a general election, so that the result would show how much and how little

the country was willing to pay its representatives, is a practical impossibility.

Mr. Marshall: That is right, too.

Mr. STUBBS: I commend this view to the critics of this question in the local newspapers. In reply to the last sentence of the article in the "Daily Telegraph," it may be argued that the difficulty can be overcome by a special referendum on the proposal for an increase. To this it may be said that a referendum can be taken, but what intelligent answer can the elector give as to what is the proper remuneration to be paid to a member of Parliament? Quite a number of them would vote in much the same manner as the Greek who voted for the banishment of Aristides, and gave as his reason that he was tired of hearing Aristides being called "a just man." Many would also vote against an increase on the ground that the member of Parliament was getting at the present time £8 a week, whereas he, the voter, was only receiving £4, £5, or £6 a week. He would ask why a member of Parliament should receive a higher wage than he did. The responsibility must be taken by the member himself. He cannot, if he recognises his responsibility, vote for a referendum to be taken on the subject for, by so doing, he would practically admit that he was not worthy to be a member of Parliament or to take the responsibility of deciding far more important questions than those merely of £ s. d. I trust that the motion will receive the unanimous assent of the House.

MR. CHESSON (Cue) [5.10]: I second the motion which has been so ably proposed by the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs). I have never been diffident in private life in putting up a case in favour of an increase in my wages, and I do not see why I should have any diffidence in endeavouring to put up a case for an increase for members of Parliament, now that I am in this Chamber. I wish to make no distinction in the course of my remarks between members who represent city and country constituencies. I realise that a member of Parliament, if he is to be in a position to deal with the various measures that come before him in a proper manner, should travel about the State so as to get in touch with the requirements of the various parts. In many instances we are asked to visit constituencies and we have to refuse, because we cannot afford the expense involved. We have to decline invitations from various sources, particularly when rail-

ways are required in agricultural areas, and we have to refuse on this score. When we take into consideration the extent of some of the electorates, it will be seen how this affects hon. members. If a man lives in Cue and has to travel through his electorate, going through Mount Sir Samuel, Lake Darlot and other places, it means a journey of about 1,000 miles, all of which has to be done by motor car. The cost of living since the last increase was agreed to, has gone up considerably. A man who represents people in Parliament has to keep up appearances and that makes for added expense. He not only has to keep up his personal appearance but he has to travel a good deal and incur other expenses. Members of Parliament have obligations and expenses that have not to be incurred by the ordinary citizen. Then again, members of Parliament have to keep two homes because, during the time Parliament is in session, they must be in the city. There is other expenditure that has to be incurred in connection with their work. Then, of course, there are the elections that are held every three years. We know that, according to the Act, a member is allowed to spend up to £100 for expenses. When one has conducted an election, there is none of the £100 left. It must be remembered that a member who has been in the House for a number of years loses touch with his calling in private life, and so when he leaves the House he is unfitted to resume it. Again, no one but a member has any idea of the numerous monetary calls made upon a member. He is practically compelled to grant donations everywhere even to the neglect of his own personal comfort, for he has to give far more than he can afford. Probably there will be criticism through the Press, and it will be contended that members have no right to increase their own salaries without a mandate from the people. But members have no other tribunal save Parliament to go to. When members realise that their salaries are inadequate, the only remedy they have is to increase those salaries. In New South Wales on one occasion Mr. Justice Edmonds was asked to fix the remuneration for members, and he fixed it at £875. If there were a tribunal to which members could go, it might be reasonable to say that it was indecent for members to increase their own salaries. However, since we have no tribunal other than Parliament itself, and since we know that our salaries are inadequate, surely it is for us to increase

them! It does not trouble me in the least what the Press may have to say against it. I know the salaries received by members to be absolutely inadequate, and further that we are entitled to an increase if we are to represent our constituencies as they should be represented. Our constituents expect us to visit them frequently, and economically we cannot do that on the remuneration we receive, so I say we shall be justified in increasing our salaries. I give the motion my full support. I am prepared to go back to my constituents and justify my attitude and vote on this question.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [5.20] : I suppose members will suggest that I am what is called in the vernacular "a bit of a nark" because I do not agree with the motion. However, I am not going to be deterred from expressing my views on it.

Mr. Stubbs: You are quite free to express your views. I do not mind.

Mr. DAVY: Two problems are involved in this motion. The first is, is the proper remuneration of a member of Parliament more than £400 per annum? The second is, are members of Parliament entitled to give themselves an increase, if the answer to the first question be in the affirmative? I submit that the answer to the first question is extraordinarily difficult. It is difficult to determine just what is the job of a member of Parliament. It differs enormously with the constituencies represented.

Mr. Panton: Quite right.

Mr. DAVY: Also it differs immensely with the temperament and mental capacity of each member. The job can be almost anything a member likes to make it, or likes to allow his constituents to make it for him. There are constituencies that expect their member to be a kind of retail buyer, guide, philosopher and friend, cheap lawyer, employment broker, and to render almost every other conceivable service that can be extracted by one human being from another. Whether or not it is the job of a member to submit to that, must be for each member to determine for himself. Again, a member who represents a constituency such as that of Kimberley has an entirely different job from a member like me, representing West Perth. I am unable to see how we can put the job of the member for Kimberley and my job in the same category.

Mr. Lambert: You are one of the fortunate ones.

Mr. DAVY: Yes, but not the only one. It is very difficult to decide what our remuneration should be. Of course the public have a quaint idea that Parliament governs the country; they think that the real Government are assisted in the governing of the country by us. We know that we do not govern the country, that all we do in the House is to—

The Premier: Rather hinder the governing of the country.

Mr. DAVY: Perhaps so. However, all that we do is to permit the real Government to extract any money they require and to give them any legislation they think necessary to the governing of the country. That function of course was the original function of Parliament, and still to a large extent remains so. It is undoubtedly changing slowly. The writing would appear to be almost visible on the wall, predicting the time when members of Parliament will be performing quite different functions from those they perform now. It may be that in time we shall actively assist in the governing of the country. But when that time comes, of course there will have to be fewer of us, and it is obvious that we shall require to have regular hours of work, and make the job a job in the sense in which the man in the street understands the job to be to-day. As it is, one has only to look around the House any night in the week to realise that a lot of members, whatever their constituents may require of them, and whatever they may do apart from their actual Parliamentary duties, do not make a job of attending the House or carrying out the functions they are supposed to carry out in the House, if those functions are any more than voting on divisions. Suppose we assume that the remuneration is, at any rate for a number of members of Parliament, insufficient; how much more ought it to be? What standard shall we set up? Are we to estimate it on the value of the services, or are we to put it on the ground of the need of the member of Parliament to keep up a certain standard of life and live comfortably without at all endeavouring to earn money from an outside source? Clearly that cannot be so if we are to lump all members together. Under that,

the job of the member for Kimberley would tend to become a whole-time job.

Mr. Lindsay: He represents not cattle, but people.

Mr. DAVY: But obviously he has to go to Kimberley at frequent intervals and that must cost him a great deal of money. He gets a free pass up as far as Wyndham, but after that he has to make his own way, probably by an expensive motor car, across his constituency.

Mr. Lambert: His allowance should be doubled.

Mr. DAVY: Well, I could raise no argument against it. But in the case of the member for East Perth and the member for West Perth I see no reason why we should receive any more than we do now.

Mr. Lambert: You could be cut down by 50 per cent.

Mr. DAVY: We certainly could. As an allowance to make up any loss I may suffer through being in Parliament, and to meet any extra expense to which I may be put, perhaps £200 would be adequate; that, both for the member for East Perth and for me, and perhaps for the member for Canning also. In passing I point out that we do not receive a salary now; we receive an allowance. That term "allowance" is always used in reference to reimbursement of expenses rather than to payment for services rendered. If it be impossible to differentiate between members of Parliament, then perhaps an increase would be justified to help those members not so fortunately situated as the member for East Perth and I. As to the question of whether we are entitled to give an increase of allowance to ourselves, it is truly said there is no one else who can give it to us. Therefore, it is urged, we are entitled to do so.

Mr. Stubbs: It has always been so since Responsible Government.

Mr. DAVY: But I do not believe that because a wrong thing has been done always it must always continue to be done. I am going to propose a measure whereby the remedy may be forthcoming without any wrong being done. On this question I cannot look upon members as managers of a business, who are entitled to raise their own salary. I have not heard of the manager of any business who is given power to raise his own salary. If he did so, the owner of the business would come down pretty severely upon him.

Mr. Lambert: A solicitor usually assesses his own value when compiling his own costs.

Mr. Marshall: To the sorrow of those who employ him.

Mr. DAVY: The laws of the land control the fees that the lawyer may charge, and a special official, who is paid a high salary, is in an office in the Supreme Court expressly for the purpose of taxing the bills of solicitors. I look upon members more as trustees. We have the power to pay to ourselves what we like. Is it, however, right for us to do so without giving the beneficiaries of our trust, those who have accorded us that power, an opportunity first to decide whether or not they agree with us? It is obviously impossible to put the matter to the people before some steps are taken. No Government could go to the country, and have as one of their planks the raising of the allowances to members of Parliament. The other side, provided it had been cunning enough not to adopt the same plank for itself, would use that as a stick with which to beat the Government side. The sound, proper and logical method would be to increase the allowances to members, and make that increase operate only in respect of the next Parliament that is elected. We should then have achieved our object, and the public could express their approval or disapproval as they thought fit. No party question could arise, because we would all be in it, or a sufficient number of each party would be in it to keep it from being a party question. Our constituents could only show their disapproval by selecting some person who was not a member of either party. If the people have the sense that we always pretend they have, no candidate who was opposed to the increase in the allowance, could possibly have any success against the honest and efficient sitting member. I move an amendment—

That the words "is inadequate and should be immediately increased" be struck out, and "should be revised" be inserted in lieu.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.35]: I regret that a private member should have brought forward this motion. If the Government consider that the allowance should be increased, as they will have to take the responsibility for paying it, they should have fathered the matter from the begin-

ning. It is a difficult question to approach. It is a matter as to whether members are to look upon their positions in Parliament in a professional light. If it is to be regarded in that light, and members do their duty by the State and their electors, the sum that is termed a Parliamentary allowance is certainly insufficient. I do not, however, think that was the intention when payment to members was first introduced. The allowance is not a salary; it is a sum granted to members for the payment of expenses. Most members have other callings. I have the greatest sympathy for those who have no other source of income than their allowance. Many calls are made upon members, but for at least a period of six months they are at liberty to follow some other occupation.

Mr. Latham: A member has his Parliamentary duties to attend to all the year.

Mr. Heron: How could a member do what you suggest if he had an extensive electorate to visit?

Mr. THOMSON: I have an extensive electorate, but I am not drawing comparisons on that point. If that were to be the basis of our allowance, a member in the far North would receive a larger salary. If the principle were extended to the Federal Parliament, the member who now represents Kalgoorlie would be drawing more than the salaries of all the members representing New South Wales and Victoria. The present salary was accepted by members for the period for which they were elected.

Mr. Sleeman: And you will not accept any more?

Mr. THOMSON: When members were elected for the life of this Parliament they offered their services to the State. If they had looked at the position from the monetary point of view I believe that quite a large number would not have offered their services. Most members gave their service to the State with a genuine desire to assist the country. It would be better that for the life of this Parliament the allowance should remain as it is, namely, £400 a year. If the Government thought fit to increase the allowance, this could be done in time for the next Parliament, and the incoming members could receive the higher remuneration. If the position of a member is to be looked upon in

a professional light, undoubtedly the salary is quite inadequate. That, however, is not the way in which the matter is generally viewed. I must, therefore, oppose the motion and the amendment.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.41]: I congratulate the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) on bringing forward this motion. It has come at an opportune time. The public life of this State is in great danger. Not only is the public life suffering from the general disrepute in which it is held, but the attractions of office both in Parliament and in connection with local bodies are so few that it is difficult to induce people to seek positions. When I look round the House and see the great talent that is displayed here, I regard it as a marvellous thing that so many men have been attracted to this position. The first question to be decided is whether a member should give his whole time to his Parliamentary duties. I consider he should do so, although it is not done to-day.

Hon. G. Taylor: A country member has to do so.

MR. NORTH: If a politician is to be of any use to the country, whether as a Minister or a private member, not only has he to give up the whole of his year to the duty, but he has to spend some time in becoming acquainted with the position. As a newcomer I can see that much time must be devoted to acquiring a knowledge of the technical side of the position. It has been argued that politicians should be amateurs, as a set-off against the professional politician. The idea of amateur politicians, however, is a thing of the past. I cannot see that we shall derive any benefit from having as members gentlemen who may give part of their time to their duties, and look upon the position more in the nature of a hobby at which they may pass a pleasant evening.

The Premier: That is a thing of the past the world over.

MR. NORTH: It is a thing of the past even in Great Britain. The time has come when we may regard members of Parliament and members of local bodies as members of a profession. If it is to be a profession we do not want it to be regarded as the most degraded and contemptible of all.

MR. DAVY: You would have to make the salary £2,000 a year then.

MR. NORTH: The question is a difficult one. We want to attract the highest intelligence in the community. That is very much

the position to-day, but we cannot be sure that it will always be so.

MR. THOMSON: You do not think that by increasing the salary £200 a year you are going to get better representatives?

MR. NORTH: There is a vast difference to-day between the standard of the average Federal politician and the average State politician. In the case of the Federal Parliament there is a much more attractive emolument offered.

MR. THOMSON: I do not agree with you on that.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON: It is higher.

MR. NORTH: There is no comparison, and I will go further and say that a similar mistake has been made in this country in regard to the higher positions in the civil service. Recently the Government thought fit to raise the salary of the holder of the office of Engineer-in-Chief, because it was realised that by making the position worth having, it would be possible to secure the services of a man possessing more than average ability. I would like to see the position of a member of Parliament made lucrative enough to attract the best intelligence in the community.

MR. THOMSON: You are now casting a reflection on the intelligence of present members.

MR. NORTH: I have already said that the present Parliament is fortunate in respect of its personnel, but we cannot always trust to the uncertainties of the future. As time goes on and the cost of living increases, and the demands on the purse become greater, members of the Legislature should be proportionately remunerated. New South Wales only recently increased the salaries of its members of Parliament. Of course, it is simple for the public outside to make jokes about members and their allowances, but I do not think that I am wrong in the view that I hold, and it is that a member should give up the whole of his time to his Parliamentary work, because if he is not busy with his electors, he is busy learning the difficulties of his job. A member never ceases his Parliamentary duties, if he is attending to the work properly. I cannot for the life of me see how the electors should decide a matter of this kind. Suppose both parties this session or next session decide to go to the electors with some arrangement that they would support an increase, how would we give the electors the choice of voting for the

present salary, an increase or even a reduction? We would require a third party, a party that might be called the poorly-paid political party. The position could never be dealt with by the people. Of course, it is simple for those who are blessed with an abundance of this world's goods, to make a part-time job of the position. I am trying to run a solicitor's office as well as attending to my Parliamentary duties, and I know how easy it is for one or the other to be neglected. I am fortunate in having an easy constituency to represent, a constituency that is only six miles from Perth. If the salary were higher, it would lead to greater competition at the polls. We always find that where the position is attractive there is more competition to secure it. I cannot help thinking that unless the allowance paid to members is sufficient to attract the most intelligent citizens of the State, there will be a general falling off in the tone of Parliament. The loss to the State, therefore, would be immeasurably greater than if a small increase were paid to members. I support the motion.

MR. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [5.50]: Some years ago in this House we discussed the question of increasing the salaries of members, and later on we found that some who were most strenuously opposed to the increase being granted, greedily took it after it had been voted. I do not know—and I say this with all due respect to the member for West Perth—that I have ever seen that member at a greater disadvantage, or more bankrupt of even the semblance of an argument. He absolutely camouflaged his acceptance of this motion by certain stipulations which were altogether absurd. He said in effect that any increase that might be made should take effect as from the election of the new Parliament. I understand that is his desire.

Mr. Davy: I suggested that the matter be carefully considered, and that some differentiation should be made, and also that it should not take effect, at any rate, until the next Parliament.

Mr. LAMBERT: I take it, therefore, that what he wants is that it should be made an issue at the next election. In a cowardly sort of way he says, let it apply to the next generation.

Mr. Davy: How does "cowardly" come in?

Mr. LAMBERT: In this respect, that when the hon. member was elected to represent West Perth—

Mr. Davy: I was elected at £400 a year.

Mr. LAMBERT: He knew that just prior to that, Parliament had fixed the salary at £400, that an increase had been made from £300 to £400.

Mr. Davy: Well?

Mr. LAMBERT: The hon. member took no exception to it then and the increase has actually been given effect to by the next Parliament of which he was seeking to become a member.

Mr. Davy: No such thing.

Mr. LAMBERT: If the hon. member thought it was not right and honourable for Parliament to increase the salaries of its members, that was the time when he should have taken exception to what had previously been done.

Mr. Davy: I was not in the country at that time.

Mr. LAMBERT: Even so, the hon. member must have known. He said that there were varying qualifications that would require varying allowances. For instance, I quoted the case of the member for Kimberley, and rightly so. I agree there are members representing North-West constituencies whose Parliamentary allowance should be multiplied by 50 per cent. However, that is another matter. On the subject of qualification, it is true that in some instances the qualifications would be distinct from others. The representation of Kimberley must necessitate a knowledge of the country, knowledge of cattle and such like, and it may be quite possible that the member for West Perth may only require a knowledge of a game of bridge or something like that which would be inseparable from the constituency that he represents.

Mr. Davy: What do they play at Coolgardie?

Mr. Teesdale: Two-up.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am not putting that forward as being actually the case, but the hon. member desires apparently that there should be a variation according to the different qualifications needed to represent the respective constituencies. It may be as I have said, that a member representing Kimberley would require to have a knowledge of cattle, while an aspiring young man with an eye on an aristocratic seat would require to have a knowledge

bridge. But I do not know that that would get us very far. At any rate the hon. member was never at a greater disadvantage than when he tried this afternoon to camouflage his support of the motion. There was much in his abstract suggestion. For instance, I believe that when a member comes into this House he should be paid the allowance then being granted, and if he should be elected to a subsequent Parliament, having then added responsibilities and a greater knowledge of the country's affairs, the allowance should be increased by 50 per cent.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And what would you do after 20 years' service?

Mr. LAMBERT: I will deal with that in a moment. What I suggest could go on progressively until a member reached the maximum allowance of, say, £1,000 a year. If a man has been in the public life of his country for 20 years or a quarter of a century, he is entitled to a pension a darned sight more than many of our civil servants. Most of the members of the service are in very nice jobs. They are on a certain grade, and go on progressing until they reach the maximum. Members of Parliament have their qualifications reviewed every three years, and if anyone is entitled to progressive payment for services rendered to the country, it is the member of Parliament who is elected for term after term. Personally I am not much concerned whether the increase be granted or not. I can candidly say that most of what I receive by way of Parliamentary allowance I spend in one way or another in the public service of the State. I do not know that I get any more calls upon my purse than the majority of members sitting here. But there is one phase that should be reviewed, and it is that neither in this House nor in another place have we a sufficient number of Ministers. The Ministers who are serving in an honorary capacity should be paid. If we consider it necessary to have Ministers to administer departments, those Ministers should receive payment for their services, and that payment should come from the State and not from any other source. I hope that, irrespective of other considerations, Parliament will have an opportunity to review that question at a near date. The leader of the Country Party suggested that an increase of the allowance should be made applicable to the next Parliament that is in strict accordance with the Coun-

try Party's platform. To that extent I sympathise with the hon. member.

Mr. Thomson: I do not need your sympathy.

Mr. Teesdale: You mean he wants it and cannot get it.

Mr. LAMBERT: His platform binds him from voicing any other opinion than that.

Mr. Thomson: That is not correct.

Mr. LAMBERT: Then I hope the hon. member will correct me. I understand that, under the Country Party platform, members cannot vote for any increase unless the electors have first been consulted. Of course the plank may be so comprehensive, or so meaningless, as to make it difficult for members to interpret it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is very clear and simple.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not think the opposition to this proposal, even the newspaper opposition, is very serious. Surely the more balanced minds connected with journalism must appreciate the great difficulty confronting a member of Parliament. He has no tribunal to which to appeal. Would the "West Australian" or the "Sunday Times" suggest that we should make this question an issue at the next election? Would they like to see the public life of the country degraded to such an extent that we should make a mere matter of an allowance increase from £400 to £600 an issue at a general election? There is probably something in the proposal that a Supreme Court judge might be asked to fix a reasonable allowance. It must be conceded that, with the increase of expenses generally, members of Parliament are not receiving sufficient allowance, and I do not know that there would be any very serious objection to their getting an additional sum. Whether the increase should take effect immediately concerns me little, but it is competent for Parliament to resolve that the present allowance is inadequate and that it should be increased immediately.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [64]: I am surprised to hear the member for Claremont (Mr. North) contrasting Federal and State Parliamentarians to our disadvantage.

Mr. North: Not necessarily this State.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: After having visited the Federal Parliament, it seemed to me that we had nothing to fear from comparison, particularly when we consider

that a majority of our Federal members had tried to get into the State Parliament, or had been defeated at the polls after serving a useful apprenticeship here. For that, however, I give them credit. It is quite proper that a man should serve an apprenticeship in the public life of the State before entering the national Parliament. I believe we have as much ability, patriotism and public spiritedness amongst our members as exists amongst Federal members, although they deal with larger and more important matters.

The Premier: But they do not deal with matters touching so closely the lives of the people.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is so. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) has misrepresented the Country Party platform. It is clear, simple and democratic. It provides that there shall be no alteration of the Parliamentary allowance without a referendum of the electors; in other words, that the taxpayers who pay should be consulted before an alteration is made. Members who give their full time to the work and have no other means of employment may find it difficult to make ends meet.

Mr. Stubbs: Do you suggest they should take on the job for nothing?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I regard the payment as an allowance, and not as a salary for a full-time position, particularly as members have the recess of six months to themselves. The motion is opposed to the platform of the Country Party and, consequently, I think our members will vote against it. I prefer the amendment to the motion, but I shall oppose both.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [G.G.]: I oppose the amendment and support the motion. I am not at all surprised at the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) moving the amendment, especially when I carry my mind back 24 or 25 years and recall the varying opinions of the electors of West Perth. When I first entered Parliament the late Mr. George Leake was the representative of West Perth. That district has had seven or eight different representatives in that period. The West Perth electors had as member Mr. H. Lingworth, and since his time they have tried all shades, including lay parsons and lawyers. They had a man of wide political experience and a most able speaker in Mr. C. J. Moran. Then they tried an auctioneer, Mr. Eben Allen, and afterwards fell back on the legal profession by electing Mr. Draper, now Mr.

Justice Draper. Then they thought they had failed and decided to try an old lady.

Mr. Marshall: What about an old woman?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: They tried an elderly lady and we must say it was a wise choice.

The Premier: And now they have gone to the other extreme.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: After three years' representation by the lady they decided to have another change. In effect they said "We have tried lay parsons, and the legal profession in two different persons, then an auctioneer and then a lady, and what are we to do now? We shall go back to the legal profession." They are the most fickle electors. I am not worried about the opinion of the electors of West Perth because they do not hold an opinion for any length of time. I have represented Mt. Margaret for just over 25 years. My electors have made no change and have no desire to effect a change, so far as I know. I cannot say whether that is a mark of wisdom or of good judgment on their part, but I have told them on every occasion when the allowance was mentioned that I would vote for an increase every time it was brought before the House. This I have done and I intend to do so now. I have stood the test of election for almost a quarter of a century, and I value the opinion of my electors after having told them repeatedly that members are not sufficiently paid. The Leader of the Country Party says the question should be tested on the hustings. We should the Government make it a question which to go to the country?

Mr. Thomson: I did not say that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Then how could it be brought before the country? I have placed it before my electors for years, and I am justified in voting for an increase.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Who would decide the amount to be submitted to the electors?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Why should the Government be called upon to interfere in a question of this kind? It is the duty of the House by resolution to give a direction to the Government who have to find the money.

Mr. Thomson: No one knows better than do you that Parliament cannot do it without a message from the Governor.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I want the Government to be informed in clear language that the House is of opinion that the allowance should be increased. When the Government know of that by the vote of the House, they will be justified in bringing down the necessary legislation to give effect to it. If a mess

be required, there will be no difficulty in the Government getting it, although it would be impossible for a private member to do so. All that a private member can do is to move a motion as has been done by the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs). Most English-speaking countries have adopted the principle of payment of members. We in Western Australia define it as an allowance, not a salary. Considered as a salary, it would be small indeed, especially when other people are receiving salaries of £500 to £1,000, and upwards. Consequently members should be paid something approaching the salaries paid to other men. Since I was a young man I have heard it argued that sufficient wealthy people possessed of commercial knowledge and public spirit- edness should offer their services to Parlia- ment free. This was done for a consider- able time, but the people got tired of such men, and it is useless nowadays for a man to offer himself for nothing. He would not get in.

The Premier: And the chap who offers his services for nothing is generally worth nothing.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We have had experi- ence of some of the most capable and suc- cessful business men being returned to Parliament and proving anything but a success.

The Premier: Many of them an utter failure.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Well, I should not like to argue the point with the Premier. There is a certain type of brain required for politics. A few years ago we had as a member one of the most capable barristers in the State, but I ask members who were in the House at the time to say whether that man was cut out for a politician. Cer- tainly he was not. On the other hand, some men who have been a failure in business have proved to be most capable politicians. A man whom I knew well in Queensland, Mr. Kidson, was a failure as a small busi- ness man. He got into Parliament and after some years became Leader of the Labour Party and finally Premier. Some members may be aware of how he succeeded the old Liberal Governments there and made a distinct success of the finances of the country; and yet, privately, he was not a good business man.

The Premier: As a matter of fact, I am not much of a business man myself.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If the member for West Perth is opposed to the principle of payment of members—

Mr. Davy: I have not said any such thing.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I say, if he is op- posed to it, then he is justified in his pre- sent attitude. But to accept the principle of payment and then to say that this House should not decide the question—

Mr. Davy: I have not said that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR:—except as regards doing it for another Parliament, and that is what the hon. member said—

Mr. Davy: Yes.

Hon. G. TAYLOR:—and then go to the country, thus making the increase 12 or 18 months before an election, seems to me absurd. If a man's principles are against payment, he is absolutely justified in op- posing the motion; but if a man is not op- posed to payment of members, a principle accepted all over Australia and in the Old Country likewise, there is no justification for opposition to the motion. So far as I am concerned, and so far as other mem- bers of the Opposition to whom I have spoken are concerned, the opinions ex- pressed by the member for West Perth are his own opinions—

Mr. Davy: Of course they are my own opinions.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: —and not the opin- ions of the Opposition. I do not wish the House to be under any misapprehension about the matter. I hope that the amend- ment will be defeated and the motion car- ried.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [7.33]: I think the mover of the motion is well within his rights, and is fol- lowing a practice that has been adopted on many occasions here and in other Par- liaments of Australia, in submitting the motion for consideration. The two propo- sitions stated very fairly by the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) seem to me to cover the whole situation. Accepting the principle of payment of members, or the payment of an allowance for the services of members, we have to ask ourselves whether the amount paid to-day is adequate for the work performed and the services rendered to the people of the State.

Mr. Stubbs: That is correct.

The PREMIER: That is the first question we have to ask ourselves. There should be only one answer to that question. It is utterly ridiculous for any person to say that any member of Parliament, even the least diligent that might be elected to this Chamber, is adequately recompensed by an allowance of £400 a year. If a salary or allowance of £300 was considered to be sufficient in 1910, then surely, having regard to the decreased purchasing power of money, £400 is not anything like in proportion to what £300 was 13 or 14 years ago. The messenger in this House who attends to members is receiving a higher salary, having regard to the obligations of members because of their positions, than are the members of the Chamber. It is undoubtedly true that £150 a year, more especially in the case of country members, does not nearly cover the expenses entailed in carrying out the duties of the position. Therefore I say we pay the messenger of this Chamber a greater salary than that received by members for their services. Every officer of the House is receiving 50 per cent. more than members of the Chamber. The gentlemen of the "Hansard" staff, who report our words of wisdom, are or will be receiving nearly twice as much as members, certainly 75 per cent. more than members are receiving. If we look where we will, there is no comparison to the miserable allowance—it can only be termed a miserable allowance—of £400 a year for the services rendered by members. It may be argued, of course, that members are not compelled to devote the whole of their time to their Parliamentary duties, that they are enabled to follow a profession or carry on a business as well as attend to their Parliamentary duties. But my considerable observation of the work of this House forces me to agree entirely with the view expressed by the member for Claremont (Mr. North), that whilst a man may be able to pursue a commercial or a professional life while representing a constituency here, with very few exceptions, such members give the fag end of their brains and their energies to the service of the country. There is a limit to the working hours of any man; and if a man is engaged in a business from 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning until half-past four or five in the afternoon, is it to be said that he can then bring to bear for another six or seven or eight hours in this Chamber that clearness of

thought and that alertness of mind which are necessary if one is going to give of his very best?

Mr. Davy: Then members give the fag-end of their brains to their Parliamentary life?

The PREMIER: The hon. member's observation must have taught him that Ministers when sitting here in the evening are often very weary and tired looking; that is, after spending the day in their offices. But, at any rate, their work here does conform largely to the work they do in the day. They have not to disconnect all their brain and thought from the business of the day and take up here something that is entirely different. A considerable proportion of the work done by Ministers in the day time is the studying of Bills and other matters coming before Parliament, and so the task here is infinitely easier for them. But what of the business man, the director of a company, or a managing director running a huge complex business until 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening and then coming here, not having had time to read a Bill through during the day? He takes up a Bill of 100 or 150 clauses here, and what does he know about it?

Mr. Heron: He does not read it.

The PREMIER: Frequently that is so. No man can go on indefinitely doing two days' work in one.

Mr. Sampson: The member for Claremont said that either a member's business or his Parliamentary work must suffer—not necessarily his Parliamentary work.

The PREMIER: Should a member be asked to let his business suffer for the country without adequate remuneration? We are living in an age in which it has become an accepted principle that men should be properly and thoroughly remunerated for the services they render, whether to an individual, a business, or an institution. I should say that when men are giving their time and thought to the service of the people as a whole, it is quite impossible for them to attend fully to some other business or occupation as well; and no member should be asked to sacrifice his personal welfare or his business without proper recompense from the State to which he gives his services. Notwithstanding opinions that may be expressed in the Press and in various quarters, I do not believe that the great

majority of the people of this country would refuse to make a proper and adequate allowance to the men who serve them in this Chamber.

Members: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I do not believe it for a moment. It is merely a newspaper cry. "The salary grab" makes a nice heading, and perhaps nice copy.

Mr. Teesdale: There is no murder on just now.

The PREMIER: It has been shown to-night that those who criticise us in that respect are not in conformity with public opinion, because in this Parliament of Western Australia, and in the Federal Parliament and every one of the other State Parliaments where salaries have been increased by members, the members have been returned and their actions have been endorsed by the electors. The people are bigger than some of the critics who would belittle Parliament and representative institutions. For my part I say that any attempt to belittle Parliament and representative institutions is to do the work of the direct actionist. Nothing is going to take the place of Parliament and of government of the people by Parliament except direct action, and those who reflect upon Parliament are reflecting upon the people who elected it. It is not possible for water to rise above its source. Such critics are doing the work of those who would overthrow the whole policy of Parliamentary government. It cannot be denied that the allowance is altogether insufficient. That does not admit of argument. The next question is whether it is a proper thing that we should increase our own salaries without the consent of the people. The members of the House are elected to take responsibility in this direction. The people have entrusted this and every other Parliament with infinitely more responsible work and greater tasks than the mere deciding as to an increase of their salaries by a hundred or two a year.

Mr. Davy: But nothing in which we are so much interested.

The PREMIER: If we believe that the allowance is not sufficient, why should we refrain from saying so or giving a vote in that direction?

Mr. Davy: No reason at all.

The PREMIER: But there are members who admit that the allowance ought to be

greater and yet take the stand that members ought not to vote themselves an increase. There is no other way of doing it.

Mr. DAVY: Yes, there is; we can vote it for the next Parliament.

The PREMIER: I am coming to that. There is no other way whatever of doing it, except through this Parliament. The member for West Perth says we can vote for an increase to apply to the next Parliament. What would be the object of that? That the people of Western Australia might say whether they endorse the action or not?

Mr. Davy: Partly that, and also because we have come here on an agreement to take £400 a year.

The PREMIER: We have not. The hon. member is wrong there. The only members who have come here on an agreement for three years are those who have definitely pledged themselves that they will not vote for an increase. The logical position is that the person who stood for a seat for three years at a salary of £400 did not commit himself to continue for that £400 for three years unless he said to the electors, "I pledge myself not to vote for an increase during the three years." Only members who so pledged themselves are committed. Other members accepted the position at the £400 with a free hand to vote according to their judgment upon this as they do upon all the other questions that come before them, except in so far as they have committed themselves to main principles. That contention is illogical. It is not correct to say that members entered into a contract with the electors for three years.

Mr. Stubbs: No, that is all rubbish.

The PREMIER: The member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) says we should do that and let the electors decide. How on earth are the electors to have an opportunity to decide?

Mr. Latham: By putting up candidates and giving the electors that opportunity.

The PREMIER: In which case we would find men like the hon. member going round the country and the electors having to approve of the candidate who was the less harmful from their point of view. Let us consider that position. What would be the position of the prohibitionist? One candidate might agree with prohibition and with nine-tenths of the views of prohibitionists.

out might approve of an increase in the salaries of members. How will the electors determine upon their candidate? Are they going to subordinate all other principles and decide purely on the issue regarding the increase in salaries?

Hon. G. Taylor: No.

The PREMIER: Of course they would not do so. Take an hon. member who may believe in the policy of contract versus day labour. The Country Party may have a candidate wholly opposed to the principle of day labour, but may not conform to the views expressed by the Leader of the Country Party regarding the increase in salary. What will the Country Party do? What will be the determining factor regarding that candidate? So it will be regarding the whole of the electors. There is no end to the questions that could crop up in the circumstances. The only way to get an expression of opinion from the electors would be to discard all other questions entirely and have candidates in favour of or in opposition to the increase.

Mr. Davy: You will not give the electors even that poor chance.

The PREMIER: Because it is ridiculous, absurd, impossible and impracticable.

Mr. Davy: The electors may not think so.

The PREMIER: I am certain they will.

Mr. Davy: You have said nothing to convince them.

The PREMIER: Would the hon. member be content to let that be the sole issue in the West Perth electorate?

Mr. Davy: Certainly, I would not mind.

The PREMIER: A man who would be content to slip into Parliament on prejudice of this kind would be a very poor, useless sort of individual when he got there.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: He would not get here.

The PREMIER: No, because there is no constituency in Western Australia where the electors do not rise above that sort of thing. The method suggested by the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) is an utterly impossible one. The only alternative would be the platform of the Country Party which favours a referendum being taken. What a tremendous question to put to the people in a ballot.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I thought you believed in referendums.

The PREMIER: How could the question be put by way of referendum? There would be some in favour of salaries of £150, £200

or even up to £1,000. How could we frame a ballot paper that would result in a true expression of opinion being obtained from the public?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Mr. Monger would have to declare a figure.

The PREMIER: Of course that method is almost impossible. It is a ridiculous issue to put to the electors. Members are sent here to carry out their responsibilities. Here we are dealing with the disposal of £9,000,000 without any referendum of the electors, but merely according to the judgment of members and in conformity with the main principles of the policy outlined before the country. We have all these powers without the necessity for reference to the electors. We can build railways, harbours and other public works involving millions of money and we can do this without any referendum.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is also the big water supply undertaking.

The PREMIER: Yes, but this little question must be put to the electors. The whole position has arisen because of the timidity and, I say it without offence, want of courage on the part of candidates for Parliament and of members of Parliament themselves. The whole amount involved, let us assume, is £16,000. What a huge sum compared with the £9,000,000 that we are dealing with in the Estimates!

Mr. Thomson: Then you have come to a decision as to the amount of the increase.

The PREMIER: No, I said, "Let us assume." The House will have to determine the increase.

Mr. Lambert: Don't say too much or we will knock some of the increase off.

The PREMIER: As the hon. member, no doubt, will not draw it, it will be a matter of indifference to him.

Hon. G. Taylor: The member for Katanning may be like that other member of Parliament who drew his back salary when he was defeated.

The PREMIER: I believe the people will get better service and better representation by a recognition of the work hon. members do in this Chamber by giving them something like reasonable compensation or allowance to cover the expenses involved by such positions. This is not a party question and I speak only for myself. However, if the motion is agreed to, I will submit it to Cabinet with a recommendation that a Bill be introduced to give effect to the desires of hon. members.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question put and a division taken with the following result.

Ayes	..	..	..	28
Noes	..	..	..	7
Majority for				21

AYES.		
Mr. Angelo		Mr. Marshall
Mr. Chesson		Mr. McCallum
Mr. Clydeedale		Mr. Munale
Mr. Collier		Mr. North
Mr. Corboy		Mr. Pantou
Mr. Coverley		Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Cunningham		Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Denton		Mr. Taylor
Mr. Heron		Mr. Teesdale
Miss Holman		Mr. Troy
Mr. W. D. Johnson		Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Kennedy		Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert		Mr. Withers
Mr. Lamond		Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

NOES.		
Mr. Davy		Mr. Thomson
Mr. E. B. Johnston		Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Lindsay		Mr. Latham
Mr. Sampson		

(Teller.)

AYES.	PAIRS.	NOES.
Mr. Lutey		Mr. Griffiths
Mr. Mann		Mr. Brown

Question thus passed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1925-26.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Pantou in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £1,423.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [7.58]: Two opportunities each session are afforded members to comment on and, if necessary, to criticise the administration of the Government so far as it affects the whole State or any particular portion of it. For my part I shall content myself with commenting on the administration of this Government and also of past Governments so far as their treatment of the North and North-West is concerned. The time has come when this question should be seriously considered.

Mr. Teesdale: You should wait for the Loan Estimates.

Mr. ANGELO: No, this does not affect the Loan Estimates. I desire to lodge a protest against the unfair treatment of the North-West by past Governments. To prove that the North-West has not had a fair deal, I propose to submit some comparative statements. First of all let us take the population of that portion of the State south of the 26th parallel and compare it with the population north of that line. I think we shall find something surprising to members. In 1911 the population in the South was 287,372. In 1924 it had risen to 362,605, or an increase of 75,228. In 1911 the population in the North was 6,546. In 1924 it had declined to 5,422, or a decrease of 1,124. We are told that this has been due to the decline of mining in the North. To some measure that may be so. But mining in the South has declined to a far greater extent than in the North, so we must look for other reasons which I propose to touch upon presently. It is not only in population that the North shows a serious decline. In 1911 there were in the South 112,639 horses. In 1924 the number had increased to 148,253, or an increase of 35,614. In 1911 the horses in the North numbered 27,638, and in 1924 the number was 26,863, or a decrease of 775. In 1911 there were in the South 165,078 head of cattle. In 1924 the number was 236,373, showing an increase of 70,695. In 1911 the cattle in the North numbered 677,960, and in 1924 the number was 665,191, or a decrease of 12,769. In 1911 there were in the South 3,049,707 sheep. In 1924 the number had grown to 3,813,941. In the North in 1911 the number was 2,361,835, and in 1924 it was 2,182,623. So in sheep alone, while the South was increasing by 764,234, the North was decreasing by 170,212. The decline in the mining industry of the North had nothing to do with that. These figures, I claim, prove that preferential treatment has been shown to the South. It is not in stock alone, for although in 1911 there was but very little wheat produced in the South last year the wheat harvest reached 24,000,000 bushels. Of course, we have no wheat at all in the North. Millions of pounds have been spent in the South on group settlements, soldier settlements, the wheat and dairy industries, and in the encouragement of agriculture. All these we have been denied in the North. So, too, in the South enormous sums have been spent

upon harbours, public buildings, and railways. It must be seen by this convincing evidence that there has been considerable neglect of the North by past Administrations. When we consider the defence aspect it is clear that there has been criminal neglect of the North. Nothing else could account for the fact that we have in the North fewer people, fewer stock and less wealth than we had 13 years ago, whilst the southern part of the State has gone ahead by leaps and bounds. The whole of the energies of successive Governments domiciled in the South have been used for the development of the South. Before the Disabilities Commission Mr. Keenan, who prepared the case for the State, submitted a table showing that out of loan funds since the State entered Federation only £2,681,935 had been spent on the development of the North. When we remember that our loan expenditure during that period amounted to considerably over £50,000,000 it is seen how little the North-West has had from this source. No balance sheet has been kept to show what the revenue and expenditure in the North have been, although Lord Derby in 1883, when discussing Responsible Government for Western Australia, urged that a separate account should be kept of revenue raised and expended in each district of the Colony. As this has not been done, it is impossible to say whether or not the North has been a drag on the South. From figures obtained from the Taxation Department it is seen that nearly 20 per cent. of the people of the North pay income tax as against 3 per cent. of the people of the South. There we show that the North contributes very fairly to Consolidated Revenue. Mr. Simpson, the Under Treasurer, when before the Disabilities Commission, in answer to a request for a return showing the revenue received by the State from the North, said it was not possible to get a return of the taxation collected from that source, but that a return of land rents had been made out showing that the annual land rental in the North amounted to £91,697. When he was asked as to the expenditure in the North-West, he said he had already given a return in respect of loan expenditure, and that he thought the ordinary expenditure in the North would be only slightly in excess of the revenue received other than by land rents. He was then asked would he say that the country north of the 26th parallel had been a financial burden

on the State. His reply was that he did not think it was a burden to any extent beyond the cost of the upkeep of the steamers and the Wyndham Meat Works. In answer to a question as to whether the revenue from land and income taxes balanced the expenditure, he said it was balanced by the interest on loan expenditure on the trading concerns. He added that it was impossible to get out figures without a tremendous amount of work, but that from the 1st July instructions were to be issued that would enable the department to have figures compiled in the future in case of emergency. It was then put to him that the State's case as prepared suggested that the interest on the large sum of money borrowed for the North-West was lost to the State. His reply was that the loss on the North-West was not as great as had been originally thought when first the case was presented. That should dispose of the statement that the North has been a drag on the South. As showing, too, that the North is still getting unfair treatment, let me give two instances that occur to me: last year the Treasurer brought down a Bill increasing the land tax, and told us that a set off would be given in the reduction of railway freights. Very good. Our people in the North have to pay that extra land tax, but as they have no railway they have no set off against it. That is an instance of unfair treatment. Another instance will be found in the heavy charges levied on the jetties in the North-West. Until a few years ago it was recognised that jetties were provided as a means of getting the settlers' produce away, and so long as the handling and wharfage charges met the cost of administration and of handling, no profit was looked for. A very different thing now appertains. According to the returns I have for the year ended 30th June, 1919, there was a loss of £170; for the year 1920 there was a loss of £226; for the year 1921 there was a loss of £93. Then the Government started to raise the handling and wharfage charges, with the result that, instead of a loss, in 1922 there was a profit of £852. This was increased in 1923 to a profit of £1,176 6s. 7d., and in 1924 to a profit of £4,487 5s. 3d., and last year was increased to a profit of £4,873s. 10d. When we take into consideration that there are less than 2,000 people in the district, who look to Carnarvon as their

port of call, it will be seen that they are penalised to the extent of £3 per head in extra taxation as compared with the people elsewhere in the State. This is not a fair thing. The compensation that was promised the people of the State because of the increased land tax, compensation that is allowed to the people of the South by way of a reduction in railway freights, should also be allowed to the people in the North by way of a reduction in wharfage and handling charges on the goods they have to import and on the produce they are shipping away. The North-West comprises 527,906 square miles, as against the southern portion which contains 448,014 square miles. The northern portion of the State, north of the 26th parallel, is considerably larger than the southern portion. They have a coastline of over 2,000 miles in length. Adjacent to this huge coastline we have thousands of islands rich in marine wealth of every description. There are whales, pearl shell and turtles in abundance. There is any amount of other wealth that should be put to use for the prosperity of the State, and yet nothing is being done. We have over a dozen magnificent harbours in the North-West, better than in any other portion of the State. One harbour, Napier-Broome-Bay, is the largest deep water, land locked harbour in Australia. It has an area of 217 square miles as compared with Sydney harbour, 27 square miles. We thus have a perfectly good harbour in the North at least eight times the size of Sydney harbour, which is supposed to be one of the finest in the world. The hinterland beyond these ports contains big mountain ranges, extensive tablelands, heavy and reliable rainfalls, noble rivers, and good soil. Some of the rivers are navigable for many miles. These would make the cost of handling produce less than would otherwise be the case. We have been told by a few people who have traversed the northern areas, including Mr. Easton, that there are tens of millions of acres of magnificent grazing land there on which not a hoof of stock is running. There is an abundance of water. The country needs only developing and encouragement by the Government. These areas cannot be taken up by single individuals, because there are many dangerous natives living there. The work has to be done, in the same way as Lord Forrest opened up Wyndham. It must be done by expeditions under Govern-

ment control. The money spent would be well repaid. This country contains districts in which the rainfall is excellent. In some parts the rainfall is as low as 8 inches, but in other parts of the Kimberleys it is up to 60 inches. The rainfall is also regular. In the summer time heavy dews are experienced.

The Minister for Agriculture: Which is the 60 inches rainfall belt of the Kimberleys?

Mr. ANGELO: It is in the West Kimberleys. The rainfall is marked on the Government plan. This land, we are told by experts, will grow sugar, cotton, maize and all tropical fruits.

The Minister for Agriculture: What experts?

Mr. ANGELO: The Government have had experts up there.

The Minister for Agriculture: What expert said it would grow sugar?

Mr. ANGELO: We are told by experienced men that sugar can be grown there.

The Minister for Agriculture: It cannot be done.

Mr. ANGELO: It can be tried.

Mr. Teesdale: We can grow cotton there.

The Minister for Agriculture: We may be able to grow cotton.

Mr. ANGELO: Many things can be grown there, and experimental plots should be started. The Government could make a move in that direction. In the south experimental farms are dotted all over the place, but there are none in the North although we comprise more than one-half of the State. We have made a start with banana-growing on the Gascoyne, and this is likely to prove successful. The great land I refer to is known to contain good gold mines. Unfortunately many of these are not being worked because of the expense attached to operating them. These expenses are very much heavier than they are in our Eastern Goldfields. Government assistance should be given in that direction. We have copper, iron, tin and practically every base metal known to the mineral world. More encouragement and assistance are necessary to the people there in the way of cheap freights, before these mines can be worked at a profit. If previous Governments had spent some portion of the money they are now spending in the South in opening up the land in the North, and encouraging the various industries that look so promising, they would have had returns in one-fifth of the time that they will receive

them from the farms and group settlements being established in the South. From the point of view of wealth production, the settler in the North would be of greater economic value to the State than any settler in the South. The Government seem to have been disinclined to develop the North. One Minister of a previous Government told us in this House that 25 years hence would be sufficient time to start the development of the North-West. We cannot wait 25 years.

Mr. Teesdale: You and I cannot.

Mr. ANGELO: I should like to know the opinion of members of the Press delegation. These gentlemen are well up in the world's politics and in the world's conditions. They know the necessity for populating and developing every part of the Empire. I should like to know what their opinion is, and if they think we can wait 25 years before we begin to develop the northern portion of this State. From time to time Governments have sent experts to the North. We have had experts there—Mr. Crawford, Mr. Despeissis, Mr. Moodie and Mr. Hampshire, the dairy expert. They have all recommended that settlement should be commenced there and experimental plots established. We have all read Mr. Despeissis' book, in which he points out that nearly everything in the way of tropical products can be grown up there. He has urged that experimental plots should be established, and yet nothing has been done. It seems to me as if everyone has put some discouragement in the way of a start being made. In the Gascoyne we have a Mr. Coe who has come from Queensland, where he has had experience of 15 years of tropical fruit growing. He came to see if he could get land here in order to commence growing bananas. He went to the Agricultural Department. They said, "We have any amount of land." They sent him to the Serpentine, to Harvey, to the Chapman, and everywhere down South, but did not mention the North. He went to those places, but found the land unsuitable and that the conditions would not apply. He was just going away when he heard of the possibility of the kind of land he wanted being available in the Gascoyne. He inspected it and was satisfied. For six months he practically sat on the doorstep of the Lands Department trying to get land, but he could not get it and finally went away disgusted. Later on Mr. Colebatch, who had been away when Mr. Coe first attempted to secure the land, returned and telegraphed to

him to come back and made the land available. Now I think we shall have something done. The other day I received a letter from some people representing a capital of about £100,000. They wanted concessions along certain parts of our coast in order to establish a turtle factory. They, too, were discouraged. It was only after seeing the Minister, and urging upon him to reserve portion of our coastline to enable these people to inspect it, that we have been fortunate enough to satisfy this particular syndicate. These people are prepared to lay out no less than £50,000 or £60,000 in establishing a factory in the North-West. To-day I have received a telegram saying that they are sending their expert over. The other day I received a letter from a man in New South Wales, who sent me a copy of a letter he had received from the Lands Department. He had written over to find out if there was any portion of the North-West that still required to be explored. He was prepared to put in £2,000 of his own money, and organise a party for the purpose of exploring the unknown portions of the North. The letter that was sent to him from the Lands Department stated that there was no part of the North which had not been explored. Fancy turning away a man who was prepared to finance an expedition at a cost of £2,000, and telling him that no portion of the North had not been explored! The other day an injunction came out—this is a Federal matter—preventing petrol being carried up to the North. The State Government should have stepped in here. They must recognise the great obstacle that will be set in the way of the northern settlers. It may mean that shearing will be stopped in some of the sheds. Petrol required for motor wagons, which are bringing in the wool, will not be available and serious trouble will occur. The Government should immediately place the matter before the Federal authorities with a view to having this disability removed.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Federal Government are too busy.

Mr. ANGELO: Take the question of the Federal road grant.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is a State road grant. "Federal road grant" is a misnomer.

Mr. ANGELO: I know it is on the pound for pound basis. It is laid down that population should not be the only qualification for the expenditure of the

money and that area also must be considered. Because of that this State got a larger share of these various grants than would have been the case if the money had been allotted purely on the population basis. The Government accepted the grant on those conditions, but immediately it is applied to this State the policy changes, and we in the North get a very small quota of what we would have been justly entitled to receive if the original conditions had been carried out, as the Federal Government intended them to be carried out. We are all satisfied that there is great need for the prompt development of the North. The considerations of national security demand a well balanced policy of population distribution. All the population must not be brought to the South. We have heard the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition talk about the need for populating our great empty spaces. I agree with them, and they admit the great necessity for it from the viewpoint of defence. If that is to be the viewpoint, why not start to populate that portion that is adjacent to the menace at present existing? Why go away 3,000 miles in a southerly direction to start populating and developing? We know that within seven days sail of our northern ports there are no fewer than 1,000 million people whose natural increase is at the rate of 5,000,000 annually. These people are becoming more accustomed to the use of munitions of war, and we notice by the paper to-day that the Bolsheviks are trying to train the Chinese to their way of thinking. The menace is increasing every day. Military experts say that the next storm centre will be in the Pacific. It will be shifted from the Atlantic, and this part of the world will be where the conflict will take place. We must admit that the emptiness of the north is a first class danger, and it is the duty of the Government to try to rectify that. The isolation of the people in the South-West from Melbourne is no greater than the isolation of the people of the North from Perth. It is therefore necessary that the Government should do their utmost to develop and populate the North. But the question is, can they do it? Mr. Scaddan, one of our ex-Premiers, gave evidence before the Disabilities Commission, and this is what appeared in the Commission's report—

Mr. Scaddan emphatically expressed his opinion that the development of the State of Western Australia, comprising as it does an area of 975,920 square miles "is so tremendous that the task is too much for the State Government. It is too enormous for one Parliament, and the Parliamentary representatives generally, to have a complete knowledge of the whole State and its requirements, while from the financial standpoint, the task is impossible as well."

That is the opinion of a man who has been in politics in Western Australia for a great number of years. We all agree that it is impossible to administer the North-West by a Government situated in the South. It takes a Minister a month to go to Wyndham and back. It was with the idea of something being done in the direction of assisting the North, that, eight years ago, when I entered this House, I urged that a North-West Department should be created, and that there should be a North-West Minister with a voice in the Cabinet. What happened? A department was established and a Minister was appointed, but all sorts of other duties were crowded on to his shoulders. We still have a Minister for the North-West, but look at the other important posts that he is expected to attend to! His duty as a Minister of the North-West is an encumbrance on his various other functions. If the Government is to continue to develop the North-West, there must be a proper administration, and the Minister in control must spend half his time in the North-West, and give his personal attention to matters there. Then he could devote the other half of the year to his Parliamentary duties and he could advise Cabinet as to the course that should be followed.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: That could also apply to the South-West.

Mr. ANGELO: Nothing of the sort. Anyone can leave here in the morning, proceed to the South-West and return the next day. One could go to Esperance and back in a few days. Why do you want a Minister for the South-West?

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Group settlement should provide enough work for one Minister.

Mr. ANGELO: I agree with the hon. member there, because of the importance of group settlements and the large amount of work the scheme entails.

Mr. Lamond: What is wrong with group settlements for the North?

Mr. ANGELO: I am advocating that, and I am going to ask the hon. member's assistance. Mr. Hampshire, the dairy expert, has written a most favourable report on the proposal that group settlements should be established straight away in the Gascoyne district. Since the issue of that report we have had an engineer's report to the effect that any amount of water is available, and that means have been found by which it is possible to raise it. No fewer than six Government engineers reported on the matter from time to time but not one was able to show us how to raise it. It took a layman to do it. What I say now is that if the Government cannot carry on the task of developing the North-West they should admit it and take steps by which another authority might be enabled to come in and carry on the work. Speaking in this Chamber on the 9th December last year, the Premier said—

The North-West portion of Australia required special treatment. It was an obligation of the Commonwealth to assist Western Australia financially to develop the North-West. It was beyond the financial powers of the State to develop the rest of the State and the North-West as well. It was the duty of the Commonwealth to assist the State in developing the North-West just as it was its duty to find very considerable sums for the development of the Northern Territory. There was not much hope of the State (W.A.) giving the North-West much assistance for many years.

There he practically endorsed what Mr. Scaddan said two or three years before, that the development of the North could not be started for a quarter of a century. We would like to know what was in the Premier's mind. How many years does he say it will take to carry out this great developmental work? We cannot afford to wait. In setting out the case of Western Australia before the Disabilities Commission, Mr. N. Keenan, K.C., speaking as the mouth-piece of the Government said this—

By far the most important problem which faces the Government of Western Australia is that of immigration, and particularly of settlement of the lands in the great tracts of the North. It would be not only impolitic, but highly dangerous, and manifestly unjust, to leave the North-West and North unoccupied and undeveloped.

I want the Government to say what it is proposed to do because it is my wish to help them to carry out what appears to be their

laudable desire. But the question is, can they do it? We heard the Leader of the Opposition say the other night that there was no desire to surrender any part of this territory to the Commonwealth or to any body. But if the Government cannot carry on the work of development, why do they not own up to it? It would be only Statesmanlike to do so. It would be only fair and just, not only to the State but to the Commonwealth and the Empire as a whole, if the Government admitted their limitations and asked the Commonwealth to take over this territory and develop it for us. There is nothing to be ashamed of in having to admit inability to develop the North. The Premier has already said that it is the duty of the Commonwealth to help us. Then why not go further and ask the Commonwealth to do it for us? The other part of Western Australia would not lose anything by the creation of a separate State or a Crown Colony. The territory cannot be shifted from us; it must always adjoin our boundary. We would still get all the trade from that part. We have heard people say, "How could you possibly start a new State with only 6,000 people." Western Australia had only 2,000 souls when the first Legislative Council was established. Mr. Higgs who was Chairman of this Commission, went to great pains over the question of the development of the North. He took evidence from dozens of men who thoroughly understood North-West conditions, and he made this recommendation regarding the North-West:—

I therefore recommend—That the Government of the Commonwealth invite the State of Western Australia to surrender to the Commonwealth that portion of the North and North-West of Western Australia above the 26th parallel of the south latitude on the following terms:—

(a) That the Commonwealth shall take over the sum of £3,680,231 of the public debt of the State of Western Australia, incurred on account of the North-West to 30th June, 1924.

(b) That the Commonwealth shall undertake, within a period of 12 months after the surrender of the territory, to create a new State of the said territory, granting such representation in either House of the Commonwealth Parliament as the Parliament thinks fit.

(c) That the Commonwealth shall grant to the new State a Government, partly nominee and partly elected, with powers equivalent to the powers possessed by the Legislative and Executive Councils of Papua.

(d) That the question how much shall the grant to Western Australia over and above the

25s. per capita allowance, be diminished upon the surrender of the territory, be determined by mutual agreement between the Commonwealth Government and the Government of the State of Western Australia, or in the event of disagreement, by an arbitrator who shall be a citizen of the British Empire.

That is Mr. Higgs's considered opinion of what we should do. If the State Government admit that they cannot develop the North in the very near future, it should be handed over to the Federal Government to be administered as a Crown colony. It should have a legislature consisting of a certain number of Government officials nominated by the Crown and an equal number of residents of the North elected by the people. Those elected by the people would act in an advisory capacity and keep the officials well advised regarding local conditions. That would be an entirely different arrangement from what existed in the Northern Territory which was administered solely by Government officials sent from Melbourne who knew nothing whatever about local conditions. The legislature I suggest for the North-West should function in conjunction with the Federal Parliament, and any laws passed would have to receive the sanction of the higher authority. This should apply until the population of the North rose to say 25,000 or 30,000 people, when it would automatically become a separate State under the Federal Constitution. There are two courses open to the State Government—they must either hand over the territory to the Commonwealth Government to administer and develop, or do it themselves. If they are going to do it themselves, it must be done in a proper, efficient and expeditious manner. The only way to do that is by raising a special loan for the purpose. Members may think it is rather unusual to suggest the raising of a special loan, but it has been done before. We raised a special loan to provide water for the goldfields; special loans were raised to establish group settlements and for soldier settlement. Although the North sent a far greater number of men to the war in proportion to population than did any other part of the State, I do not think we have had more than five soldier settlements in the whole of the North. Nearly the whole of the money for soldier settlement has been expended in the southern portion of the State. I wish it to be distinctly understood that I would much prefer that we ourselves should develop

the North, but it has to be done and it is no good waiting as we have waited during the last eight years. Every Governor's Speech I have heard read—with the exception of the latest speech in which the Premier was honest enough to say nothing about the North—has contained a pious promise that the development of the North would receive immediate attention. The member for Roebourne was fortunate enough to secure a jetty at Onslow, which should have been provided 20 years ago, but that is the only work of any magnitude done in the North for years past.

Mr. Lamond: The Federal Government did not make too good a job of the Northern Territory.

Mr. ANGELO: I am not advocating a similar administration for the North-West. The Northern Territory was governed by officials sent from Melbourne who understood nothing of local conditions. If we had a Legislative Council of say 12, six Government officials and the other six members elected by the people, it would be satisfactory.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Really a system of smaller States?

Mr. ANGELO: Exactly. The Government should be honest and acknowledge that the task of developing nearly a million square miles of country is too great for them, if such be the case. No one would blame them or consider that they were not standing up to their job. To develop the southern portion of the State is a Herculean task. The North consists of nearly one-fifth of the whole continent and should have a separate administration. If the Premier and his colleagues think they can do it, they should get on with the job straight away.

Mr. Teesdale: On last year's Estimates they said it was too big.

Mr. ANGELO: But the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition say they do not wish to surrender any portion of our territory. If that is their considered opinion, let them adopt the only alternative of raising a big sum of money in order to get on with the job without delay. The Premier may say it is difficult to obtain money. There is any amount of money offering in America.

Mr. Teesdale: We do not want any American money.

Mr. ANGELO: Why not?

Mr. Teesdale: Because it is tainted.

Mr. ANGELO : American money is at present being lent to Germany and other countries because we will not have it.

Mr. Teesdale: Pretty good places for it to go to.

Mr. ANGELO: It is being used to assist our recent enemies to build up a tremendous empire that probably will be used against us. America offers us the money. Why not take it? Does not the hon. member realise what a great thing it would have been for Australia if we had borrowed £100,000,000 from America?

Mr. Teesdale: Yes; the Americans would have owned this place now.

Mr. ANGELO: Probably they would have had a mortgage over it. If we could borrow a hundred millions of money from America, we would have a thundering good assurance against any future war.

Mr. Lambert: That is a very indecent suggestion.

Mr. ANGELO: It is correct.

Mr. Teesdale: Ask your own country for the money first of all.

Mr. ANGELO: England has placed an embargo on loans.

Mr. Teesdale: Only temporarily.

Mr. ANGELO: Surely Great Britain, with all its dominions and colonies, can use all the money it has available.

Mr. Lambert: You have very little knowledge of finance in Great Britain. A black-fellow has a better knowledge.

Mr. ANGELO: America has any amount of money to lend on good security. She is prepared to lend it to Australia. She considers our land and people good enough to lend us the money, and we can get it at a very reasonable rate of interest. It would be a big advantage to Australia if we owed America a good lump of money in future. If the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) saw a house burning, he would probably say "It is bad luck" and pass on. If he had lent a couple of hundred pounds upon it, he would rush in to save the property.

Mr. Teesdale: Not if it was insured.

Mr. Lambert: So you think the filthy lucre from America is better than British sentiment?

Mr. ANGELO: The hon. member is helping America to amass its filthy lucre; he bought an American motor car.

The Premier: There are other aspects of the question apart from a house-burning.

Have you thought of America being involved in a war and, because of her financial hold upon Australia, drawing Australia into it against her will?

Mr. Teesdale: And would not she like a shot? She would have her pound of flesh.

Mr. ANGELO: The chance of Australia with five millions of people being dragged into a war to help America with 120 million people, is not so important as getting America with her 120 million people to help us with our five millions of people.

The Premier: And Australia would make a very excellent base for America in the event of such a war.

Mr. Teesdale: Quite right.

Mr. ANGELO: But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that millions of American dollars are being lent to build up foreign countries with which we and the Americans have nothing in common.

Mr. Lambert: Then for God's sake borrow it for the Primary Producers' Bank!

Mr. ANGELO: The hon. member cannot take anything seriously.

Mr. Lambert: I cannot take you seriously.

Mr. ANGELO: We talk of America as our big brother.

Mr. Teesdale: It is a red rag.

Mr. ANGELO: Great Britain has many a time been glad of American assistance. We hear of our great ambassadors going from England to America almost every week to try to cement the relations between the two countries.

The Premier: Do you know that Britain's financial difficulties are due to the way America squeezed her when she undertook to pay her war obligations?

Mr. ANGELO: Then why not get a little of it back?

Mr. Teesdale: You never undertook a more rotten speech in your life.

The Premier: That is the cause of the Old Country's trouble at present.

Mr. Teesdale: Yes, America has bled her white.

The Premier: The Americans squeezed Great Britain and Great Britain alone, and now they are squeezing little Belgium. I should not like them to have too much of a grip upon us.

Mr. ANGELO: We have 20 millions of money in Australia that came from Amer-

ica, and the Premier has acknowledged that two millions of it came here.

Mr. Davy: Fortunately America is not our creditor; we got it through another channel.

The Premier: The Americans do not know Western Australia in that transaction.

Mr. ANGELO: Cannot some more be obtained through the same roundabout way?

The Premier: You were advocating that we should borrow direct.

Mr. ANGELO: If the Premier can get the money from Great Britain, he should do so, but we must have this money for the North. We require two or three millions to start the serious development of the North. If he cannot see his way clear to make a start in the immediate future, he should acknowledge the limitations of the State and ask the Federal Government to take over the North. The work is going to take some time. There is no use waiting until trouble starts. Several decades will be needed to develop and populate the North. The sooner we make a start in that direction, the sooner we shall have some kind of defence. It is the duty of every Premier and Prime Minister in the British Empire to assist in forging the great chain of defence that the Empire must of necessity establish. At present the North-West of this State is undoubtedly the weakest link in the chain of defence.

Mr. Lambert: And you want to throw American shackles around our necks.

Mr. Latham: You had a good holiday in America once.

Mr. Lambert: At American expense.

Mr. ANGELO: If we cannot develop the North, let us hand it over to the Commonwealth. Money is wanted for the work. It is the duty of every man in a high place in the British Empire to help to complete the chain of defence that will enable the Empire to carry on, so that the British flag will always float over the Empire on which the sun never sets.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.4]: It is a subject of congratulation that the Government are continuing the policy of development inaugurated by Sir James Mitchell, and in particular that the work of group settlement is proceeding. I am glad, too, that the contract system has been introduced into the groups. In this connection we may reasonably and properly congratulate the Minister for Lands, who has shown a keen,

earnest and practical desire to push on the work connected with group settlements. Personally I am convinced that the day is not far distant when there will be a considerable quantity of butter fat and other dairy products coming from that portion of the South-West, with the effect of helping the State materially and preventing the flow of money to the Eastern States that has continued for so many years. I was surprised to note that the Premier expects a deficit for the current financial year, a greater deficit than that for the year just closed. The estimated deficiency for this year is £98,079, whereas last year's deficiency was £58,397. The Budget anticipates a remarkable increase in receipts from land tax. I have no doubt that the amount budgeted for will be easily secured. Last year it was anticipated that a sum of £75,000 would be received, whilst the actual receipts were £113,867. This year the anticipated receipts from land tax are £150,000. Part of this sum, I understand, will be used for the construction, reconditioning, maintenance and repair of main roads.

The Premier: There might have been some idea of that last year, but "the minds of men are widened with the process of the suns."

Mr. SAMPSON: The statement made last year, I take it, holds good until it is definitely withdrawn.

The Premier: My statements of last session were merely intended to provide for the needs of that session.

Mr. SAMPSON: Now we know. I hope, however, the Premier will find it in his heart to make another statement on similar lines this session. I note that the additional revenue expected to be derived from land tax, income tax, dividend duty, totalisator duty, stamp tax, probate duty, and licenses amounts to almost £100,000—£99,061, to be exact. The anticipation indicates a belief that we are going to have a good year, and I hope the realisation will live up to the estimate. There will, of course, be additional outgoings, as is only to be expected when the country is being developed and additional services are needed. The amount of income anticipated gives added weight to the Opposition Leader's suggestion that the Premier's anticipations in regard to a deficit for the current year are hardly justified. I hope they are not justified, and I am sure the Premier hopes so too. Alto-

gether the anticipated increases of revenue for the current year amount to £451,285. In addition there is the £450,000 expected from the Federal Government. Accordingly, a good surplus may reasonably be looked for. One matter in which Western Australia is specially interested is the State Savings Bank, on which subject I have spoken before. I would draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that although the deposits for the current year have slightly increased and the operations show a small profit, there is unquestionably great opportunity for the development of the bank. We know how necessary this money is for the development of Western Australia, and I am hoping that as a means towards the end of securing that money better accommodation will be provided not only at the head office of the bank but at its branches throughout the State. In many of our provincial towns the erection of buildings for the purposes of the State Savings Bank would be well justified. The Governments of the Eastern States pay special attention to this matter, and I do not doubt that our Premier is giving consideration to it. One aspect as to which little if anything has been done, is publicity regarding our State Savings Bank. The patriotic aspect might be stressed in regard to the institution. Another institution of the kind, the Commonwealth Savings Bank, is operating in various centres of Western Australia; but I believe that if the people of this State were made to realise thoroughly that the money deposited in the State Savings Bank is used for the development of Western Australia, there would be a considerable increase of business. I noted with pleasure the growth of the savings bank funds in connection with schools. I understand that 45,354 children in our State schools have made deposits in the State Savings Bank. The idea is an excellent one, and the result will be that as the children grow up the spirit of thrift will be encouraged and later the accounts will be transferred to the regular business of the bank. Perhaps I may be permitted to refer to the Federal-State grant. The grant is doing most useful service, and I am sure that the ultimate result from it will be to increase settlement and production materially. I am particularly grateful to the Minister for his decision that the much and justly maligned Perth-Armadale road is at last to be repaired. The recondition-

ing of that road is justified in every respect. The road serves not only the residents of the districts abutting on it, but is one of the main arteries of the State. It provides access to the districts en route to Bunbury and beyond and also to Albany and the districts that extend in a westerly direction from the latter port. Dealing with agriculture, I gather that an additional inspector and also an agricultural adviser have been engaged by the Agricultural Department. As a result of the Fruit Diseases Act, the menace that fruitgrowers have been faced with regarding the fruit fly and other difficulties may be overcome. Great progress has been made in the Spearwood district because of the community spraying that has been maintained there. The same procedure could be adopted with advantage in other fruitgrowing districts. An increased expenditure of £11,766 is provided for in the Estimates and in view of the development that is proceeding, I am sure no one will question the wisdom of that provision. I regret, however, that I can see nothing on the Estimates to indicate that a cool chamber is to be constructed on Victoria Quay at Fremantle. A request for the establishment of those facilities has been before the Government for a long time. To the exporters of fruit, this is a matter of first class importance. While no item appears on the Estimates, I hope that the Minister will be able to arrange for some provision being made on the Loan Estimates. The importance that the producing community attach to the question of marketing has been acknowledged by the Minister, and we are indebted to him in that a Bill to control the marketing of primary products has been introduced. The movement in favour of the control of markets is world-wide. In this morning's "West Australian" appeared a report regarding a request made by the fruitgrowers of Victoria for a Bill to control the marketing of their produce. Already there is an Act in Victoria and South Australia to control the dried fruits industry and in New Zealand there is legislation controlling dairying. In South Africa consideration is being given to the enactment of legislation of this type. In Western Australia there is unquestionably need for such legislation. It is my earnest hope that the Bill which is now before the Upper House will be passed. The fact that the area under fruit trees is steadily decreasing should furnish evidence in justifi-

cation for the passing of the measure. Some reference was made in the Legislative Council to the operations of the committee of direction in Queensland and it was suggested that my visit to that State was limited to an interview with Mr. McGregor, of the Council of Agriculture. As a matter of fact, my visit included inspections of Stanthorpe, Applethorpe, Redland, Montville, Palmwoods, Nambour, Maroochydore, and Beenleigh. These are fruit growing areas and in each centre I discussed the position with growers. I am pleased to note the progress made in connection with the Hospital for the Insane, but I regret that provision has not yet been made for the erection of a reception house and convalescent home at Point Heathcote. I am hopeful that before the present session closes the Premier may be able to inform the House when these necessary works will be commenced. It is by no means essential that the buildings shall be elaborate. If a homely building is erected, more on the lines of the mental reception home at Enfield in South Australia, all that is necessary will have been done. Under the present conditions whereby those under observation are held in a ward at the Perth Hospital, the position is not at all satisfactory. The accommodation is utterly inadequate to say the least of it. I believe that when these facilities are provided there will be a reduction in the number of those who, on account of their mental ailments, are compelled to take up their residence in Claremont. The work of the After Care Society in connection with the Hospital for Insane is one deserving of the thanks of the community as is also that of the Ugly Men's Association. The Board of Visitors continue to do good work, associated with which is Mrs. Casson, secretary of the After Care Society, and others working in connection with these bodies. It is interesting to note that apart from South Australia, Western Australia has, on the basis of population, fewer cases of insanity than any other State of the Commonwealth. Western Australia is the most favourably situated regarding admissions. In this State the admissions represent one to every 3,436 people, whereas in South Australia they are one to every 2,143; in New South Wales, one to every 1,577; and in Queensland, one to every 1,644. Thus, the position of Western Australia is best of all. A tribute should be paid to the work of the Salvation Army, which organ-

isation has established inebriates' homes at Claremont and at Lincoln-street. In the opinion of experts those committed to the homes because of drunkenness should be sent there for a longer period than is customary at present. I understand that the period of detention is usually three weeks, and from the standpoint of reforming the individual, that period is practically useless. If assistance is to be gained from this work the period of detention ordered should be much longer. It is interesting to note the occupations of the patients who have been received into the Hospital for the Insane. A perusal of the returns shows that tradesmen are not so prone to mental troubles as are unskilled workers. I take it that the reason for that is that the unskilled workers are faced with greater anxiety in respect to obtaining and retaining employment than are those who, by virtue of their trade, are in a position of comparative independence. A tradesman has very little difficulty in obtaining work. The statistics provided by the Inspector General for the Insane seem to bear out that point. Where tradesmen have been committed to the care of the institution, not more than one in any particular trade is being looked after. Regarding the Department of the Chief Secretary, I notice that £23,620 is provided on the Estimates in connection with the Gaols Department. Here, again, I regret that no progress has been made regarding prison reform. Throughout Australia and in most countries of the world, a great advance has been made in that respect. I was hopeful that the Government might decide that a prison farm was desirable, or at least that some work for prisoners might be provided. Afforestation, quarrying and road making are three of the most popular forms of work in which prisoners are engaged in the Eastern States, and more particularly in New Zealand. I have noted with pleasure the keen interest shown by the Honorary Minister in charge of our hospitals and have also noted the work done by the chairmen of the Perth Hospital and of the Children's Hospital respectively. There is great scope for work and I am sure that the interests of the institutions I have referred to are safe in the hands of those gentlemen. The work entails heavy responsibility and there is great need for money. The sanatorium at Wooroloo comes under this department. The work of the chief resident medical officer and his assistant, as well as that of the matron and of the

staff, are keenly appreciated by the patients. It is regrettable that the sanatorium has not proved its usefulness to the extent hoped for when it was established; but concerning the services of those in charge, there can be no question. I listened with interest to the remarks of the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) in respect of the development of the North-West. With him and others I look forward to the time when a definite step will be taken for the development of that great area. It is a part of the State concerning which I know very little beyond the information I have had from northern members. I hope it will be possible in the near future for the Government to arrange for a visit to be paid by members to some portions of the North-West. I recall the visit to the South-West in 1921. Although I had been down there on many previous occasions, yet that carefully organised tour of inspection was most educational and helped one to appreciate not only the difficulties of settlement in the South-West, but also its great possibilities. A visit to the North-West would be very helpful to those who desire to know something more about that part of the State.

Vote put and passed.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

Vote—Tourist and Publicity Bureau, £1,594:

Votes—Legislative Assembly, £2,216; Joint House Committee, £5,127; Joint Printing Committee, £4,211; Joint Library Committee, £375; Premier's Department, £12,809; Governor's Establishment, £2,314; Executive Council, £5; London Agency, £12,227; Public Service Commissioner, £1,400; Government Motor Car Service, £5,068; Printing, £62,970—agreed to.

Mr. SAMPSON: The State owes a good deal to this bureau, which during the past three or four years has shown greatly increased activities. Mr. Hayward is a remarkably energetic man, full of initiative, and so I should imagine this bureau is more prosperous than ever before. At one time it was difficult even to learn where it was situated; to-day if one desires to plan a tour it is only necessary to go to the bureau to get the fullest information. I notice there is on the Estimates of the department an increase of £78. In my view, because of

the numbers of people who still leave this State to go East for a holiday, a far greater increase in the Estimates would have been justified. Too many of our people forget the delights of the South-West, the beauties of our caves, the comfort of the Caves House and the enjoyable motor drives through the jarrah and karri country to Augusta. I wish to congratulate the department. I have no criticism to offer except that I think the increase of £78 is a little inadequate.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Literary and Scientific Grants, etc., £9,450:

Item, Law Library, £100:

Mr. DAVY: Although the general impression is that the Law Library appearing here is a lawyers' library, it is nothing of the sort. It is a library that has to be kept as part of the Supreme Court machinery. It is used by the judges of the High Court, by various magistrates and of course by the officers of the Crown Law Department. The grant of £100 is entirely inadequate; it does not pay half the salary of the librarian. Some time ago the legal profession put up a suggestion to the Premier that this vote might be supplemented and a proper library maintained. For this library as it stands is one of the worst law libraries in Australasia and is seriously out of date. The proposition made by the profession was that if the Premier were able to provide £700 or £800 per annum, the profession would find the balance necessary in the first place to establish a chair of law at the University, and in the second place to bring this library up to date. I should like to hear from the Premier whether he sees any possibility of finding £700 or £800 next year. It would enable a chair of law to be established at the University, which would make it possible for any young man of brains and character to become a member of the legal profession and would at the same time convert the law library into something to be proud of.

The PREMIER: This item of £100 has been provided annually for many years past. I do not know where the library is situated other than that it is in the Supreme Court building, and as to the quality of the library, I have no knowledge of it. The proposal referred to by the hon. member was that the legal profession should

assist in the establishment of a chair of law at the University. They were to find £400 or £500 per annum.

Mr. Davy: As a minimum.

The PREMIER: Yes, if the Government would find the balance, amounting to £700 or £800 per annum. The governing authorities of the University also approached me during the past month or two, with a request for the provision of funds to establish the chair of law. I have not been able to meet their wishes in this respect. The amount the University requires each year for the carrying out of its ordinary functions is increasing by approximately £1,500 per annum. I was not able to find any greater amount for this year. I am hopeful, however, of being able perhaps to do something in the direction indicated by the hon. member next year. It would be of considerable advantage to many of our young people if they were able to study law at the University and at the same time follow up some more ordinary avocation instead of, as at present, having to go into a solicitor's office without any reward or salary for a year or two. If we had the facilities provided at our own University it would enable many of our bright young people to qualify for the law, which is denied to them to-day. It is the old story of the State expanding in many directions and having insufficient funds to meet the requests that pour in from day to day on the Treasurer. Frequently one is faced with the serious problem of deciding what should be cut out and what should be provided for. Members in the exercise of their rights will not hesitate to criticise the Treasury if the deficit should be too large, and even if the deficit should disappear, there will be requests for the reduction of taxation and of charges for services rendered. Consequently the desire for the establishment of new activities involving additional expenditure must create some difficulty. However, I shall not lose sight of the matter, and I hope next year to be able to do something in the direction desired.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Treasury, £18,367—agreed to.

Vote—Audit, £12,797:

Mr. LATHAM: When may we expect to receive the Auditor General's report? I have repeatedly heard the present Premier say that the Auditor General's report should

be in the hands of members before the Estimates were considered.

The PREMIER: I have no idea when the report will be available. I have no more control over the Auditor General, or the preparation or presentation of his report, than has any member of this House or the man in the street.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is only proper that it should be so.

The PREMIER: Of course.

Mr. Latham: Still, it should be here if it is to be of any use to us.

The PREMIER: It is entirely proper that the Auditor General should be free from any influence on the part of the Government.

Hon. G. Taylor: He is the only officer that Parliament has.

The PREMIER: That is so.

Mr. Latham: His report should be presented before the Estimates are considered.

The PREMIER: Perhaps I may be able to convey the hon. member's views to the Auditor General. I shall ascertain to-morrow when the report is likely to be available.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Compassionate allowances, etc., £1,789—agreed to.

Vote—Government Savings Bank, £35,911:

Mr. THOMSON: There is an apparent decrease of £19,000 in the revenue expected from the Government Savings Bank. I should like the Premier to explain the reason. I voice a strong objection to passing the Estimates without having had an opportunity to consider the Auditor General's report. I am not blaming the Treasurer; it is his job to rush the Estimates through.

The Premier: I have nothing to do with the Auditor General's report.

Mr. THOMSON: I am aware of that, but the financial year closed nearly four months ago and the report should be available.

Hon. G. Taylor: We rarely get it any earlier.

Mr. THOMSON: The Premier is fortunate in getting his Estimates through to this stage so quickly.

Mr. LAMBERT: In the Eastern States one is forcibly impressed with the activity shown by the State Savings Banks. The branches of our Savings Bank are obscured or poked away in corners that are hardly

accessible and the existence of which the public are hardly aware.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is on account of the Commonwealth Bank stepping in.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is true, but it has not prevented Victoria from adopting a most vigorous policy to develop its bank. Some of the most beautiful buildings in Melbourne and in the country districts of Victoria are those occupied by the State Savings Bank. It is regrettable that the Commonwealth Bank should have entered the savings bank business. The cheapest money a country can get is the savings of its own people, and we in Western Australia have not exploited those resources to the extent we should have done. All the employees of the Government should be agents of the State trying to bring business to the Government Savings Bank. I do not know that anything can be done to curb the idea of the Commonwealth to make its bank a national bank. Some people rave about nationalisation, but the greatest possible challenge to freedom is the desire of the Commonwealth to nationalise banking. This will probably prove to be the greatest curse of all nationalisation.

Mr. Davy: The Commonwealth is not attempting to nationalise banking.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is, to the exclusion of States that enjoy self-governing powers.

Mr. Davy: You do not call their running one bank nationalising banking.

Mr. Lindsay: Your party agreed to the Commonwealth Bank.

Mr. LAMBERT: I say the greatest possible menace would be the nationalisation of banking.

Mr. Lindsay: Or any other nationalisation.

Mr. LAMBERT: When the hon. member is even superficially informed of other nationalisation, I shall discuss it with him. The constant encroachment of the Commonwealth upon the avenues of State finances may even extend to the rights we enjoy to-day.

Mr. Davy: Do you say that the starting of one bank amounts to the nationalising of banking?

Mr. Munsie: The Commonwealth Government have denationalised the bank.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not desire to proceed further with that aspect.

Mr. Latham: I should think not after your colleague has let you down.

Mr. LAMBERT: There is not sufficient activity displayed by the Government Savings Bank. The head office is a miserable little hovel in Hay-street, whereas in Victoria and New South Wales the offices of the State Savings Banks are almost palatial buildings. The Premier should endeavour to develop an active policy for the one branch of banking left to us. I hope he will give us an assurance that he does not intend to stand by and drift out of the business of banking. There is no driving force to hold for the State the small amount of saving bank business that we have at present. The member for Gascoyne suggested earlier in the evening that we should borrow some millions of pounds from a foreign country. It is better to promote thrift in our own country and then take charge of the money and lend it out. A vigorous policy should be pursued instead of a policy of gradually dying, and it is this latter policy that is apparent in our State Savings Bank.

Mr. LATHAM: I endorse a good deal of what the previous speaker has said. I want to see the State making use of the people's money. Will the Treasurer consider the transference of the Bruce Rock branch to the new Agricultural Bank Buildings?

The PREMIER: I have already taken that matter up, though it is not yet decided. The Minister for Lands brought it under my notice after his recent visit to Bruce Rock.

Mr. LATHAM: The farmers are prepared to deposit their money with the Government.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am anxious to see our State Savings Bank get in step with similar institutions in the Eastern States. We seem to be allowing the business to go to the Commonwealth without effective opposition. A lot of cheap money is available to the Government through the State Savings Bank.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I realise that the Commonwealth Savings Bank have taken away a lot of the business of our State Savings Bank. We knew that would happen when the Commonwealth Savings Bank began operations here, because our people have been accustomed to deposit at the post office throughout the State, the post offices being the State Savings Bank branches. Naturally, the Commonwealth immediately substituted their savings bank for ours. Past Governments and the present Government have done the best they could, but the

are up against a stiff proposition in competing with the Federal Government, who control the post offices. If our people desired to help the State rather than the Commonwealth, surely it would not be much trouble to them to walk another block or so to the State institution. Can any member suggest to the Government how the State Savings Bank can be popularised? Apparently our people are more anxious to do business with the Commonwealth than with the State in this respect.

Mr. CHESSON: The falling-off in the deposits in the State Savings Bank is largely our own fault. It is really due to the agents the State institution employs. It is not likely that people owing money to the store-keeper who acts as agent for the State Savings Bank will go to him to bank money; they will go to the post office every time. Another ground of objection is the fact that the chartered banks are frequently employed as agents for the State Savings Bank.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Has the question of amalgamation of the Federal and State Savings Banks come up for consideration? When Mr. Fisher was Prime Minister he made the State Governments a proposal under which the two banks would be amalgamated and about 80 per cent. of all the money in the savings bank at the time of amalgamation was to be retained by the State, and, further, about 80 per cent. of increase in deposits was to be placed at the disposal of the State Government at one-half per cent. above the rate of interest paid by the Commonwealth Savings Bank. If such an arrangement had been entered into, the Western Australian Government would have had the use of a good deal more savings bank money than they have to-day, and would have been protected in the event of large loans, such as war loans, which mean heavy withdrawals from the savings banks. Are the Treasury officials in a position to advise the Government whether it would not be better from the State point of view—the only point of view with which I am concerned—if there were an amalgamation of savings banks on the terms mentioned? I believe such an offer has been accepted in both Queensland and Tasmania. I am not forgetful of the sentimental desire to retain the State Savings Bank under the control of the Western Australian Government.

The PREMIER: In reply to the question raised by the Opposition Leader regarding the difference in profits, 1924 was

an abnormal year with its profit of £31,000. No previous year had yielded more than £25,000. Investment receipts last year were £15,280 lower than for the previous year. This was caused by the redemption of State debentures of £150,000, the interest on which was 5 per cent. The redemption was for the purpose of meeting cash requirements. There was also the repayment of a deposit of £175,000 with the Western Australian Bank, which was earning $5\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. That being repaid, the interest on it was lost. Further, there were holdings of cash in anticipation of withdrawals of money to be placed in Australian loans. The experience of the savings bank authorities is that whenever Australian loans are placed on the market, there are considerable withdrawals for investment in such loans. Accordingly cash was held to meet possible withdrawals, and the bank lost the interest which would otherwise have accrued from that source. So the difference between the two sets of figures is accounted for. As regards the position of the State Savings Bank, I do not think it is quite fair to compare Western Australia with, say, Victoria or New South Wales. It may be that the savings banks of those States have finer buildings, have palatial offices; but Perth is a very small city in comparison with Melbourne or Sydney. Moreover, the State Savings Bank has great difficulty in securing agents. In Victoria and New South Wales populous country towns where it is payable to rent a building or put up a building in a prominent position are far more numerous than here. So the Victorian and New South Wales institutions enjoy greater publicity than would prove payable in our comparatively small country centres.

Mr. Lambert: What about the head office in Perth?

The PREMIER: That is one of the difficulties under which we labour with regard to the housing of our Government departments. They are sprawling all over the city.

Mr. Sampson: But the bank is the awful example.

The PREMIER: It is going to cost money to provide a new building. Some improvements, however, are in course of being carried out at the head office. In the smaller country centres where there are no Government offices, the State Savings Bank management are forced to accept private traders as agents. In most cases there is no choice, as only one person can be found willing to

accept the position of State Savings Bank agent. The result is that the competition between the State and the Commonwealth Savings Banks has become entirely unequal. The post office is the centre in the little country towns. People naturally go to the post office; they have business to do there. And even if they have no business to do there, they prefer to do banking business which is so essentially of a private nature, with a Government official rather than a private business man. To be quite frank, I fear that the competition between the two banks is going to be even more unequal in future.

Mr. Sampson: Do you think our people appreciate the importance of dealing with their own State bank?

The PREMIER: They ought to do so. I do not know that we should enter into a great publicity campaign in order to induce them to do business with their own savings bank.

Mr. Sampson: That has been done in the Eastern States.

The PREMIER: Yes, I know; but whether we would get a return commensurate with the outlay required is a point on which I am doubtful. What the member for Mt. Margaret says is undoubtedly the fact: the people of this State seem to prefer the Commonwealth Bank. One reason is facility and convenience. Our people were always used to do their banking at a post office in the days before the Commonwealth entered into the savings bank business.

Mr. Davy: It was called the Post Office Savings Bank.

The PREMIER: That is so. The people have continued on those lines. In Victoria there are the two institutions competing in the savings bank business with a population of one and a quarter millions. Naturally both the State Savings Bank and the Commonwealth Savings Bank get a considerable volume of business. In Western Australia, however, with a population of only 360,000, we have the same amount of competition between the two institutions. Therein is the difference.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: In the Eastern States the savings banks lend a lot of money to the people for building homes and so on.

The PREMIER: I know that the position is not at all satisfactory. The increase in the deposits in the Common-

wealth Savings Bank exceeds our own by a considerable amount.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is the worst feature.

The PREMIER: The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) raised the question of amalgamation. That matter has again cropped up recently. It will be within the knowledge of members that an agreement was practically completed between the previous Government and the Commonwealth authorities for an amalgamation. It was not proceeded with so far as Parliament was concerned and the matter dropped until it was revived recently.

Mr. Thomson: Why did the Government not go on with it? It seemed to me to be an advantageous offer.

The PREMIER: It may be that one newspaper which came out with big flaring headlines regarding what they termed a betrayal of the people, had something to do with it. I do not know whether that was why the amalgamation proposal was dropped.

Mr. Stubbs: Do you favour the amalgamation of the State and Commonwealth Savings Bank businesses?

The PREMIER: At this stage I am not prepared to commit myself. The matter is under discussion and a decision will probably have to be given upon it within the next few weeks. I think I am safe in saying that if the old agreement had been proceeded with, the State would have obtained, and would be likely to obtain in the future, much more money than it is receiving under the present separate arrangement. It was then proposed that the State should be handed over 70 per cent. of any increased deposits. That would have amounted to more than we have at our disposal under the existing arrangement.

Mr. Sampson: Was that proposed agreement for a definite period?

The PREMIER: Yes, I think it was for a great many years. I do not think the savings bank question is one we should view altogether from a parochial standpoint. I am as keen as anyone else to resent encroachments upon State domains by the Federal Government, but at the same time, I do not know that we may not carry that policy too far. There may be some directions in which it would be of advantage to Western Australia to

effect amalgamations. There is no doubt that the Commonwealth Bank is here to stay and its business will be an ever increasing one, while its activities will probably be extended to other towns in various parts of the State in the near future.

Hon. G. Taylor: I do not think anyone anticipated that the Commonwealth Bank would embark upon the Savings Bank business.

The PREMIER: No, but having embarked upon it, they will not leave it. I think it was very wrong for the Commonwealth to have started in that sphere.

Mr. Thomson: It was an absolute invasion of the State's rights.

The PREMIER: That is so, but having commenced the business, it will extend, because of the position I have referred to including the unfair competition with our own institution, the post offices and so on.

Mr. Stubbs: If an amalgamation be effected, what will become of the officers of the State Savings Bank?

The PREMIER: I presume provision will have to be made for the officers to be taken over as was done with the Taxation Department. We will have to provide against the possibility of the Commonwealth, after an experience extending over a few years, withdrawing from any agreement that we may make with them. As a matter of fact, the State made a bad bargain in connection with the amalgamation of the State and Federal Taxation Departments. This mistake was that we did not provide for the agreement continuing over a sufficient number of years. To-day the Commonwealth Government are demanding a much greater sum from us on account of the work of collecting our taxation, otherwise they say, we can take back our own department and collect our own taxation. That was an oversight on the part of Parliament and in any amalgamations effected in the future, we must see that the agreement will cover a period of years, making provision, however, for termination or alteration by mutual consent. Under the present agreement regarding the Taxation Department the Commonwealth can withdraw from the arrangement and can dictate its own terms as to what we shall pay, failing which the Commonwealth can tell us to re-establish our own department.

Mr. Stubbs: Then it was a rotten arrangement.

The PREMIER: If I remember aright, the proposal in the agreement regarding the amalgamation of the savings bank was for a period of 50 years. However, that question will receive the consideration of the Government at an early date. I realise we are up against strong competition and probably, under some amalgamation arrangement, we shall receive considerably more money than under the existing conditions.

Hon. G. Taylor: There are ample facilities for our people to bank with the State institution if they desire to do so.

The PREMIER: I think so. We endeavour to establish agencies in every small district but there is great difficulty in doing it. Sometimes we have a bank and sometimes we have the local storekeeper.

Mr. Heron: People do not like banking with their storekeeper, to whom they may owe money.

The PREMIER: That is one difficulty.

Mr. Stubbs: The present head office in the city is an uninviting one.

Mr. THOMSON: I am pleased that we have received this explanation from the Premier. The position regarding the State Savings Bank is rather to be regretted and we shall have to give that matter serious consideration. I would draw the Premier's attention to the state of the bank premises at Katanning. The building was erected to accommodate perhaps three or four men. If the premises were under the supervision of an inspector under the Factories Act I am afraid there would be a prosecution. In my opinion it would be wise to erect new buildings for the savings bank and a new courthouse. The Agricultural Bank could be transferred to the old courthouse and the present buildings could be utilised for what they were originally intended. I trust the Premier will make some inquiries regarding the position at Katanning. The Premier stated that he proposed to make a certain amount of money available for workers' homes, but if we were to adopt the system in operation in the Eastern States whereby those desirous of providing homes for themselves could get accommodation from the State Savings Bank, it would prove a profitable investment for us. As the member for Mt. Leonora remarked, the system of banking with the storekeeper in country towns is unsatisfactory for the reasons that have been given. As to the amalgamation pro-

posals, whatever arrangements are made must receive serious consideration. When this question was mooted some years ago, when Sir James Mitchell was Premier, I was privileged to see the conditions and they seemed reasonable enough. I regret that the amalgamation was not decided upon.

Mr. MARSHALL: While I agree with the Premier regarding the facilities in outback centres for the State Savings Bank business, there are some anomalies. I do not boast of inside knowledge regarding the activities of the State Savings Bank, but difficulties arise regarding withdrawals. If a man has a banking account in Geraldton and desires to withdraw the money at some other centre he has to wait until such time as Perth communicates with Geraldton and the money is transferred. I had an experience of that sort two days ago. I was notified that I would have to wait until next Monday before I could get the money. In the Commonwealth Bank there is a system under which they have the signature of the depositor, and once he is identified, he can draw any amount that he desires. He cannot do that with the State Bank.

Mr. Sampson: Can that be done in small branches of the Commonwealth bank?

Mr. MARSHALL: I think so. It is only under the State system that I have found I could not draw up to the limit of my account.

Mr. Thomson: A limit is set at small post offices.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, a limit of £10 on demand. But even at the head office of the State Savings Bank one cannot close his account until the officials have communicated with the branch office where the account was opened. These delays must have a prejudicial effect on the bank's business. As for the point raised by the member for Cue (Mr. Chesson), I know that people do not like having to transact their private banking business with the local storekeeper.

Mr. SAMPSON: One other matter: I have been informed that clients of the Commonwealth Savings Bank in this State are able to operate on their accounts in other States when visiting those States. I believe also there is now an arrangement under which our State Savings Bank reciprocates with similar banks in other States.

Vote put and passed.

Note—Government Stores £16,495—agreed to.

Vote—Taxation, £14,031:

Mr. THOMSON: I should like to know whether the Premier will take into consideration the bringing down of a Bill to amend taxation in respect of rabbit-proof fencing, and so bring our Act into uniformity with the Federal Act.

The CHAIRMAN: We cannot discuss legislation on the Estimates.

Mr. THOMSON: No, but perhaps the Premier will indicate his attitude.

The Premier: I do not think we can have any amendment of the taxation Acts this year.

Mr. THOMSON: I understood from the Premier's Budget Speech that the amount paid to the Commonwealth for the collection of taxes was likely to be increased.

The Premier: Even now it is the subject of communication between our Government and the Commonwealth.

Vote put and passed.

[Mr. Panton took the Chair.]

Vote—Workers' Homes Board, £12,843:

Mr. STUBBS: Quite recently several applications for workers' homes in country districts have been turned down on the score of no funds, and quite a number of other applications have been received that will not be dealt with for some months to come. Is it not possible for the Premier to advance more money for the Workers' Homes Board? The Act was introduced by a Labour Government many years ago. It has worked well and given entire satisfaction, and I should like to see its operations extended. That is why I ask the Premier whether there is any possibility of increasing the grant to enable all genuine applications to be met.

Mr. HUGHES: I understand that the approved schedule of applications will be exhausted somewhere about Christmas time, and that the board have a number of communications from people who have not put in definite applications. I should like to know from the Premier whether, when the present approved schedule is exhausted, public notice will be given so that any person who wants to make application can do so, or whether the board will then go on to exhaust the list of communications that have been received. When the schedule is exhausted the fairest way to deal with applicants will be to give public notice, so

that all desirous of obtaining advances from the board shall be on the same footing. Some land is owned by the board on the hill at East Perth overlooking the river, one of the finest residential sites in Perth. That land is lying idle. It would provide space for only six or eight homes, and it is a pity the money cannot be found to erect those half-dozen houses. It would be a sound business proposition, for the land is earning nothing at present, whereas as soon as the homes are erected, they will be returning rent.

The PREMIER: I said in the course of the Budget statement that the Workers' Homes Board would have available this year £49,000 for new homes.

Mr. Stubbs: That will not go far. There are about 100 applications in already.

The PREMIER: It will not go far, but that is a larger amount than has been available for some years. This is money that will come to the board by way of repayments. I shall not be in a position to say whether any new money will be made available until I make up the Loan Estimates. There has not been any new money utilised for this purpose for many years, not since 1915, I think. Altogether £525,500 has been expended and it has been a splendid investment. It has not cost the State anything, and the values are much greater to-day because both land and buildings have increased in value. The reason no new capital has been made available is because of the financial stringency and because the rate of interest has increased. It was felt that if money was borrowed at a high rate of interest, the weekly payments would be beyond the financial resources of the workers. I was hoping to be able to resume building with new money as soon as the interest rate came down. The position of the money market at the moment is not bright, not so bright as it was a few weeks ago. The terms suggested for loans in London to-day are not so good as could have been obtained a few weeks ago. It is my desire to have homes erected. The board have extended their activities to country districts in the last few years, and it is their intention to continue that policy. There is need for workers' homes in the country districts as well as in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Stubbs: If you provide workers' homes in the country, it will prevent a lot of people from drifting back to the city.

The PREMIER: It is a question of how much money we can set aside for this purpose, having regard to the commitments in other directions. I shall endeavour to find some money when the Loan Estimates are prepared.

Mr. SAMPSON: Will special consideration be given to country applications? The difficulty of securing a home in the country is considerably greater than in the city. To finance a home in the country is difficult, whereas it is comparatively easy in the city.

The Premier: Much has been done in the country districts in the last few years, compared with what was done previously.

Mr. SAMPSON: But work has been stopped during the last few months.

The Premier: No, it has not, because I have approved of two homes this week.

Mr. TEESDALE: Is there any regulation against erecting workers' homes in the North-West? On several occasions I have endeavoured to arrive at the office door when there was a little credit balance, but I have always been quite out of it. I am given to understand that there is a mileage limitation at which these homes are erected, and I should like to know whether that is so. It seems to be understood that there is to be no building in the North-West of soldier homes or workers' homes. The Premier will recognise that if there is a place where homes are requisite at a reasonable figure, it is in the North, where it is difficult for workers to erect homes on account of the high cost of material and heavy freight. I should like to know whether I am up against a brick wall or whether there is a chance of getting a couple of workers' homes for the North-West, if only for the novelty of looking at them. We have none there at present.

The PREMIER: The North-West is no worse off in this respect than are the goldfields. The board have not embarked on the erection of workers' homes at Kalgoorlie, Boulder or in the North-West. It is probably considered that the security is not as good as it might be owing to the uncertainty of the goldfields, and perhaps it is considered there is some uncertainty about the North-West as well. These little towns rise and fall, and if a building were erected at a cost of £400 or £500, it might not be of much value in a few years on account

of depression of trade. It has been the policy of the board to confine themselves to reliable securities such as I assume the ordinary banking institutions would take. I know this was a source of complaint during the first years following the passing of the Act, so I suppose I shall have to give the member for Roebourne the doleful reply that the North-West will not have workers' homes.

Mr. ANGELO: I am surprised at the Premier comparing the security of an established port in the North-West with that of a goldfields town depending entirely upon an industry that in time must disappear.

The Premier: I did not compare the two; I said possibly the board regarded it in that light.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Workers' homes in the North might be blown away by a willy-willy, or eaten by white ants, and there would be no security at all.

Mr. ANGELO: I have not known a house at Carnarvon to be blown away. The board are quite ready to build homes at Carnarvon; in fact they had special plans prepared suitable for semi-tropical country. Unfortunately, however, when applications were made—about 23 altogether—it was found that the board had spent all their money. As to security, the Associated Banks lend money to businesses at Carnarvon without any difficulty. The purpose of the Workers' Homes Board is to afford assistance to workers who cannot afford to go to the Associated Banks. It is within my knowledge that at least a dozen estimable workers have had to leave Carnarvon with their families because they could not get homes. Their retention at Carnarvon would have assisted to populate the North. While advantages obtaining in the South are not extended to the North it is not possible to have that population there which I feel sure the Premier earnestly desires.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Miscellaneous services, £89,340:

Item, Parks, Recreation Grounds. etc., £2,700:

Mr. THOMSON: Is the amount of £300 for "other grounds" allocated to some special account?

The PREMIER: The distribution of the money is set out in the public accounts.

The King's Park receives £2,400, the Point Walter Reserve £100, the Bayswater Road Board £50, the Mundaring Weir Road Board £50, and so on. The distribution is on similar lines to that of previous years. When I first came to this House, the amount was much larger and the practice was to give grants to parks throughout the State. For reasons of finance the grants were gradually reduced to a minimum. The goldfields towns keenly feel the need of assistance because of the long dry summer, but for years past no money has been found for them.

Item, Refunds of Revenue not otherwise provided for, £20,000:

Mr. THOMSON: What is the explanation of this item, and what is the explanation of the item appearing next, £7,000 for commission on interest paid, etc.?

The PREMIER: "Refunds of revenue not otherwise provided for" mainly represent refunds from the Taxation Department. Members know that the department assess a man with an amount of tax, and that whether he objects or appeals he has to pay the amount of the assessment. Afterwards it may be found that he is being compelled to pay too much, and then a refund has to be made. That is what this item is for. The other item is for the work of keeping the accounts of our loans in London. The Westminster Bank receive a small commission.

Item, Interest and Exchange, £28,500:

Mr. THOMSON: What is the explanation of this item?

The PREMIER: It represents interest on bank overdrafts in the Eastern States and in London, and also exchange on remittances between the various States, and so forth. It is not expected that interest on overdrafts will be so great this year as last year, by reason of flotations. Our overdrafts will not be so high because we hope to float loans.

Items, Expenses of Deportation of Robert Fletcher £37, Expenses of Deportation of J. Antuloo, a Jugo-Slav, £25:

Mr. LATHAM: Were these two men group settlers?

The PREMIER: Yes. I gave instructions to substitute "repatriation" for "deportation." They were returned for health reasons. In some cases it is cheaper to

pay fares back to the Old World than to keep people on our Charities Department, possibly for years.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 29th October, 1925.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. J. R. Brown, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to the Hon. T. Moore (Central) on the ground of urgent private business.

MOTION—RAILWAY DINING CARS.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.35]: I move—

That the present system of leasing the dining cars on the railways, especially on the Goldfields line, is detrimental to the best interests of the State, and should be immediately altered or revised.

I submit this motion to the House because of a number of complaints and adverse comments that have been made for some time past as to the meals and fruit obtainable on the Goldfields trains. As members know, the Goldfields service carries quite a number of visitors to this State, and it seems to me that we should equip the train as well as possible with the products of the

State. We had an instance only the other day of one of the delegates to the Imperial Press Congress who, when coming down by the train, remarked facetiously, "I thought this was a good fruitgrowing country." I said, "It is a good fruitgrowing country." He replied, "I suppose you export all that is of any value and you yourselves eat the windfalls." He was referring to the quality of fruit placed on the table of the dining car. Members who use that and other railway services know well the miserable fruit provided in a country that ought to advertise by every possible means its capacity to grow excellent fruit. I have tabled the motion to direct attention to the matter in the hope that this state of affairs may be remedied. The Chief Secretary, in reply to a question I put the other day, informed me that the Railway Department received £100 per annum from the lessee for the right of conducting the refreshment car from Kalgoorlie to Southern Cross. That £100 has to come out of something, and it comes out of the food, thus giving the State a bad advertisement while proving of very little benefit to the Railway Department. On the whole service, according to the reply of the Chief Secretary, the Government receive £1,250 10s. per annum. All that money has to be made out of the food and fruit partaken of in the dining and buffet cars, and the revenue benefits the department very little as compared with the bad advertisement it gives to the State. The Commissioner of Railways should endeavour to improve the service.

Hon. A. Burvill: Then you believe in State trading!

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I have moved the motion merely in order to direct attention to the matter.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.38] I could have wished that Mr. Lovekin had included in the motion that all papers relating to the leasing of railway dining cars and refreshment rooms to the present contractor be laid upon the Table. I hope the Minister will table the papers. There are rumours abroad that are anything but savoury regarding the way in which the present contractor secured his contract. I am given to understand on reliable authority that better offers were made by other tenderers. It is well known that the contract