

stantiate. The Premier loves me too much for me to do that. I have done my duty in directing attention to the seriousness of the position—the absolute lack of harmony and co-ordination.

Mr. Teesdale: Was that man promised assistance when he bought the land?

Mr. A. THOMSON: He was guided by the pamphlets.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The pamphlet that stated such men were to receive the same preference as was granted to soldiers was withdrawn in 1920.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But that does not excuse the delay of 10 months in replying to the letters sent to the department. Any man taking up land is justified in assuming from the literature distributed that he will get assistance from the Agricultural Bank. If it is not intended to grant advances, the Lands Department should be able to notify applicants when they inquire for land.

The Premier: Where do you say we are spending the money?

Mr. A. THOMSON: In the group settlements. The Government have brought these men out. They have no money, and the Government are paying them 10s. a day sustenance. They are also teaching them how to work. Many of them have never seen an axe. Notwithstanding this the Premier makes that inane interjection. I have done my duty in drawing the attention of the Government and the House to the deplorable state of affairs connected with our land settlement policy and our group settlements, caused by the various departments not working in harmony with each other but working against each other. Large departments are being built up, and employment is being found for a number of civil servants. All this is detrimental to the interests of land settlement, and I trust the present position will no longer be allowed to continue.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 18th September, 1923.*

	PAGE
Question: Income tax collection ... ..	731
Assent to Bill ... ..	731
Bills: Amendments Incorporation, 1b. ... ..	731
Inspection of Scaffolding, Com. ... ..	731
Redistribution of Seats, 2a. ... ..	736
Annual Estimates: Vote discussed, Lands and Surveys ... ..	743

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

### QUESTION—INCOME TAX COLLECTION.

Mr. HUGHES asked the Premier: Of the £390,003 collected during the year ended 30th June, 1923, on account of income tax, how much belongs to that financial year?

The PREMIER replied: The amount of £390,003 consists of: Arrears from previous years, £103,849; on account of 1922-23, £286,154; total, £390,003. An amount of £121,966 was outstanding on 30th June, 1923.

### ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to Supply Bill (No. 1) £1,790,600.

### BILL—AMENDMENTS INCORPORATION.

Received from the Council, and read a first time.

### BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING.

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous sitting; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Scaffolding, etc., to be in accordance with Act:

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

*That the words "used in connection therewith" be struck out.*

As I argued on a previous clause, although the Bill provides for gear other than that which will be used in connection with scaffolding, the retention of the words "used in connection therewith" would prevent the Government from prescribing regulations as to the standard of gear, unless such gear is used in connection with scaffolding. The ladder on which a painter works is gear, and

is not used in connection with scaffolding, but used "on its own." The clause as it stands, therefore, affords no protection to the man working on a ladder. The regulations under the measure should cover all gear. There is more danger to men working on ladders than to men working on scaffolding.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As on an earlier clause, I am bound to say that I cannot accept the amendment, for which there is no necessity. What the hon. member refers to is fully covered by paragraph (c) of Clause 25. This is a scaffolding Bill, and applies to scaffolding and all gear used in connection therewith. To say that under the clause as it stands a ladder on which a painter is working could not be inspected is stretching the argument very far indeed. Often painters use ladders on which they place planks to form a scaffold. An inspector would be carrying out his duties if he looked after such things. There is no necessity for striking out these words. I have consulted the Crown Law Department, and have had my opinion confirmed.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Not keeping scaffolding in conformity with the Act:

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

*That after "scaffolding" in line 1 the words "or gear" be inserted.*

If the amendment be agreed to there is a consequential amendment in the second paragraph of the clause.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will accept that amendment.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 13—Inspector to be notified of accident:

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

*That after "scaffolding" in lines 2, 3 and 4 the words "or gear" be inserted.*

The same thing applies as with the previous clause.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not propose to oppose the amendment, but will merely point out that the clause, as amended, may prove awkward in the country districts. The loss of life is serious wherever it occurs, but this may cause some inconvenience in country districts.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN: Several succeeding clauses will be consequentially amended by inserting "or gear."

Mr. McCALLUM: I move a further amendment—

*That the following words be inserted at the end of Subclause 1: "and the name and residence of every person killed or so*

*injured, and notwithstanding any other provision in this Act, no repairs or alterations to such scaffolding or gear shall be made after such occurrence without permission in writing of the inspector."*

If the amendment be agreed to, the effect will be that the scaffolding and gear will remain in the same condition as when an accident occurred. No repairs will be possible until after an inspector has viewed them and given his permission in writing for alterations or repairs to be carried out. This provision exists in the South Australian Act. It is necessary because, if an inquiry is to be held, repairs should not be effected prior to inspection. Unless this safeguard is provided, an inquiry will be useless, for the inspector will not be able to produce the necessary evidence.

The Minister for Works: That would be all right if all the inspectors were easily available. If an inspector were not available, it would mean that all the men would have to stop work.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Minister should keep in mind his own notice of amendment to make the Act apply to certain proclaimed areas. I take it, local inspectors would do the work in country towns.

Mr. Latham: Will they be qualified?

Mr. McCALLUM: They would have to submit to certain examinations or be taught something about scaffolding. The principal work will be in the metropolitan area, where the bulk of the people are living. The previous decision of the House limiting the height of scaffolding will cut out some portions of the State.

Mr. Pickering: There is a good deal of two-storied building done in the country districts.

Mr. McCALLUM: Apart from hotels and a few buildings, there are not many two-storied buildings in the country. This provision has been in operation in South Australia for 20 years. Unless this safeguard is provided, a contractor may effect repairs immediately an accident occurs.

The Minister for Works: The working man of to-day would not allow that sort of thing to be done.

Mr. McCALLUM: If all the workers are on the scaffolding when it gives way, they will not have much chance of preventing the debris being removed. I know the position the men will be in. The working man has to look after his job first. If a man thinks he will be held responsible for an accident, the natural inclination will be for him to protect himself.

Mr. Lutey: A similar provision already appears in the Mines Regulation Act.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not wish to block any provision that should be in a Bill designed to save life and prevent injury to workers. I appreciate the viewpoint of the member for South Fremantle. I am not of the opinion, as indicated by the member for South Fremantle, that my objection to the earlier amendments will be met by

my proposed amendment to make the measure apply to proclaimed districts, in which case the amendments would not be likely to apply to remote areas. I suggested adding to the further amendment, "or if an inspector be not in the district, permission may be given after inquiry by the local police officer." That might meet the situation. When an accident occurs, men usually knock off work for the day, but continue on the following day. Unless there are numbers of inspectors, a couple of days might elapse after the accident before an inspector could get there. In the meantime all the work would be hung up. Alternatively, the local police officer could inspect the gear, impound any that was defective, and then allow the work to proceed. If the hon. member will agree to my amendment, I will get the Crown Law Department to draft it, and we can then deal with it on recommittal.

Mr. McCallum: Yes, I agree to that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then, I will move that the clause be postponed.

The CHAIRMAN: You cannot do that, because already the clause has been amended. You can, of course, arrange to recommit the Bill later.

Mr. McCALLUM: I understand that, if I withdraw my amendment, the Minister will recommit the Bill, and the clause can then be dealt with.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. McCALLUM: Then I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause, as previously amended, agreed to.

Clause 14—Inquiry into cause of accident:

Mr. DAVIES: I move an amendment—

*That at the end of Subclause (1) the words "and also a member of a building trades union" be added.*

The clause leaves it open to the Minister to appoint to sit with the police magistrate or resident magistrate a person skilled in the use and construction of scaffolding. I hold that a member of a building trades union also should be appointed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am sorry the hon. member should think the amendment necessary. The clause provides all that is required, without encumbering the work of the inquiry. The Minister, if he choose, can add to the court a person skilled in scaffolding, but it will scarcely be necessary to add a member of a trades union. Of course, if loss of life should occur, there must be an inquiry apart altogether from the authority of the Minister. In such a case the inquiry provided in the clause would be a supplementary one. There is no need for the amendment.

Mr. DAVIES: I will press for the amendment, for I think a trades unionist should have a seat on the court.

Mr. Heron: You will find it provided in the Mining Act.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes, and I want it in this also. The court should be representative of both parties.

The Minister for Works: Then we should have to appoint an employer as well.

Mr. DAVIES: I have no objection to that. Why should we not have both a unionist and an employer on the court?

The Minister for Works: They could be represented by advocates.

Mr. DAVIES: I hold that they should have places on the bench.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	..	14

Majority for .. .. 4

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Johnston
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Collar	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Marshall
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Davies	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Durack	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Heron	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Mullany

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Carter	Mr. Sampson
Mr. George	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Harrison	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Teesdale
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Pickering	Mr. Underwood

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

*That the following subclause be added—*  
 "(12) The industrial union representing the class of employment in which the persons who met with an accident were employed at the time of the accident, and concerning which accident the Minister has ordered an inquiry under this section, shall be entitled to be represented at such inquiry, and the representative of the union shall have full power to call, examine and cross-examine witnesses thereat."

This is similar to the provision in the Mines Regulation Act that has worked well. An inquiry under such conditions would probably be more thorough and would give greater satisfaction than if the union was not represented.

The Minister for Works: If the employee has that privilege, it should be extended to the employer.

Mr. McCALLUM: The amendment says "industrial union." It does not specify a union of workers or of employers. Employers have industrial unions and the amendment would not debar them from being represented.

The Minister for Works: How would it do if you altered the amendment to read, "The industrial union of employers and of workers," etc.?

Mr. McCALLUM: I shall accept that alteration.

The CHAIRMAN: It will also be necessary to adopt the plural by making the latter portion of the amendment read, "and the representatives of the unions."

Mr. CHESON: I am glad the Minister has accepted the amendment because, when representatives acquainted with an industry are permitted to assist at an inquiry, they are able to bring out pertinent evidence.

Amendment as altered put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 15 to 24—agreed to.

Clause 25—Regulations:

Mr. PICKERING: The member for Katanning has on the Notice Paper an amendment as follows:—

*That in line 1 after "make" and before "regulations" the following be inserted: "With the approval of the said board."*

I am in favour of the appointment of a board to deal with this Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It may cause more expense.

Mr. PICKERING: But it may lead to less expense. I am, therefore, in accord with the amendment the hon. member desires to move.

The Minister for Works: I will not agree to it.

Mr. PICKERING: The machinery of this Bill will have to be carried out by regulation, and in the framing of such regulations it is necessary to have the advice of the most talented and expert people available.

The CHAIRMAN: Is there anything in the Bill, as it has so far proceeded, dealing with the appointment of any board?

Mr. PICKERING: No.

The CHAIRMAN: How is it possible to read sense into an amendment which deals with a board?

Mr. PICKERING: The member for Katanning has given notice of his intention to move a new clause to provide for the appointment of a board.

The CHAIRMAN: It has not yet been discussed. I could not accept an amendment which presupposes a clause which may or may not be passed.

Mr. PICKERING: If the amendment were not carried, and the new clause to provide for the appointment of the board were agreed to, how would it be possible for the board to operate?

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept the amendment at present.

Mr. PICKERING: I must bow to your ruling, but would like to know, if the new clause is agreed to, whether the Bill will be recommitted or not, so that the amendment may be moved.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure the Minister will give you that opportunity.

Mr. DAVIES: I move an amendment—

*That a new paragraph to follow paragraph (g) be inserted as follows: "Prescribing that any structure which, if it were built up and fixed to a height exceeding eight feet, would be scaffolding within the meaning of that term, but which is built up or fixed to a height not exceeding eight feet, shall be of such material and of such substantial character as prescribed."*

It is logical to provide that substantial material must be used in structures of this nature, if they be under 8ft. in height, seeing that we have provided for all heights above 8ft.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot accept the amendment. It would nullify the work already done, and defeat the purpose of the Bill.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I would like a ruling as to whether the amendment is in order. We have already passed the interpretation of scaffolding, which fixes the height at 8ft. and over. The hon. member's amendment refers to scaffolding which is built up or fixed to a height not exceeding 8ft. Is that in accordance with the interpretation to which we have agreed?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the amendment clashes with the definition of "scaffolding." I will accept the amendment, but the hon. member may, if he wishes, disagree with my ruling.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have no desire to do that. At the same time, the amendment appears to me to be a silly one, because it will provide for regulations to be made in regard to scaffolding to which the Act will not apply. It was my desire earlier in the proceedings to make the height 4ft., but the hon. member would not support me.

Mr. Davies: I did.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member did not vote.

Mr. Davies: I did so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I pointed out when the hon. member was speaking that the Bill would not apply to anything under 8ft. unless my amendment was carried. We cannot now provide for regulations to be made which will be contrary to the definition of scaffolding. If we specifically provide for 8ft., how can we make the measure apply to anything less?

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 26—agreed to.

New clause:

Mr. PICKERING: On behalf of Mr. A. Thomson I move—

*That the following new clause, to stand as 4a, be added to the Bill: "A board to be known as 'The Scaffolding Board' shall be constituted under this Act, and the fol-*

lowing bodies may each appoint one representative to the board: (a) the Builders and Contractors' Association; (b) the Architects' Board of Western Australia; (c) the Fire and Accident Underwriters' Association of Western Australia; (d) the workers engaged in the industry. The Chief Inspector of Scaffolding and all other inspectors shall be appointed from qualified persons recommended by the said board."

The member for Katanning attempted to move this new clause in the form of an amendment at an earlier stage of the proceedings, and was advised to submit it in the form in which it is presented now. The greater portion of building work carried on in the State is not done by the Public Works Department, but by outside architects and contractors. It is ridiculous, also, to suggest that all the architectural and building talent of the State is concentrated in the public service. That professional men outside the service have risen to eminence is proved by the success which has attended their efforts, and it is not right, therefore, that unfair comparisons should be made between them and the officers of the Government. In view of the fact that the Bill will apply very largely to outside organisations, it is only reasonable that the different bodies should have representation on the board. As I have already said, it is in the regulations that the Bill will really count, and it is desirable that the building trade should not be handicapped. If something of this nature is not done, the cost of building will be increased, and that added expense will affect the worker just as much as anyone else. It is desirable that we should go ahead with building operations, at the same time taking every precaution to protect the lives of those engaged in the industry. It is likewise important that the regulations should be framed by people who are interested in building operations.

Mr. Hughes: What interest can the fire insurance companies have in scaffolding?

Mr. PICKERING: Claims have to be met by those people.

Mr. Hughes: What would fire underwriters know about recaffolding?

Mr. PICKERING: They should have some knowledge of building. At any rate, the question is deserving of every consideration, and the new clause should find a place in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government cannot accept this proposed clause. There is no necessity for it, and if a board be created in the manner suggested, it will add considerably to the cost of building, and that cost will have to be met by someone.

Mr. Hughes: They will be three to one against the workers.

Mr. Pickering: Why take that jaundiced view?

Mr. Hughes: That is the correct view to take.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I presume provision would have to be made on the Estimates for such a board. Further, it seems that Clause 25 is to undergo what the hon. member considers improvement, with the result that the Government will not be able to make regulations unless they are approved by this board, to whom the Minister administering the measure will have to go cap in hand. The Minister administering the measure would consider suggestions irrespective of the quarter from which they came. He would be in duty bound to do so. It has already been pointed out by an hon. member opposite that under the new clause other parties interested would be three to one against the workers. The three could not, of course, be charged with indifference to the security of life and limb. Still, they have not as direct an interest in this respect as the workers themselves have. While no one wishes to see another person injured, yet no one wishes to have his own pocket injured more than he can possibly help. Those two conflicting interests would be represented on this proposed board, with the result that its proceedings would be characterised by a good deal of bickering. If the Minister is not fit to issue regulations under this measure, he is not fit to hold Ministerial office.

Mr. McCALLUM: The new clause represents a practical step towards the supposed red objective of workers' control of industry, and under it regulations could be made only with the approval of the board, the board therefore being put over the Ministry and the Governor in Council. Anything of a like nature brought forward by the Opposition would be characterised as Bolshevik, as emanating from Moscow. I congratulate the member for Sussex on the progress he is making from conservatism towards democracy, and I suggest to him that he amend the new clause so that everybody concerned in the building trade should elect the board, which would thereupon control the industry. Only a week ago the member for Sussex told us that legislation of this kind would make the cost of building oppressive, or even prohibitive. Still, the men who work for wages would not have very much say on the board; the real influence would be exerted by the other sections. It is gratifying, nevertheless, to think that this new clause has emanated from a contractor and is now being fathered by an architect.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. PICKERING: Listening to the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) I am convinced that, according to him, I am a red-ragger of the reddest dye. The earnestness he imparted to his allegations against me was really astounding. It is not my intention nor is it the intention of the member for Katanning that the board should override the Government. Such a suggestion is absurd. Other boards have power to frame regulations for submission to the Government.

Mr. Underwood: Why the necessity for a board? This makes the seventy-sixth board!

Mr. PICKERING: We have found it necessary to transfer so many of the operations of the State to boards that we are justified in asking the Committee to agree to the amendment. The member for South Fremantle appeared to impugn everyone except those representing the workers. There is no distinct line of demarcation as suggested by him, and it is just as much in the interests of the architects and the contractors as of the workers that scaffolding should be sound. Work cannot be carried out unless inspections are made by the architects and contractors frequently, and, consequently, they have to take the same risk as the workers. There is no suggestion that the board will be other than honorary. I was surprised to hear the Minister express such exaggerated views regarding the possible attitude of members on the board. I believe those members would be reasonable and would work in the best interests of the employees. It is to no one's interest that any workman should be injured. We recognise that the present Minister for Works has exceptional knowledge, but we may not have such a Minister for all time.

Mr. HUGHES: I congratulate the member for Sussex on being one of the best unionists in Western Australia! I know of no unionist who is as careful and anxious concerning the welfare of the union to which he belongs, as the member for Sussex. Whenever there is legislation before the House affecting architects, we hear the member for Sussex speaking on behalf of his brother architects. As a class-conscious worker, he sets an example I wish other workers would follow. If all workers were as class-conscious as the member for Sussex, architects might be deprived of their spokesman in Parliament. The ideal he put before the Committee of handing over the control of industry to those working in it, is a splendid one. The builders and contractors, architects and fire underwriters represent a small percentage of those engaged in the building industry; yet the member for Sussex proposes to give them three representatives on the board, compared with the one allotted to the workers. If the board were constituted as he proposes, there is no doubt as to how it would act; there would be on all occasions three delegates ranged against one. The constitution of the proposed board might be altered, giving one representative to the builders and contractors, architects and fire underwriters, and one to the workers, an independent chairman to be elected by a plebiscite of the whole of those engaged in the building industry. If that were done, I would support the amendment.

Mr. Pickering: Why should not the Minister be chairman?

Mr. Underwood: Yes, he has nothing else to do.

The CHAIRMAN: If the member for East Perth will resume his seat, I will simplify the position. If the proposed new clause were agreed to, it would cover something not pro-

vided for in the Bill as introduced by the Minister. The creation of this board will entail expenditure, and it is not within the power of a private member to move in that direction. For that reason, I rule the proposed new clause out of order.

Mr. HUGHES: Just when it looked as if we would get it agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

## BILL—REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from 13th September.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [7.45]: I have listened with interest to the many speeches delivered by members on the Bill. It is safe to say that one would be right in concluding that the Bill is an honest effort on the part of the Commission to deal with a very difficult and delicate task. I feel sure hon. members will readily admit in their hearts that the Commission have ably carried out their duties so far as was reasonably possible under the conditions existing in the Electoral Department to-day. I am prepared to admit that the rolls are not up to date.

Mr. Latham: They are in a shocking state.

Mr. PIESSE: But it would be a very difficult matter to get the rolls perfect. With the material at hand, the Commissioners did their best. More equitable means could not have been adopted to meet the pressing demand for a redistribution of seats. I am wholly in favour of the Bill, believing as I do that, in the circumstances, a better one could not have been devised. The important factor, community of interest, has been deviated from or overlooked in one or two instances, but it is impossible to devise a perfect distribution of seats. It has been suggested that the Commission should have taken evidence. That would have been a very dangerous expedient. It was far better that the Commission should avoid being subjected to influence in any shape or form. If it had been made compulsory for every member of Parliament to attend before that Commission, the result would have been the same.

Mr. Latham: Why members of Parliament? There are officials, qualified to speak.

Mr. PIESSE: There are officials, it is true, but the grievances raised have been raised by members themselves rather than by the community, and have been based on personal objections to the recommendations of the Commission. Two or three electorates have not been treated as fairly as they might have been in respect of community of interests. First there is Sussex. Then there is Greenough, where a number of miners have been included in what is purely an agricultural constituency. Similar anomalies have occurred in other agricultural electorates. However, it is extremely difficult to get a redistribution based purely on community of in-

terest. We have only to recall the redistribution in 1910, when the boundaries of the Sussex electorate gave rise to the charge of gerrymandering. Yet, when we look at the boundaries of Sussex to-day, extraordinary though they appear, it is seen that they were justified. I have been pleased to notice how little party feeling has been displayed in the debate. Members have almost ignored party interests. I take it as a sign of the times. Men are becoming more broad-minded than they were in days gone by. On personal grounds, also, I would vote for the Bill, because it is perfectly satisfactory in respect of my big electorate. It will make Toodyay practically two electorates, and will relieve the future member, whoever he may be, of a very heavy task. During the 12 years I have represented Toodyay I have found it difficult to keep pace with the continuous public demands that are the inevitable result of increased population and increased development. I do not say the Bill ensures to me any certainty of my return to Parliament if I should again nominate. I hope the requisite majority will be found to support the Bill, for in the circumstances it is as fair a measure as is possible. Moreover, it is freely admitted that a redistribution of seats is necessary. Probably at no far distant date we shall require another redistribution of seats. The success of the group settlements, the advancement of the agricultural industry generally, the extension of settlement north and east of Esperance and between Southern Cross and Ravensthorpe, will evoke keen interest among the farming population of the Eastern States, and in consequence we shall have quite a big influx of agricultural population, necessitating, as I say, another redistribution of seats at no distant date. I hope the Bill will pass the second reading.

Mr. HERON (Leonora) [7.54]: I will oppose the second reading. I do not say a redistribution of seats is not necessary—those members on this side who have spoken have clearly attested its necessity—but I oppose the Bill on the ground that it does not give fair representation to the outer goldfields. The Murchison electorate has been fully dealt with by the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) and other speakers. The Commissioners have taken 303 electors out of Mt. Magnet and put them into Greenough, and have taken 149 out of Cue and put them into Leonora. Those 452 electors added to the 2,202 in Murchison would have brought the Murchison quota well above the maximum, at the same time reducing the number of electors in Leonora to 1,637. We have to take into consideration that within six weeks from to-night 400 names will be added to the Leonora roll. As most of us are aware, on about the 19th of next month the Gwalia mine will be reopened. I have from the manager an assurance that on that date he expects to put another 200 men into the

The Premier: Hear, hear! That is good news.

Mr. HERON: If only 50 per cent. of those men are married it will mean adding to the roll the names of 100 wives, and that without taking into consideration the number of other persons that this influx of miners will take into the district. Then a number will be going on to the wood line which has been closed down for the last three years. I have information from the Lawlers district, where a new development has occurred, in the Waronga mine. Only to-night I heard that they have opened up a lode 16 feet wide yielding 16 dwts. to the ton. You, Mr. Speaker, as an old goldfields member, realise what that means. Then we have to take your own electorate, Sir, now amalgamated with Leonora. Quite recently there has been a new find in the King of Creation, which we expect will be opened up on big lines. Also there is the Mighty Atom, another very promising show, as well as Jones's concession, a few miles out from Laverton, where the Government are opening up the route and sinking wells to supply that route with water, so that the prospectors can go into that district. We expect to have within a few months a number of men there also. And even if mining were going down, there is left in the district something besides mining. You, Sir, and the member for Menzies know that the district is fast developing into a sheep area. Within the next few days the pastoralists will be holding a conference with a view to having the district ring-fenced against wild dogs. We shall then have sheep pasturing from Menzies right across to the Murchison. Then you, Sir, are well aware of the development in the Yarri centre. At the present time mining is quiet, but we do not expect it to remain quiet very much longer. If reductions were made in railway fares and freights and in the cost of mining commodities, we should have thousands of men returning to the back country. It is only the high costs of living and of all mining commodities that have made the back country quiet. You, Sir, are well aware of the position. I will not say, as the member for Cue (Mr. Chesson) said the other evening, that I expect to see you "hop down from your perch" to take up the cudgels on the floor of the House, but certainly I say that if you were not occupying your high and honourable position you would be eloquent in putting up a case for those people whom you have represented for so many years. I know that district as well as most people; I travel through it at every opportunity and appreciate its possibilities. This Bill does not give the outback mining areas a fair crack of the whip. When the Electoral Districts Bill was before the House last session, we concluded from the Premier's remarks that our quota would be about 1,500. It could have been as low as 1,440. In view of the vast area that Leonora and the Murchison districts will embrace in future, it will be impossible for any man to represent them in this House as they should be represented.

It is impossible for any member to travel through such a big district and attend to the wants of those who are battling to keep the mining industry going. It is very easy for the people of the metropolitan area to get into touch with their members every lay.

Mr. Clydesdale: Too easy.

Mr. HERON: I would not say that. The vast outback areas where the pioneers are doing so much for the State should be better represented. I do not say they should be given as many seats as they have at present, but there should be another seat between the Murchison and Leonora. The Leonora boundary could have been brought down and the 149 electors could have been retained, and there could have been granted three seats instead of two. No fair-minded man would say that the outlying districts have received a fair deal. A fortnight or three weeks ago I attended a reception to the Overseas Settlement Commission, to whom was proudly exhibited by members a fine specimen from the Mt. Magnet district. Members were pleased to know that this specimen was to be sent to the Old Country to give the people there an idea of what Western Australia was still producing. Yet, while this is being done, the Government are practically saying to the people of the Old Country, "We think so little of the mining areas that we have reduced the representation." It is tantamount to saying, "We have no confidence in our outback mining areas," and they are saying this to the people on whom we rely to provide the capital to develop our mines.

The Premier: You cannot have votes without electors.

Mr. HERON: Some time ago I asked the Premier for a little assistance for my district, and his reply was, "You have no one up there now, and you do not need it." I am glad the Premier proposes to visit that part of the State. The people there are putting up a great fight and are not complaining. They are a type of pioneer that the Government can ill-afford to crush out of the back country. But the Government are depriving them of representation and are practically telling them that they, too, may as well come to Perth.

The Premier: We do not flatter ourselves to that extent.

Mr. HERON: This measure will not give the outer goldfields a fair deal. The boundary could have been shifted further down to take in the lower portion of the farming area, and the Leonora and Murchison districts should have been given three seats instead of two.

Mr. Latham: Are you in favour of the Bill?

Mr. HERON: I favour a Bill, not this Bill. I consider redistribution necessary, but I am opposed to this measure because it does not give a fair deal to the outer goldfields districts. About 150 men are employed on the Sons of Gwalia mine. Before the 19th of next month a full complement of about 330 will be employed. The Commission should

have made inquiries and ascertained these facts before they proposed an alteration of the boundaries.

The Premier: We would all have had a few hundred more.

Mr. HERON: It is all very well for the Premier to say that. If it were so, redistribution would again be necessary. The Murchison district at present is practically at the maximum quota. Only 300 more are required for my district; Sussex is almost at the maximum; Canning is over the maximum, and would be well over if all the electors eligible were enrolled. The same applies to North-East Fremantle. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) said the Government had done everything possible to clarify the rolls. I travel through the back country as much as any man, and I know what has been done.

Mr. Lambert: Nothing!

Mr. HERON: They have struck off the names of people that were objected to; that is all. Nothing was done to enrol eligible persons whose names were not on the roll. Last year, the Premier assured us that the rolls would be attended to.

The Premier: They have been attended to.

Mr. HERON: I disagree with that; in the back country they have not been attended to. This measure has been discussed from all points, and there remains little to be said beyond emphasising that the outback districts have not been given a fair deal. In addition to the men who will be employed on the Sons of Gwalia mine, the population will be augmented by shopkeepers, shop assistants, bar-men, barmoids, and attendants, who will represent an immediate roll increase of 300 to 350 electors. Just now I spoke of clarifying the rolls. I went through my district and found there had been removed from the rolls the names of some people who had never been out of the district. I suppose the experience has been the same in other parts of the State. If the Premier would only visit that district, we would be able to point out to him what pastoralism is going to mean to Leonora. From Leonora and Menzies through to Murchison, sheep will take the place of cattle, so that in addition to its being a mining area, this part of the State will be an important pastoral area. When speaking on the railway Estimates last year I pointed out that the income received from stock at the Leonora station amounted to £5,000 in one year. This was in respect of only the stock that left there; not the stock sent there. Although mining is a little quiet at present, cattle growing is an interest that should have been considered. The Colonial Secretary visited the district and he was very favourably impressed by the pioneers and the fine spirit they exhibited. I again appeal to the Premier to do something in order to ensure to these outside districts the representation to which they are entitled. Last year I made a personal appeal to the Premier, but it had no effect.

The Premier: What you said would have shaken the appeal.



The Colonial Secretary: He has put on more weight since.

Mr. HERON: I am not speaking from a personal point of view. If the Leonora district were allowed to stand as at present, I would have a fighting chance.

Mr. Mullany: So would I.

Mr. HERON: If the three seats are grouped as is proposed under this Bill, I shall still have a fighting chance.

Mr. Marshall: I would lay odds on you.

Mr. HERON: I am pleading for the people I represent, the people who are pioneering the outlying districts. The Minister for Mines knows that the Yarri district is not by any means dead. Some very good shows are being worked there. One is held up through a court case; another has a very promising lode. These districts are, perhaps, quiet, but they are not out for ever. Are the Government going to say they have no faith in our goldfields? Are they determined to deprive the goldfields of three seats in one hit. The nearer the constituency is to Perth, the smaller is its quota. Kanowna has a quota of 1,638. There is nothing new operating in Kanowna at present, nor is there any chance of a large number of men being employed there in the near future. Coolgardie, which is very ably represented, is to have 1,850. At present there is no big development in Coolgardie that would require the services of 200 or 300 men.

Mr. Lambert: Do not make any mistake about that.

Mr. HERON: I am making no mistake.

Mr. Lambert: You stick to your own little cabbage patch.

Mr. HERON: Leonora has a quota of 1,786; Murchison a quota of 2,002. The employment of 200 additional men on the Sons of Gwalia mine will mean that an additional 350 to 400 electors will be eligible for enrolment.

The Minister for Mines: I think they must have compared Leonora and Coolgardie in the light of what their representatives looked after.

Mr. HERON: Kanowna is to have only 1,638. Where is there any fairness in that? If any district should have a lower quota, it should be Leonora or Murchison. I am not speaking from party or personal feelings.

The Minister for Mines: Kanowna is the only part of the goldfields where we had to close down a railway.

Mr. HERON: And still Kanowna is to have a lower quota than Leonora. Is there any justification for that? The Commission could not have been aware of the local conditions or they would never have suggested such a redistribution. They took 452 electors from the Murchison district in order to cut out two seats. That was absolutely unfair. Then they put 149 on to my district.

Mr. Marshall: You could have done without them.

Mr. HERON: Yes, and Murchison could have done with another member. I again appeal to the Premier to refer this Bill back

to the Commission. I know his heart goes out to the people battling and pioneering in the back country. I hope he will hold this Bill until he has visited my district. If he does so, I am satisfied that he will decide to refer the Bill back to the Commission and that the goldfields will get a third seat.

The Minister for Mines: Would you undertake to support anything he then brought down?

Mr. HERON: The boundaries could be altered by shifting them further down. That is all that is necessary.

Capt. Carter: Would you take a seat from the metropolitan area?

Mr. HERON: We have metropolitan members on the Opposition side of the House, and I do not think they would object to giving away one seat. The metropolitan area could easily forego one seat in order to give the outer goldfields additional representation. The metropolitan area is well represented. Nearly every member lives in the metropolitan area.

Mr. J. H. Smith: We want another seat for the South-West.

Mr. HERON: Nearly every night some member representing one of the outlying centres asks a question about tramways, electric light, or water supply in the metropolitan area. Therefore, the members from the outback centres to a great extent represent the metropolitan area.

Capt. Carter: By the same token, the metropolitan members assist you in the country.

Mr. HERON: The metropolitan area is well looked after. In nearly every part of the metropolitan area there reside two or three members who represent outback centres, and most of them can be relied upon to support a metropolitan member in his request for something for his electorate. Unfortunately, 75 per cent. of the members of this Chamber are unfamiliar with the outback centres.

The Minister for Mines: East Perth and Canning ought to be one electorate.

Mr. HERON: The Canning electorate has quite enough voters as it is. Some Ministers hardly know anything about the country that members of outlying districts bring under their notice from time to time. They do not know the conditions under which the people there are living.

Capt. Carter: That is a serious charge.

Mr. HERON: Some of the Ministers have never been through the back country.

Capt. Carter: Give instances to show where they have refused their sympathy in legislating for the country.

Mr. HERON: The metropolitan area is well represented. Either the metropolitan area or the country districts could well relinquish a seat or two in favour of the outer mining areas. It is impossible for the member for Murchison or the member for Mount Leonora to visit all his constituents. In the case of Mount Leonora, a man would have to travel from Paddington to Mount Keith, a distance of 300 miles as the crow flies,

and then across to the South Australian border, in the course of a journey through his electorate. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) may say no one is living out there.

The Premier: There is plenty of food out there.

Mr. HERON: One can go for 100 miles north of Laverton, where Jones's find is, and still be within the electorate. One can also go 80 miles from Kookynie. From the rail head at Leonora a man has to go by motor because there is no other way of travelling. It is impossible to look after the pioneers in that part of the State, when so much country is given to one man to represent. On the one hand we are offering inducements to people in the Old Country to invest their money here, and on the other hand the Government are showing their lack of confidence in the goldfields by reducing their membership. I hope that even at this late hour the Premier will refer the Bill back to the Commissioners.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [8.20]: This Bill is the greatest injustice against the goldfields that was ever perpetrated. I take up the same attitude now as I did when the Electoral Districts Bill was brought down. At that time the Government, by their determination to lessen the representation of certain parts of the State, showed us clearly that we could expect very little when we received the report of the Commissioners. We have not been disappointed.

The Premier: If you have the votes you can have the seats.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Premier ought to tell his friends from the North-West, whose four seats are rendered immune under the Bill, and who have an average of only 900 electors in each district, that there is no justification for such liberal representation. In one of the North-West seats the roll is at present considerably inflated because of the work at the Wyndham Meat Works. No attempt was made to adjust the boundaries of the four North-West seats on ordinary common sense lines. The Premier says, if we have not the electors, we cannot have the number of seats we want. If there is any justification for reducing the representation of the outer goldfields, there is still more justification for reducing it in the case of the North-West. In the North the greater number of electors live along the seaboard and are easy of access. Members have the use of our State steamers in order to visit their constituencies. It is virtually a week-end sea trip for them.

The Premier: Will you go for a fortnight? The "Bambra" leaves to-morrow.

Mr. LAMBERT: If I thought I could do good for the State, I would go for a month. The Premier would be doing a service to the State if he would come with me, and leave this Bill in the lap of the gods.

The Premier: I would go gladly. There is good fishing up there.

Mr. LAMBERT: North-West members must have fished very successfully, seeing it is thought unnecessary for them to muster more than 900 electors for each district. I have a particular interest in the Roebourne electorate.

Mr. Teesdale: Praise God they have no interest in you.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is not safe for the hon. member to stay away long from his constituency, but once or twice during his absence I had the pleasure, not the honour, of representing that electorate.

Mr. Teesdale: And I nearly lost the seat over it.

Mr. LAMBERT: I should have done some service for the country if I had been the means of the hon. member losing his seat.

Mr. Teesdale: That is why you volunteered for the service.

Mr. LAMBERT: Under this Bill the hon. member is not likely to lose his seat for some time.

Mr. Teesdale: That is pleasing news.

Mr. LAMBERT: He can occupy his seat for the time being with that comforting assurance. The representatives of the outer goldfields should not be asked to serve the interests of more electors than the four members of the North-West, but each goldfields member is asked to represent as many as any three of the North-West members.

Mr. Teesdale: They recognise your superior ability, and yet you are growling about it.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know that it is any compensation to get recognition from the hon. member as to one's ability. We need not be ashamed of the comparison in the matter of ability or representation. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) is smiling. He represents only a handful of people, who reside along the seaboard.

Mr. Angelo: I recently travelled 2,000 miles and did not visit all my constituents.

Mr. LAMBERT: The hon. member was on business. It often takes me over long distances.

The Premier: Tell us about the new Coolgardie electorate.

Mr. LAMBERT: A good deal can be said concerning that. The member for Mount Leonora (Mr. Heron) had a good deal to say about the outer goldfields.

The Premier: It will be a great country if all that has been said comes true.

Mr. LAMBERT: It will be a great country when the Government can evolve some sane and sound policy for the development of the mineral wealth of the State. Between the years 1914 and 1918 about 85 per cent. of the available manhood of the fields was drawn away to fight in distant lands. No one will cavil at that, but when they returned, was any inducement offered by the Government, Federal or State, to repatriate them into the industries from which they had been drawn? The mining areas have been so depleted in population that they cannot revive under the present policy of drift. The Premier's land development policy is commendable. No one can deny it is essential.

for our national life that we should have such a policy, even if it costs a considerable sum of money. We should also have a policy for the development of our mineral resources. If we spent a million of money in that direction, we should probably double the population of our mining areas within the next two or three years. But this uncalled for and vicious measure should not be carried.

Mr. Teesdale: You cannot say anything fresh on the Bill; it is worn to a frazzle.

Mr. LAMBERT: So is the hon. member. A general election may act as a corrective. As sure as the sun rises and sets, if this Bill passes, the parties in this Chamber will change places after next March. The Premier will probably make a very good Opposition Leader.

Mr. Marshall: He might not get even that position.

Mr. LAMBERT: I hope that for the good name of this State the Premier will, in the light of the very reasonable and very moderate criticism which has been offered on this measure, recognise that it is his duty, as head of the Government for the time being, to modify the more striking anomalies in the Bill. I am glad to help members representing the Murchison to offer a strong protest against that huge stretch of country, from Buntine to the South Australian border, being so seriously under-represented. Although I admit that it is not easy to ruffle you, Mr. Speaker, who are even tempered, cool, and self-composed, still you must have been somewhat ruffled when you saw the Royal Commission's recommendations regarding the Murchison.

The Premier: It ought not to be a personal matter with any of us.

Mr. LAMBERT: No; but even you, Sir, in your fairness must recognise the injustice of the position regarding the Murchison. Thousands of young fellows were drawn away from their activities in the mining districts to serve in the war. Upon their return no inducement whatever was offered them to go back to their old calling. Plenty of inducements, on the other hand, were offered to them to take up land. The Federal Government lavished millions of pounds in this State to that end. A considerable portion of that expenditure they will never see back.

The Premier: Oh, don't say that!

Mr. LAMBERT: In all fairness it must be said that there are considerable sums which the Federal Government will not see returned. Let us hope, with the Premier's optimism, that the whole of that money will come back. Still, contrast that huge expenditure with the comparatively few pounds spent for the restoration of the mining industry. The men who pioneered the mineral wealth of Western Australia are real jewels of humanity, men who live hard in and out of season, men who never grumble like some of the migrants do.

The Colonial Secretary: The migrants are not complaining.

Mr. LAMBERT: Some of them are. The smallness of the assistance which the mineral industry has received since the cessation of the war is accountable for the backward state of our mining industry. It is all very well to give assistance in a little way in order to revive the interest which mining awakened in 1912. Probably it would have cost a couple of millions sterling to repatriate our soldiers from the mining districts to those districts. The outer goldfields areas, however, are not without hope. A mining policy on the same lines as our land policy would prove more responsive, and the results would be less speculative as well as more rapid. The Premier could see the possibilities of mining in my district when he visited it. He met there hard workers full of hope.

Mr. Harrison: They must be super-men.

Mr. LAMBERT: Considerably more super than the crowd who hang around the Agricultural Department day after day and get practically everything done for them by the State. Our mining territory should not be left unexplored and unexploited for one day longer than is absolutely necessary. The neglect of the mineral industry has contributed to the unevenness of numbers in the constituencies. I regret to say that the passage of this Bill will almost stamp the imprint of general decline on Western Australia's mineral industry. It went forth to the Royal Commissioners that that industry had long ago reached its zenith, and that therefore its representation must be reduced. That is not a very statesmanlike attitude; any office-boy could enunciate such a policy. We must repopulate our depopulated mining areas by the same means as are being adopted in other directions. With the member for Leonora (Mr. Heron) I would plead to the Premier that he should in justice to his own good name remove some of the anomalies from the Bill. Personally I am quite disinterested. I have a constituency which suits me, and I suit my constituents. If the nodding member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) doubts that, he can come and have a try against me.

Mr. Angelo: I was nodding my approval.

The Premier: We all agree that we suit our respective constituents very well indeed.

Mr. LAMBERT: Then why this inhuman haste to alter the conditions which obtain to-day?

The Premier: Personally I do not want the slightest change.

Mr. LAMBERT: There are anomalies, and I would welcome a change which would make for the better. Still, there are many other things upon which the Premier could engage his time and his mind with more profit to himself and to the State than an endeavour to tiddly-wink with a Redistribution of Seats Bill, which can bring nothing but disfavour upon himself and upon Parliament. If it is the hon. gentleman's considered opinion that the measure should be passed, I hope he will not be lacking in that generous attitude towards the House to which the House has

always responded. I trust he will, in a considerate mood, let the Bill go to a committee for the removal of the stupid anomalies put into it by the Royal Commission. The Leader of the Opposition put the position very well when he said that he had either to impugn the integrity or recognise the stupidity of the Commissioners.

The Premier: I do not think he meant either.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Opposition Leader rarely indulges in language that he does not mean. He is not like some members on the cross benches, who use language like turning on a tap, or, wind them up and they go. The Leader of the Opposition rightly entered a strong protest from a goldfields point of view against the injustice of the Bill. I hope some members opposite, whether they are personally affected by the Bill or not, will help us, if the measure passes beyond the second reading stage, to adjust some of the anomalies in Committee. The Bill generally has been dealt with very fully, and little remains to be said other than that every goldfields member should record up to the last moment his unstinted antagonism to the measure, and his determination, if the Bill passes its second reading, to try to preserve for the people in the outer portions of the State at all events some of that free representation which they have enjoyed in the past. I believe that if the Premier represented an outer goldfields constituency, he too would make an eloquent protest against the anomalies in the proposed redistribution. He is not altogether without a sense of justice and fairness, and I hope in his own interests and for the better representation of the State in Parliament, he will see to it that the measure is not passed through Committee until some of the glaring anomalies, to which attention has been drawn during the debate, are rectified. Those anomalies have been pointed out with an absence of party feeling or hard words. I trust members representing the country constituencies will not be prepared to see the outer goldfields sacrificed.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The very outer goldfields.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is those that I refer to. Goldfields members have always been prepared to assist other representatives in seeing that the best interests of the State are conserved. Country members will not merit much praise if they slavishly follow the Government into a den of iniquity. It is all very well for the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) to talk, but—

Mr. Teesdale: You don't mind me sneezing, do you?

Mr. LAMBERT: It is one of the very few useful things you can do.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LAMBERT: I sometimes look at the member for Roebourne and wonder.

Mr. Teesdale: Yes, and I wonder too.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You are both wonders.

Mr. LAMBERT: The member for Roebourne and other Government supporters should feel satisfied with themselves and their position under the Bill. If the measure reaches the Committee stage, I trust they will at least see that if they are to represent 900 people only, those people shall be represented fairly. It is essential to adjust some of the electoral boundaries so as to bring several constituencies more into line with other electorates. During the debate on the Electoral Districts Act last year, I pointed out to the members for Roebourne, Kimberley and Gascoyne respectively, that it was something approaching barefaced humbug for them to vote on that measure.

The Premier: They would not have done their duty had they not done so.

Mr. LAMBERT: To themselves?

The Premier: No, to the country.

Mr. LAMBERT: One could have seen the country bleeding and weeping copiously if they had failed to vote!

Mr. Teesdale: If you only knew how the public suffer when they hear you talk!

Mr. LAMBERT: The member for Roebourne should bark a little louder. As those members are practically immune under the Bill, they should permit other members who are affected to vote on it.

Hon. M. F. Troy: And hold their peace.

Mr. LAMBERT: I appeal to the House on behalf of the mining industry, to review the work of the Commission to some extent. I ask Government supporters not to blindly and stupidly vote with the Government on the Bill.

The Premier: I would not say that, if you want their support.

Mr. LAMBERT: I ask them not to be stupid in blindly following the Premier, but to agree to remove some of the anomalies in the Bill. They should endeavour to provide for better and fairer representation. Notwithstanding that the numbers are on the Government side to carry the measure if they so desire, I warn them that a day of reckoning will come and that day will be about March next.

Mr. Angelo: Beware of the ides of March!

The Premier: I thought he meant the first of April.

Mr. LAMBERT: Impartial as you are in your present position, Mr. Speaker, you can hardly use the illuminating language of the member for Cue (Mr. Chesson), however telling it may have been, but I hope you, with others, will recognise the spirit of the debate and the moderation of the tone in which it has been conducted. I trust you will agree with us, that it is essential that the House shall preserve the best traditions of our Parliamentary institution and that every hon. member be urged to do his best to improve the Bill so as to give better representation to the electors of the State.

Mr. J. THOMSON: I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

Motion put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes	..	..	..	22
Noes	..	..	..	15

Majority for .. .. 7

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Money
Mr. Carter	Mr. Pickering
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Denton	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Durack	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. George	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Johnston	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. Underwood
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. Mullany

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Collier	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Troy
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Heron	Mr. Munroe
Mr. Hughes	

(Teller.)

Motion thus passed.

# ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1923-24.

## In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 13th September; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Department of Lands and Repatriation (Hon. Sir James Mitchell, Minister).

Vote—*Lands and Surveys, £96,446* (partly considered):

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [9.0]: The other night we were advised by the temporary Chairman of Committees that unless we took advantage of the general discussion on this vote it would be impossible to speak on group settlement, since there is no vote under that heading. Group settlement is the most important branch of present-day land development, and it is the duty of any member who can do so to render assistance in the framing of so important a policy. A good deal of criticism of this subject has been indulged in, some of it highly inimical to group settlement. Only the other day I was astounded to see in a South-Western newspaper the report of a condemnatory speech made by a gentleman of responsibility. Whilst we may have divergent views on group settlement, I think most people are convinced that it is the only form of settlement by which we can hope to develop the South-West. At all events, it is the policy, not only of the Government, but of the party sitting behind the Government. The cost of this development has been widely criticised. The gentleman to

whom I have alluded wondered who was going to pay the cost, and told a sorry tale of development in the South-West in years gone by. The difficulties met with in developing the South-West are very great to-day, but not nearly so great as they were 20 years ago, if only for the reason that we have the experience of the last 20 years as a guide. Although the early pioneers of the South-West were confronted with tremendous difficulties, many of them have achieved success. Therefore one may reasonably hope for the ultimate success of the group settlement policy. But the utmost possible care must be exercised in expenditure on this form of development. I have brought under the notice of the Premier many instances in which I thought improvement could be effected. It is common knowledge that the cost of clearing in the initial stages of group settlement was very much greater than it is to-day.

Mr. Willcock: How much greater?

Mr. PICKERING: In spite of repeated endeavours, I have never been able to get the actual figures from the Government, but I believe the cost of clearing the first 25 acres was approximately £1,050.

Mr. Willcock: Was that fully or partially cleared?

Mr. PICKERING: Fully cleared. Many clearing experiments have been made by foremen of the groups. Surely, by this time a decision has been arrived at as to which is the best and cheapest way of clearing. On some blocks in which miners have been interested, one finds that the use of explosives has been great indeed. There are two degrees in which the use of explosives is unduly expensive: first when explosives are used in excess, and secondly when they are not sufficiently used. The correct use of explosives could have been easily demonstrated, and as a result the cost cut down. Within the new boundaries of my electorate are 45 groups. I have intimate knowledge of many of the groups, and so I ought to be able to express a reasonable view as to the fitness of the settlers. On the whole, those within my electorate are of fine type. The suspensions on account of unsuitability and unfitness have been very few. It has been predicted by people in responsible positions that the percentage of failures on the groups would be fairly considerable. However, the process of suspension will largely eliminate the failures, and the vacancies caused will be filled by suitable men. The question as to whether the men will leave the blocks when the sustenance ceases is largely dependent on the care exercised in the development of the groups and the equipment of the individual blocks. If provision be made to ensure fodder crops and furnish stock, there will be no need to worry about settlers leaving their blocks.

Mr. Willcock: But will that be done?

Mr. PICKERING: I hope to deal with these various phases in their order. From experience I have found that settlers of the

best type are heart and soul in the movement. It does not matter whether they come from England, from Scotland, from Ireland or from our own State, most of the settlers show a keen interest in their work. This is the best indication we can have of the ultimate success of group settlement. There is need for the immediate provision of stock as soon as the settlers get on to their blocks. From the start they should be provided with, at all events, one cow each, so as to meet the milk requirements of the homes. The cost of getting milk for their wives and families, I am assured by group settlers, represents 30s. per month. Another immediate necessity is the proper selection of seeds. From experience I know that one can get certain crops to grow profitably in certain districts; and the better the seed, the better the results will be. Again, it is important to see that the settlers use the right manures. In this respect a lot of unwarranted expense has been incurred. For instance, Thomas' superphosphate has been sent to remote groups by motor car. Such a manure should not be sent by transport so costly. Had a more intensive manure been thus transported, the percentage of freight cost would have been much lower. There is urgent necessity for providing permanent homes on the group settlements before next winter. Large numbers of settlers have had to endure hardship during the past winter as the result of having to live in small temporary huts. The cost of the erection of the permanent buildings would be less if the work were put in hand as soon as the weather improves. Another point: the department should avail itself of timber obtainable at mills situated much closer to the group settlement than are the State sawmills. For instance, the mill at Ellis Creek is carrying large supplies of seasoned timber that would be readily available to the groups between Nannup and Busselton, and those lying behind Busselton. That timber could be landed on the spot much more cheaply than timber from the State mills.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: From which State mill? We have one actually on a group settlement.

Mr. PICKERING: But that has no railway communication as yet. Moreover, there is no seasoned timber at the mill, and the use of green timber in floors, partitions, and mouldings is disastrous. Notwithstanding representations I made to the Premier months ago, the roads to the group settlements are in an appalling condition. It is impossible to do anything with South-West roads during the winter. In recognition of that, I approached the Premier on the subject last summer. On the 24th March I wrote to him as follows:—

24th March, 1923. The Hon. the Premier, Perth. Further to our conversation of yesterday, I desire to bring under your notice the following matters, which in my opinion are vitally urgent, in connection with the group settlement in the Sussex

electorate. The one outstanding feature of urgency is the matter of road construction and repair, and as the winter is drawing nigh, it would be absolutely necessary that steps be taken to obviate a repetition of the deplorable experiences of last winter. If something is not done immediately in connection with the low-lying groups, it will be absolutely impossible to keep such groups provided with the necessities of life. I have recently had an opportunity to visit several of the groups, more particularly Nos. 52, 44, 48 and 49. These groups, especially the three latter, are situated on low-lying country and can only be approached over plains which will be under water during the winter, as it is not to be expected that the drainage will be so far advanced as to afford relief to these areas. At present the roads to all these groups are almost unapproachable and group 52, which is on the Kaloorup-road, can only be served by motor lorry for the first seven miles, after which it has to be hauled by dray, entailing extra handling. Great relief can be afforded for the winter months by clearing, forming and ditching the roads in question, as the sand and light soil would during the winter months probably consolidate and the question of gravelling and metalling could be undertaken at a later stage. The roads generally throughout the Sussex electorate district extending from Capel to Augusta have been more or less destroyed by the abnormal traffic consequent upon group settlement and railway construction, and roads that prior to the initiation of this policy were in good order are now practically impassable. The bridges and culverts, which were built prior to the introduction of motor lorry service, were never constructed by the road board to meet such contingencies, and the consequence is that the bridge at Carbanup, the 14-mile slabby bridge, and nearly every culvert are giving way under the stress of traffic, and it is impossible for the road boards, with the revenue available, to do anything to remedy this serious position. I venture to say that in my opinion the success of this group settlement policy will be either retarded or expedited by the neglect of or attention to this very necessary phase. As a matter of fact, the storekeepers of Busselton and Capel are labouring under the greatest difficulties in keeping the groups supplied to-day, and cannot contemplate the maintenance of the service during the winter unless these urgent works are carried out.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The groups do not make such heavy traffic as that, do they?

Mr. PICKERING: Yes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I can understand your reference to the road boards not being able to keep their roads in order.

Mr. PICKERING: The hon. member has seen the groups in progress and the enormous amount of traffic over the roads. He has seen the motors, 4-ton lorries and other vehicles

carrying huge loads on roads that were never designed to bear such heavy traffic.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I saw manures being carted over the roads.

Mr. PICKERING: Manures, seed, buildings—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There were no buildings except the shanties.

Mr. PICKERING: Several groups have the permanent dwellings erected.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They might have them erected now.

Mr. PICKERING: I am prepared to substantiate every statement in my letter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But you said that was the position last March.

Mr. PICKERING: If the hon. member has any doubt he may verify my statements.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I was there in January.

Mr. PICKERING: The roads were not too bad then. I have read this portion of my letter because the result has been entirely as I forecasted. I venture to say that the cost of keeping the groups provided with stores has been more than doubled in consequence of the neglect of road facilities. A lot of money has been spent on forming roads in the groups that might well have been spent on forming roads to the groups. That was the great error made, because there is not the same occasion for roads in the groups as there is for roads between the main thoroughfares and the groups. My road has never been made and it consists of eight miles of track through the bush, but to carry the enormous amount of traffic that a group entails, it is essential that proper roads be constructed. The Premier's excuse was that he had not the money to provide these roads, but the scheme should be big enough to carry the money necessary for road construction. It should be part of any such policy to give the people proper road facilities. Colonel Brazier, speaking in the South-West the other day, pointed out the impossibility of road boards dealing with this problem. It is time something was done to rectify the position; in fact the matter should have been taken in hand years ago.

The Premier: We have spent more money on roads in your electorate than has been spent for many years.

Mr. PICKERING: And a lot of it has been spent unwisely.

The Premier: Of course, it was all badly spent.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not say the whole of it was badly spent. Another matter that requires attention is drainage. This must be pushed on with the utmost expedition if the groups to be served are to get the benefit of it before next winter. These are urgent works. This is the only opportunity I shall have to deal with the matter, and it is my duty to the people of my electorate to urge those things essential to the success of the groups. I have asked for particulars of the cost of roads and drainage, but have not been able to get them. I believe that a letter is now on its way to

me describing how the costs are to be allocated. I realise the difficulty of allocating the costs because of the varied obligations arising in connection with different groups. I believe it is the earnest desire of the Government to allocate the costs as justly as is possible, but this only bears out the contention I have voiced in this Chamber before, of the necessity for adopting an accurate system of bookkeeping.

The Premier: We have an accurate system of bookkeeping.

Mr. PICKERING: If that is so, it will be a step towards settling a big question. The group settlers themselves are alluding to the difficulty of allocating the costs and are asking for an explanation as to how it is to be overcome. I had to find some answer.

The Premier: They can ask the office and get the information.

Mr. PICKERING: They can ask the office but they cannot get the information. The Lands Department is the most difficult department of all from which to get replies, and the Premier knows it.

The Premier: I do not know it.

Mr. PICKERING: The Premier does know it.

The Premier: Is anything else wrong?

Mr. PICKERING: It is my duty to see that things wrong are put right. The Premier would like us to sit here and bestow upon him all the adulation possible, even to bow down and worship him.

The Premier: Thank God I am not called upon to suffer that humiliation.

Mr. PICKERING: If there is anything wrong, I shall draw attention to it with a view to getting it remedied. I am determined to do that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is impossible to do everything at once.

Mr. PICKERING: But these things should be done as speedily as possible. The member for North-East Fremantle is a good apologist for the Premier.

The CHAIRMAN: The Premier is not on the Estimates.

Mr. PICKERING: He is the Minister responsible and I think I am entitled to speak to him when discussing these matters.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must address the Chair and not the Premier.

Mr. PICKERING: Then I say to you, Mr. Chairman, that the member for North-East Fremantle is a good apologist for the Premier.

The Premier: He always speaks the truth.

Mr. PICKERING: I am not prepared to go that far.

Mr. Corboy: We shall remember that when he is talking about the Premier's party during the next elections.

Mr. PICKERING: I impress upon the responsible Minister the need for carefully selecting the sidings for groups when the railway is being constructed. I have had experience of the necessity for changing the position of railway sidings. This should not be necessary if proper care is ex-

exercised to fix the sidings so that they will suit the groups they are intended to serve. I trust the responsible Minister will bear this in mind. I have previously referred to the need for hospital accommodation. On inquiry at the group settlement office to-day, I ascertained that there are 25 groups that could be served by the Margaret River hospital. This is a very urgent matter indeed, because provision must be made for the casualties and maternity cases from the groups. At present there is no railway communication from the Margaret River to Busselton, and even if there were, the Busselton hospital could not deal with this big influx of population. Steps should be taken immediately to provide a hospital at the Margaret River.

The CHAIRMAN: Would not that come under hospitals?

Mr. PICKERING: This would be purely a group hospital.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not in order to discuss hospitals on the Lands and Surveys Vote.

Mr. PICKERING: I was taking the opportunity to deal with this question because it is due to the group settlements that this additional hospital accommodation is necessary.

The CHAIRMAN: I can quite understand it if you desire to refer to anything regarding group settlement connected with the Lands Department, but hospitals have nothing to do with the Lands Department.

Mr. PICKERING: It would be impossible to carry out the group settlement policy unless some provision were made in this direction. I shall not labour the question. There are 25 groups in urgent need of these facilities and 20 groups that will come within the scope of the Busselton hospital. I was seriously thinking of moving the adjournment of the House to enable it to be considered as a matter of urgency, and I think I am justified—

The CHAIRMAN: I must disagree with you.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not think you can.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member persists, I shall rule him out of order.

Mr. PICKERING: I shall regret that very much. You are forcing me into this position—

The CHAIRMAN: If every hon. member did as you are doing, we should make no progress with the business and I must ask you to refrain from further referring to that matter.

Mr. PICKERING: The question of group settlement is of vital importance to the State and anything that appertains to its success should receive earnest consideration. The Minister for Lands is responsible for group settlement. It is of no use going to any other Minister on any subject affecting group settlement because one is at once referred to the Premier as the Minister who finds the money. That is why I have touched on these matters at this stage rather than

deal with them when other votes were being considered. It is important to have a Minister devoting the whole of his time to group settlement.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is in order in proceeding on those lines.

Mr. PICKERING: I am satisfied that unless close and concentrated attention is given to the minute details associated with group settlement, these propositions will be over-capitalised, and if they be over-capitalised, that is the rock on which the scheme will split. That is why I am so earnest in this matter. I wish members to clearly understand my attitude towards group settlement. I am heart and soul in favour of this policy and shall do all I can to help it to a successful issue. I wish now to read the concluding passage of my letter to the Premier, in order to show that what I have stated here to-night, I have previously put up to the Premier:—

Whilst I am bringing these matters under your immediate notice, I desire to assure you that I am not doing so with any other object than that of giving my best services and assistance to a policy that has my most complete endorsement, and I am at all times discouraging unnecessary or frivolous complaints and will not listen to unreasonable demands. I therefore trust that you will view the foregoing as being the result of my experience and conviction and worthy of your immediate and favourable consideration.

In spite of all my efforts to bring these urgent and pertinent matters before the Premier the roads are still not down, the drains not built, and the experience of the settlers during this winter has been almost unspeakable. The costs have been increased beyond all measure. I hope the experience of last winter will show the Premier the urgency of the position, and induce him to tackle this road construction, this lack of drainage, and the question of proper homes for the settlers before next winter comes.

Mrs. COWAN (West Perth) [9.30]: Do you rule, Mr. Chairman, that it is out of order for a member to speak on such matters as medical attention at the group settlements? If so, it is very little use my attempting to speak on the subject at this time. There must be some vote under which we can discuss such matters, especially as many of us have received letters drawing attention in the strongest possible way to the needs of the settlers. If we wish these people to be contented and happy on their groups the Premier must be made to understand the necessity for attending to details such as have been mentioned by the member for Sussex. I have spoken upon these matters myself. Complaints have been voiced to us as members, as well as to organisations in which we are interested, showing the small efforts that appear to have been put forward for the comfort of settlers. A dwelling 10ft. by 8ft. does not seem very palatial. I understand



they used to be 20ft. by 8ft. divided into two. They frequently have no window. It is understood that the settlers will put in windows of calico. I do not raise any objection to that. Is it not possible to provide extra shacks for medical purposes, or for temporary hospitals? These could be put up on the group settlements very cheaply, and would enable the people to have some of the decencies of civilisation in their present rough surroundings. Urgent cases of sickness may arise at any time, and do arise. The settlers incur a good deal of risk at present, and the provision of such medical facilities would be of very great help, especially to the women on the settlements.

The Colonial Secretary: There is a maternity hospital in Busselton.

The CHAIRMAN: The question can better be discussed under the Vote "Department of Public Health."

Mrs. COWAN: I will reserve any further remarks I have to make, and the correspondence I have to read, until then.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Probably you are not aware, Mr. Chairman, that the Department of Public Health has nothing to do with group settlements.

Mrs. Cowan: That is the trouble.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I do not want the objection raised, when we come to the votes controlled by the Colonial Secretary, that the discussion is outside the province of the Minister, but within that of the Premier. Group settlements are administered by the Premier, who is supposed to make full provision for medical, health, etc.

Mrs. Cowan: He does not make any provision for that.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you dispute my ruling?

Hon. M. F. Troy: It is not desired to dispute your ruling. I also have some correspondence regarding these matters, but I do not want the Colonial Secretary to say later on that it has nothing to do with him.

The CHAIRMAN: I will see that an opportunity is given to members to discuss this question.

Mrs. COWAN: I do not complain that I have not had fair play. I have endeavoured in other ways to impress upon the Premier and the Colonial Secretary the necessity for something being done in this direction. If you, Sir, say I cannot deal with these matters now, I will wait until later, unless I am to be ruled out of order then.

The Premier: How can you be ruled out of order?

Mrs. COWAN: It is no use the Premier being annoyed. I have spoken to him about all this before.

The Premier: You come about them almost every day.

Mr. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [9.35]: I presume I must discuss the question of group settlements later on.

The CHAIRMAN: Now is the time for that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I also want to talk about medical attention at the group settlements.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the question of hospitals and schools to be discussed under this vote.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: This is the only opportunity we have of discussing the expenditure on group settlements.

The CHAIRMAN: You can discuss group settlements.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I would draw the attention of the Premier to the minutes of the meeting held in Bunbury some time ago regarding soldier settlement. The soldiers are having a bad time in respect to their interest and capitalisation charges, and the R.S.L. has taken up their case. There is not a great deal to complain of concerning the groups in my electorate, except as to the deplorable condition of the roads. Possibly the Premier is not interested in the question of roads, or whether the groups are starving or not, or whether they get bogged or drowned. Ministers are not very attentive when a member tries to point out some of the difficulties under which the settlers are living. I should like the Minister for Works to send his engineers over some of the roads they are responsible for.

The Minister for Works: Are you sure they built the roads?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister's engineers did.

The Minister for Works: They did not.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I understand Engineer Young is one of his officers.

The Minister for Works: Yes, but he is getting old.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Apparently the Minister lent him to the group settlements. It is the policy to settle people on the land many miles from a railway, and to promise them railways but not to build them. Men have gone out into the country in the hope of making good when the railway came along. In the meantime the Agricultural Bank advances them money against their holdings. After working and waiting in vain for a railway many of these settlers have abandoned their holdings, which have come back into the hands of the bank. New arrivals come here and select these properties, which are from 25 to 30 miles from a railway. When they get to their holdings they find they can get no advances. The money originally loaned upon the blocks has been squandered. The fences are dilapidated, and very likely the adjoining settlers have taken away the wire and wire netting to put on their own lands. All the clearing that was done has gone for nought, for the country is again over-run with scrub. I visited the Agricultural Bank to get an advance of £250 for a Mr. W. G. Tracey, of "The Chase," Manjimup. This man is a hard worker, and

is settled on heavily timbered country. The bank promised to advance £250 for cows, manure, seed, spring cart and horse, but it advanced only £100. The authorities seem to expect these settlers, situated up to 30 miles from a railway, to carry their food on their backs, and their produce, if any, to market on their backs. This sort of thing amounts to a squandering of public money. It breaks the hearts of the people who would in more favoured localities make good settlers. I will read a letter dated the 11th September, from Mr. Tracey, as follows:—

I am sorry to trouble you again in reference to my case, but as you so kindly took an interest in it previously, I trust you will be able to assist me again, so will endeavour to explain. I informed you that the Agricultural Bank had granted me the full £250 when you previously intervened. However, shortly afterwards, I received a letter from them informing me that it was a clerical error, and my loan was increased by £100 only. Therefore, it left me without the plough, harrows, seed and manure, really the most important things of all to give me the necessary start. I have 19 acres fully cleared, and am just completing another four acres.

This is heavily timbered country.

I also have in my possession two horses and harness, and have on order a good pedigreed cow and buggy.

Hon. M. F. Troy: He wants a spring cart in addition to a buggy.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The letter continues—These are out of the £100 which you so kindly obtained for me. Owing to the other £50 not being granted, I am worse off than before, as I have 23 acres of fully cleared land lying idle, and am sorry to say I cannot afford to seed and manure this out of my own pocket at present. I have built a four-roomed house with 8ft. verandah, also piggeries, and have posts in ready to erect 1,000 yards of divisional fencing. The fencing I have carted and have on the place. I have no particular wish to leave here after doing all this work, and with the possibilities of a railway I would very much like to carry on, but must obtain the following assistance if I am to remain:—£100 for fully clearing seven acres, £50 for seed, manure and implements, and £50 for three cows. I should not purchase cows until I have feed next season. I wonder if you would kindly intervene on my behalf when it is convenient for you. Then if the bank will assist me as proposed above, I shall require no further assistance, and I am sure I can go ahead. But it is absolutely essential I get this area laid down in clovers, grasses, etc., early next season so as to prevent further delay. I would not apply for clearing loan, but am unable to obtain any work in this district, so must partly rely on that to carry me on for a time. If you cannot arrange anything with Mr. Mc-

Larty, then I do not object to re-selecting as the board previously mentioned.

The bank suggested that he should re-select. If he does so it will mean more money wasted until another man comes along, and he, too, will have to go round in the same old circle. The letter continues:—

I do not wish to roam about. I have a wife and little boy, and wish to settle down, and after doing all this work on the property and placing it on a sound footing, I don't really feel like leaving it. If the bank cannot advance this £200, then I would be pleased to have full particulars from Mr. McLarty of a good mixed farming property near the railway. I have not forwarded the necessary fees for the £200, but will do so as soon as I hear from the general manager. I would be pleased to hear from the general manager as early as convenient, as if I must re-select I would like to do so immediately, so as to prevent further waste of time and money down here. I sincerely trust I am not putting you to too much trouble by asking you to assist me, and I would be very pleased if you could let me know anything in reference to the railway, as whatever happens, I may possibly try to hold this property if it is only a matter of two or three years. Trusting you will be able to oblige without inconveniencing yourself in any way. The Premier: Who wrote that letter?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Mr. W. G. Tracey, of "The Chase," Manjimup.

The Premier: What is the date of that letter?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The 13th September. Here is another letter I have from a new settler 30 miles from a railway—

I am writing you as the member for my district, in the hope that you can obtain justice for me in my case against the Department of Lands and Surveys in the first case, and secondly against the Agricultural Bank. I landed at Fremantle as a nominated immigrant on the 2nd April, 1922, and proceeded to Manjimup, where my brother-in-law, Mr. W. Tracey, was working for Miss Strachan of Calder Green. I obtained work here, and stayed on with Miss Strachan for six months. I then left her, on the 4th October, and went to stay at "The Chase," Mr. Tracey's selection, during the opossum season. On the 17th September I had written to the Lands Office, Bridgetown, and applied for Nelson Location 5,094. I received an answer dated 25th September, in which I was informed that this Location was open, and that if I still wished to apply for it I was to send in enclosed form and deposit of £3 7s. In December I wrote to the Agricultural Bank to inquire with regard to a loan for clearing, etc. On the 30th December Mr. Tracey and myself received a visit from Inspector Doust of the Agricultural Bank. He gave me information about the loan, and showed me what land to clear. He told me that I should

have no trouble about obtaining a loan of £100 for clearing and ringbarking, and that the block was mine as soon as I applied for it. He then signed my application form, both for the location and the bank loan, and departed. Of course, taking for granted that the bank inspector would know what he was talking about and would have some authority, I began work on the blocks, and started totally clearing 7 acres of ringbarked country. I put in two months on the block, living meanwhile with Mr. Tracey. Then in March I started work at Mr. Lloyd's farm, Riverview, where I am at present working. On the 11th March, 1923, I received a letter from the Agricultural Bank informing me that the trustees could not see their way clear to grant me a loan. This after working 10 weeks. They gave no reason at all, and I don't really see how they could give me a reason, unless it was that the location is 30 miles from the railway. In any case, they granted Mr. Tracey's loan, although they made a fuss about it until he wrote to you; and I believe he now has the full loan granted to him. The climax came on the 14th of March, when I heard from a neighbour that I could not take up the location. Next week I heard from another source that a forest ranger had been down to inspect the block. On the 14th April I had an official notification from Perth, dated the 28th March, that my application must be cancelled as the Conservator of Forests objected to the alienation of the land referred to, in spite of the fact that Location 5094 was an abandoned block, its previous holder being a Mr. Dodds, the improvements being as follows:—8 acres cleared, 7 acres ringbarked, 1 well, 10 chains of drainage.

There are pages upon pages of that kind of matter. The settler has done considerable work, but the Agricultural Bank have turned him down. Having gone into the matter with the Lands Department, I received the following letter from that department at the end of August:—

With reference to the attached letter from Mr. G. T. B. Sibley, I beg to inform you that all land in this district is open for selection, subject to a report by the Forests Department, and in this case the Conservator of Forests reported that Location 5094 carried a considerable quantity of karri and jarrah timber and, under the circumstances, he could not agree to its being alienated. I regret, therefore, that this department cannot approve of the land being granted to Mr. Sibley.

As the member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) said the other evening, there seems to be a lack of co-ordination between the various departments. After the man has done all the work, he discovers that the Forests Department have the land held up for the sake of the timber on it. He has written to me again, this time asking whether the Premier cannot

do something in the matter. There is another matter I wish to talk about, though what one says does not seem to cut much ice. I refer to the lack of land in my district for farmers' sons. Many of them are unable to secure land. I know of cases in my own district where the sons have been obliged to go to other parts of the State in order to obtain land. They do not care to go on group settlements, for which practically the whole of the South-West is tied up. Again, there is the matter of certain lands which have been held about Bridgetown for 40 or 50 years. The owners of those lands, rendered nervous by a Bill which was defeated in another place last session, decided to offer them to the Government, who, notwithstanding expert advice as to the quality of the country, turned the offer down. If the Government had bought those lands, they would have immediately been taken up by settlers who had made good. Let us look after our own before we look after people from overseas. When the whole thing has been analysed, there are none better than our own Australian-born sons for settlement on our lands.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [9.54]: The Estimates introduced this year again place us in the same position as we found ourselves in last year, with reference to three important branches controlled by the Lands Department. I refer to the Agricultural Bank, Soldier Settlement, and group settlement. In no other instance is any amount of the expenditure in these three cases charged to revenue. Yet we find that the losses of the Industries Assistance Board for last year amounted to £28,194. That money has to come from somewhere.

Hon. M. F. Troy: It is being funded into the deficit.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: As regards soldier settlement, there are also some heavy losses. We have no opportunity of discussing any item of them owing to the manner in which the Estimates are presented. In the course of the report regarding soldier settlement it is stated that in view of the fact that the scheme is drawing to a close it is interesting to note that at the end of last June the number of abandonments was 348, and that 127 cases of redisposal of properties involved a loss of approximately £14,000, including principal and interest. The money has to come from somewhere.

The Premier: It comes out of a special fund.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In order to prevent discussion of these matters, all the department have to do is to transfer the expenditure from revenue to loan or suspense account. Then members of this Chamber are debarred from criticising closely the Estimates placed before them. The report further says the board regret the necessity for calling attention to the fact that the interest obligations of soldier settlers are not being met to the extent that might be expected, more especially in the case of repur-

chased properties which were immediately productive at the time of occupation. The interest outstanding at the end of the financial year, the report states, amounted to a total of £281,317. Further, we are told that the board are making inquiries into each case of arrears, with a view to placing matters on a more satisfactory footing.

The Premier: That amount would include the interest for the half-year.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I object to the Estimates being introduced in such a form as to debar members from discussing the separate votes. The result of submitting the Estimates in their present form is that all we can discuss in a general way out of this expenditure is the sum of £104,296. The Agricultural Bank, soldier settlement, and group settlements should have been taken out of these Estimates and placed in the Loan Estimates, if the money is coming from loan; and then we would have had an opportunity of discussing those three branches. If, on the other hand, the money comes out of revenue, the three branches should be placed under revenue. The present practice is wrong, and should be stopped. The question of discussing the three branches was raised last year before you, Mr. Stubbs, and you then said that you would give members an opportunity of discussing them. However, the ruling given the other evening was to the opposite effect. Last year the Industries Assistance Board wrote off bad debts to the extent of £33,243. That money has to come from somewhere. It must be paid out of some vote. Probably the only chance we shall have of dealing with that expenditure will be an item under Development of Agriculture, which will include assistance under the Industries Assistance Act. The report of the Industries Assistance Board is very interesting. It is only on rare occasions that we have a report from the Agricultural Bank, and we are not in a position, therefore, to know the amount of interest outstanding in connection with the bank's operations. The Industries Assistance Board is a good institution for providing money towards Consolidated Revenue. There could not be a better one, because all they have to do each year is to pay amounts owing to Government departments out of loan moneys, making the settler pay 8 per cent. interest and thus wiping off the amounts owing to the bank.

The Premier: The rate is not 8 per cent., and in any case we pay only on good accounts.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We are not in a position to know if that is so, for we have not the report of the Agricultural Bank before us so that we may compare the transactions of the two institutions. Since 1914-15, when the Industries Assistance Board was established, £465,205 18s. 7d. has been paid to the Agricultural Bank for interest only on ordinary accounts.

The Premier: Why not? Only good accounts are dealt with.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Regarding soldier settlers' accounts, £95,331 15s. 1d. was paid. These figures show the advantage of continuing the Industries Assistance Act to allow Government departments to make good their positions easily. While we have this system in operation, we will not have as effective a scrutiny regarding the amount of loans made as we would have if the Agricultural Bank had to see that the interest was fairly paid at the end of each year. If they had to do that, they would be more careful about the accounts and the loans made. Regarding water rates, £43,029 has been paid.

The Premier: You did that when you were a Minister.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The financial year 1914-15 was the most difficult we had. The amount transferred then was £33,565, whereas in 1922-23 it was £43,979. The payments respecting soldier settlers' accounts with the Agricultural Bank totalled £50,975 last year. These show that the numbers are less, but interest transferred was more.

The Premier: Interest charges were higher.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I admit that the interest charges are higher now than they were then, but the rate only started to increase to an important figure in 1916 when we went out of office.

Mr. Latham: They paid more to the Lands Department than in 1922.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, it was £31,456 in 1914-15 and £29,900 last year. I object, however, to the way the Estimates are introduced. Departmental Estimates should not be introduced in such a way that members are debarred, under the Standing Orders, from dealing with the various departments concerned.

The Premier: Those departments are under special Acts.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I admit that, but they were not dealt with under special Acts for the purpose of preventing Parliament from discussing these operations.

Hon. M. F. Troy: It would be ridiculous if that were the position.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Moreover, these difficulties are overcome by the instances I am discussing by transferring amounts, one to suspense and another to loan, thus balancing the account.

The Premier: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is so. We find that the vote for the Agricultural Bank is £85,196, less recoups by other departments £13,000, leaving the net vote £27,196. Of that amount £36,098 is transferred to the Industries Assistance Act Suspense and £36,098 to the Agricultural Bank Trust Fund, thus wiping out the amount. The same thing applies to the group settlement and the soldier settlement schemes, with the exception of the fact that the transfers are to loan. I have not the least doubt that some money has been expended out of revenue.

The Premier: If that were so, the items would have to be shown in these Estimates.

You know the Agricultural Bank is under a special Act, and charges 1 per cent. more than it pays, to cover costs.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Perhaps so, but I am justified in lodging objections to the method adopted in introducing these Estimates. We would be acting wisely if we rejected the Votes so that they could be placed before us in a proper way.

The Premier: They cannot be presented in any other form.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We should have the departmental reports before us; we could then study the position and ascertain if there is any leakage. We are not given that opportunity now. I had hoped to find an alteration in the method this year, but we are disappointed.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [10.7]: It has been customary for Ministers, when introducing their Estimates, to give some indication as to the policy to be adopted during the ensuing year. That method has been departed from this year.

The Premier: I did that when introducing the Estimates.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Premier dealt more with the financial aspect than with prospective land settlement and the steps to be taken to carry out the Government's policy during the year. Although the Premier made some reference to land settlement in the Budget Speech, we could not get details from his statement on that occasion regarding land settlement or the figures we are entitled to expect relative to the area of land available for selection.

The Premier: You want a photograph of each block.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Nothing of the kind. The Minister controlling the Lands Department should tell the Committee how much land is available for settlement, and give particulars, so that members might have the necessary information. To-night the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) informed us that land was not available in his district for the children of settlers in that area. The same thing applies to my own district. There are many men desirous of taking up land, and the Premier tells us there is plenty of land available. I cannot find plenty of land available in this State, much less in my own district. One would naturally conclude that the present discussion would furnish the opportunity to the Premier to give us particulars on these points. Instead of that, we are asked to pass a vote representing the expenditure of £96,000 and no information is furnished to members. Three or four years ago the policy of the Government, apparently, was in favour of closer settlement of the lands in proximity to existing railways. On two occasions, a Bill was introduced to give effect to that policy, but because the Legislative Council did not agree to the Government's proposals, the whole policy has been thrown overboard. The Legislative Council

has been allowed to dictate the policy of the Government. Unless the Government were hypocritical in introducing those Bills, simply because the Legislative Council opposed the measures and Country Party members also opposed them, that policy has been jettisoned.

The Premier: You should not say that. The Bills were passed in this Chamber and strong support came from Country Party members.

Mr. WILLCOCK: There was strong opposition from the Country Party members.

Mr. Latham: No, there was not.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, there was.

The Premier: You opposed it yourself.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I favoured the Bill and desired it to go much further.

Mr. Hughes called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

Mr. WILLCOCK: While a peculiar policy has been pursued by the Premier regarding these Estimates, I find also that the Country Party, whose members are supposed to have at heart the interests of the people on the land, and who are particularly interested in the Government's land policy, is only represented by one member in the Chamber at the present time. That is not a good advertisement for the Country Party who pose as champions of primary production and land development. When such a Vote is being discussed they show their enthusiasm, or rather their want of enthusiasm, by staying outside. If they do not care to listen to criticism of the land policy, it does not concern me very much, but in the interests of the constituents they claim to represent, the least they can do is to remain in the Chamber while this vote is being discussed.

Mr. Latham: They will be here when a division is taken.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Government embraced a policy of closer settlement until two or three years ago, when the Premier found he could not get the support of the Legislative Council for that policy. He then jettisoned it, and started on this new and expensive group settlement policy.

The Premier: I suppose it doesn't happen to suit Geraldton.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Premier, knowing the Geraldton district, knows that there is in that district an area that would absorb 400 or 500 families and give them better prospects of success than obtain in the South-West. I refer to the Greenough Flats.

The Premier: The Greenough Flats are held in small areas.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Not now. The Greenough Flats are going back into large estates. Areas which 30 years ago were held by 100 families are steadily getting into fewer and fewer hands.

The Premier: When I was there the holdings were very small.

Mr. WILLCOCK: They are not so small to-day. In a few years' time this, the richest agricultural district in the State, will be in comparatively few hands. If the Premier wants closer settlement that will give rapid development, there is not a better district in the State than the Greenough Flats, and with them the Irwin district. People who know the value of agricultural land are unanimously agreed that the Greenough Flats, if situated anywhere else in Australia, would be worth from £15 to £20 per acre. Only last month some of that land was sold at £19 10s. per acre. The Premier's own brother is subdividing some of it with a view to closer settlement. Fifty years ago officers of the Imperial Government recognised the value of that land, declaring that 40 acres of it was sufficient to afford a family a good living. Thousands of acres were cut up into small areas by the Imperial Government for the accommodation of ex-Imperial soldiers who had served in the Crimea and other big campaigns. The Minister for Agriculture and his brother, the member for Irwin (Mr. C. C. Maley) can support me when I say it is one of the richest agricultural districts in the State. There is there a most promising field for closer settlement. Group settlement in the South-West is going to cost an immense amount of money, and a considerable number of years will have to elapse before a full return is secured. The land is good enough, but not for many years can it be brought into full productivity. For a million years, bark containing tannic acid has been deposited on that land, with the result that the soil is soured and will take years to sweeten.

Mr. Money: Where is this?

Mr. WILLCOCK: In the big-timbered country being cleared at present, the red gum and karri country being utilised for closer settlement.

Mr. Money: But in red gum country the first crop is the best crop.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But they are not using all red gum country, anyhow.

Mr. Money: The best potato crop is always the first crop.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The first crop of anything is not bad. Sandplain, poor hungry-looking country, will grow a first crop, but it has to be cultivated and manured for years to bring it into full productivity. The hon. member will know that one can get a crop off almost any land in the first instance, but that after a year or two a great deal of manuring and sweetening is required. The same thing applies to the wheat lands. The Greenough and the Irwin Flats offer a very much better field for the investment of money. Whether we can afford to develop the South-West by the expensive process now being tried is debatable. It means years of hard labour, and the first generation can never hope to get much of a return from land pioneered in this way. Whether the South-

West can stand the immense capital cost involved, will only be determined years hence. Many people have grave doubts about it.

The Premier: They once had the same grave doubts about the wheat belt.

Mr. WILLCOCK: People have made good in the wheat belt, and there is any amount of land there, perhaps a million acres of it, within reasonable proximity of existing railways, remaining to be utilised.

The Minister for Works: Where is that?

Mr. WILLCOCK: All over the State. I have repeatedly travelled over the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line. Tens of thousands of acres along that line have never had an axe put into them.

The Premier: The settlers have not had time.

Mr. WILLCOCK: They have had plenty of time, but the department is loth to advance money on that land. One departmental officer says that land is no good.

Mr. Piesse: What land?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Mr. White, of the Soldier Settlement Scheme, says the land up there is no good.

Hon. M. F. Troy: What does White know about it?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Practically nothing, yet he is virtually in charge of the department. Mr. White does not seem to know much about it. I have had several discussions with him. With a wave of the hand, he condemns that land.

The Premier: Which land?

Mr. WILLCOCK: The land right up through Mullewa. Mr. White says it is no good. He is practically the head of the department, yet he condemns the whole of the land in that area.

Mrs. Cowan: It is not as good as the Wimmera land in Victoria.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is good agricultural land. The Wimmera land is exceptionally good.

Mrs. Cowan: Yet it has a very light rainfall.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It has a most excellent soil, and will grow virtually any crop. I am afraid the hon. member is mixing the Wimmera district with the mallee district further north. The Wimmera has quite a good rain rainfall.

Mrs. Cowan: I thought it had a lower rainfall than we have.

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, in the mallee country, certainly, the rainfall is light and the soil not so good as that in the Wimmera district, which embraces the best wheat land in Australia. Also they have in that district something which our Director of Agriculture recently discovered, namely, excellent methods of cultivation. Several things recently discovered by the Director of Agriculture were known in this State as far back as the days when the Labour Government were in power. Something should be done to develop the land between Yuna and Mullewa, in the electorate of the Minister for Agriculture. The advisory board has promised to go through the

district and report, so that an authoritative statement of the value of that land can be made. We want more land for agricultural development. We know from experience that we can get a better, quicker and more certain return from wheat and sheep than from any other form of development. Where land of this description exists within a safe rainfall area and in close proximity to a seaport, we should exert every effort to bring it into cultivation or give it the communication necessary to enable it to be settled. I do not know what we are going to do with regard to land that is not being developed. A Closer Settlement Bill was introduced, but we got no further with it.

The Premier: That was not the fault of this House.

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, but it is the fault of the Government that this sort of thing is allowed to continue. Almost everybody one speaks to refers to the vast areas of idle land in close proximity to existing railways.

Mr. Latham: The passage of the Closer Settlement Bill through this House was the means of a lot of that land being brought into better production.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But there are thousands of acres of that particular class of land not being utilised at all, and yet there is talk of expensive railway propositions and there is propaganda in favour of railways in the direction of Eucla and other places where distant fields look green.

Mr. Heron: They are green at present.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I hope they are.

The Premier: You are treading on someone else's corns now.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I still maintain that while we are talking of extending our railways hundreds of miles from existing settlement, there is plenty of land held up and unutilised in close proximity to the railway system.

Mr. Piesse: Well, the State should buy it.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is not the principle. The people owning the land should be made to utilise it. A scientific method of taxation should be introduced so that if holders will not develop their land, it will be too expensive to hold. Such a policy would meet with almost unanimous approval from the people. That is the only point of disagreement between the "West Australian," which is the chief apologist and at the same time the guide, philosopher, and friend of the Premier—

The Premier: Did you say the "Worker"?

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, the "West Australian." The only point of disagreement between the "West Australian" and the Premier is that he does not introduce some method of taxation to force unimproved land into use.

The Premier: A good rousing tax, eh?

Mr. WILLCOCK: One that will wake up the people sleeping on land that should be producing wealth.

The Premier: I have heard that before.

Mr. WILLCOCK: And the Premier is likely to hear it again. Such a policy would meet with the approval of 90 per cent. of the people. We have had expressions of opinion from both sides of the House and from almost every individual—

Mr. Latham: It must have been adopted since the Labour Government went out of office.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The member for York said something to that effect on one occasion.

Mr. Munsie: We passed a measure through this House.

Mr. Latham: No, you did not.

Mr. Munsie: The hon. member was asleep at the time.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Every proposal that the Premier brings forward evokes the support, approval and enthusiastic backing of the "West Australian," but on this particular issue there is serious disagreement between the Premier and the "West Australian." I do not want him to fall out altogether with the "West Australian."

The Premier: Well, I cannot rely upon the "Worker" or the "Primary Producer."

Mr. WILLCOCK: The "West Australian" has proved most useful to the Premier during his career as head of the administration. If the Premier had not had the enthusiastic backing of the morning paper, he would have gone out of office two or three years ago on his financial policy. When the Labour Party were in power, leading articles were published by the "West Australian" month after month criticising the deficit. Now, instead of criticism, we find apologies being advanced by this wonderful organ that is supposed to be the leader of public opinion in this State.

The Premier: I did not say a word against the "Worker" that supported you.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am merely pointing out the good service rendered the Premier by the "West Australian." But I must emphasise that there is a policy which the "West Australian" has enunciated in season and out of season, namely a tax on unimproved land values, and that is the one serious point the Premier will not concede. It is time some system of closer settlement was applied to pastoral lands. There are wonderful pastoral lands—

Mr. Pickering: More particularly on the Murchison.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That happens to be one part of the State where railway facilities are established and where pastoral areas lend themselves to closer settlement. An expensive railway system has been built and these pastoral lands, taken up in the days before people ever thought railway facilities would be provided and now served by railway, should be dealt with under a closer settlement scheme.

Lieut.-Col. Denton: There is quite a lot of undeveloped land along the Midland line.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, but I am referring to pastoral areas. You, Mr. Chairman, when

speaking on the Address-in-reply, expressed the opinion that when pastoral areas were being transferred, the Government should have the first right to buy them. I am in hearty agreement with such a policy. When pastoral land of known quality such as that in the Murchison and Gascoyne areas is to be disposed of by the original holders, the State should have the first opportunity to buy it. We talk of peopling our vast empty spaces: we talk of increased production; these and other such platitudes we have heard for many years and yet we have areas of land capable of carrying ten times the population and twenty times the number of sheep still being held up in tracts of a million acres in those particular localities. It is about time a decision was reached regarding the proposed purchase of the Midland concession. Along the Midland Railway a considerable area of good land is still available. Acre for acre that land is as good as the land of the Great Southern, where, under Government control, a series of comparatively large towns have sprung up at about every thirty miles, towns that are the centres of prosperous and thriving districts. The same thing would apply to the Midland lands if they were opened up and controlled by the Government.

Lieut.-Col. Denton: There are 250,000 acres of first-class land in the Midland area to-day.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That land should be brought into cultivation.

Lieut.-Col. Denton: It is very suitable for group settlement.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is suitable for agricultural development of any description. The largest area of unoccupied land in the State is situated along the Midland line. The land there has been proved hundreds of times over. It is being held up because advances cannot be made against it by the Agricultural Bank. It is excellent land. If it were brought under the purview of the bank it would all be utilised, and brought into production to a greater extent than at present. It is time we reviewed our policy in this respect. If the Midland Railway Company is prepared to sell its vacant lands to the State at a fair and reasonable price, the price should be paid. If it is not prepared to do this the Government should have no compunction about using every legitimate means of making the company do so. There is a quarter of a million acres of first-class land, a large area of second-class land, and a million acres of third-class land held up by the selfish greed of a private company, which wants to make as much as possible out of the State. Parliament should take every means possible to bring the company to its senses. The land was granted in the first case under definite conditions. Not one of these conditions has been carried out, and the methods of finance employed by the company in the early stages should have brought it within the clutches of the law, and might have done

so but for the friends it had at court. We cannot afford to allow this state of affairs to continue. Already we have Government utilities such as schools, police, doctors, etc., in the area, and everything of that sort ready for settlement. The Government have spent enormous sums of money in opening up areas a tremendous distance from our sea-board, while this company has been reaping advantages out of the State. If the Midland Railway were worth anything as an asset I should not be surprised at the attitude of the company, but it is making nothing out of the railway though a good deal out of the land. Much more, however, could be done with the land if it were taken over by the Government. The settlers are not allowed to exploit their holdings as they should otherwise be able to do, and the development of one of the biggest agricultural provinces in the State is being kept back. I hope before the debate concludes the Premier will make the statement he should have made earlier, and tell us what the land policy of the Government is, where the land is that will be made available for settlers under the immigration policy, and what is to be done in the matter of land development generally.

Progress reported.

[House adjourned at 10.47 p.m.]

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 19th September, 1923.

	PAGE
Questions: Departmental replies ... ..	755
Water Supply, Leonora ... ..	755
Locomotives, purchase ... ..	755
Railway Staff, bonuses ... ..	755
Motions: Meat Contracts, Government Institutions	755
Kendenup Settlement, to inquire by Royal Commission ... ..	760
Justices of the Peace, appointment ... ..	768
Long service leave ... ..	770
Esperance Northwards Railway extension ... ..	772
Papers: State hotels, adulterated liquor ... ..	778
Retirement of E. H. Hamel ... ..	778
Bills: Control of Rents, 1R. ... ..	755
Workers' Compensation Act Amendment, 1R. ... ..	755
State Trading Concerns Act Amendment, 1R. ... ..	778
Architects' Act Amendment, 2R. ... ..	778
Local Authorities (additional powers), 2R., Com. report ... ..	779
Lunacy Act Amendment, 2R., Com. report ... ..	780

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