

doctor, I feel that—quite apart from the evidence given before the select committee—he is temperamentally unfitted for the position he holds to-day. Even if the session closes without proper consideration being given by members to the report of the select committee, I hope the Government will be fully seized with the necessity for giving effect to the more essential recommendations the committee saw fit to make.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [1.42]: Now that the general debate on the vote has been concluded, I will move—

That the vote be reduced by £500.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [1.43]: As chairman of the select committee and on behalf of the members of the committee I desire to say that I strongly resent the accusations made by the Minister for Works. I would like hon. members to be acquainted with the position. The Standing Orders of the House were violated by the select committee for the express purpose of enabling Dr. Anderson to have all possible information, everything in fact that came under the notice of the select committee. There were no charges made against Dr. Anderson, but the committee thought that some witness might possibly prefer a charge against the doctor, and that the doctor should then be in the position of knowing what was said almost as soon as the matter was laid before the committee. Consequently Dr. Anderson was allowed to have a copy of the evidence when it was available, and that was, when the printed copies reached the committee. If a Royal Commission had been appointed Dr. Anderson could have been represented before it. The Minister for Works, instead of making charges against the committee, should have expressed regret that he did not assist in bringing about the appointment of a Royal Commission which was what was asked for originally. The select committee had to prepare their report on the evidence given and the only accusation made against Dr. Anderson is in regard to administration. The committee came to the conclusion that the administration was not good, and they recommended that another system of management should be instituted. I will read what the Standing Order 352 says with regard to evidence—

The evidence taken by any select committee of the House and documents presented to such committee, which have not been reported to the House shall not be disclosed or published by any member of the Committee or by any other person. The committee should have abided by that Standing Order, but they violated it in order to let Dr. Anderson know what was going on. Now we have the Minister for Works accusing the committee of not acting fairly to Dr. Anderson. Further than that, when Dr. Anderson appeared to give evidence he was handed a typewritten copy of the evidence of another doctor which had been

taken on the day previously so that he might have an opportunity to reply to that as well if he cared to do so. Dr. Anderson took that evidence away with him so as to peruse it over night. The accusation of the Minister for Works is grossly unfair, and it is not the kind of thing that is likely to induce hon. members to undertake onerous work of this description in the future. Charges of bias are not likely to encourage members to offer their services in the future in connection with matters of public importance which require to be investigated. In this case the select committee endeavoured to frame a true statement on the evidence submitted, and unprejudiced members of this Assembly will, I think, agree that they succeeded in their task. I have nothing whatever to say against Dr. Anderson. The recommendation of the select committee that the system of management should be altered does not suggest that Dr. Anderson should be thrown out. There is nothing to prevent him from receiving the appointment of superintendent under the new scheme.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 1.50 a.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 21st November, 1919.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE, STATE CHILDREN DEPARTMENT.

Interim Report.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) brought up an interim report by the select committee appointed to inquire into the State Children Department.

Report received and read, and ordered to be printed.

QUESTION—WHEAT, PAYMENT FOR NEW CROP.

Hon. P. COLLIER (for Hon. T. Walker) asked the Premier: 1, Have all arrangements been made with the Commonwealth for payment for the coming Western Australian wheat crop? 2, What is the amount to be paid per bushel at the sidings? 3, Will the payment be made in full, or will only a portion be paid on account? 4, Was not an absolute promise made to pay up to 5s. on delivery of the wheat at the sidings?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The Commonwealth Government arrange for the money necessary to make the payments. 2, 5s. per bushel. 3 and 4, The arrangement as I understand it is to pay 5s. per bushel on delivery at sidings.

BILL—ANGLO-PERSIAN OIL COMPANY, LTD. (PRIVATE).

Report of Select Committee.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the Bill.

Report received and read.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin resolved: That the consideration of the report be made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [4.52]: When the Industries Assistance measure was originally introduced, it was explained that the purpose was to tide the country over a temporary difficulty. The crops at that time were exceptionally poor, and it was thought that legislation of this kind would give the Government power to assist the settlers until normal times returned. However, the normal times then looked for have not yet returned, and we still find it necessary to continue the operations of the Act year after year. On this occasion, instead of continuing the Act as formerly, amendments have been embodied in the Bill to give effect to something which the board have been doing for the past couple of years. I believe the deal made by the Government with the International Harvester Company and Harris, Scarfe & Company, Ltd., was made before the continuance measure was passed last session, and the amendments now occupying attention could well have been embodied in the Bill a year ago.

The Premier: I did not have an opportunity last year.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But the Government of the day had the opportunity to do so. An agreement was entered into with certain firms—an agreement that was unconstitutional until ratified by Parliament—and the

Government of the day failed to take the opportunity they then had to put the transaction on a constitutional basis. I agree with the general policy of the Industries Assistance Board. It has had a good effect on the country and particularly on the agricultural industry. I do not know whether the Government or the board have considered the question of taking stock of their clients, and weeding out those whose position is absolutely hopeless. There are many farmers on the board whose position is quite hopeless and they are not prepared even to work—I do not say this applies to the majority—but a considerable number have no possible hope of ever making good; yet they are just dragging on week after week, prolonging the agony at considerable expense to the State. The Government should consider this question in a businesslike way, examine the whole list of clients and ascertain what prospects there are of success. Those who have a prospect of making good should if necessary receive further assistance; those who have not should be told so straight out and be taken off the board's list. The member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) when Minister, displayed great optimism in his report each year on the operations of the board. When the Bill was introduced by him he expressed the opinion that within two years the whole of the clients on the board, or those worth keeping, would be able to pay off all their liabilities and the board would automatically go out of existence. So far from this having proved the case, the board like Tennyson's brook, seems to be going on for ever. The Premier, in moving the second reading of the Bill, made no statement as to whether the board had become a permanent institution or whether it was likely eventually to go out of existence. The Bill has made its appearance regularly for about four years past, and there appears to be no end to the business to be done by the board. I hope there will be no necessity to renew the Act in the year after next. The farmers are reaping a good harvest and are getting a good price for their wheat. Next year, too, they are guaranteed a good price and, if we get a fair average crop, practically all the settlers who are going to make good should have attained a sufficiently sound financial position to get off the board. A fact worthy of notice is that the average crops of board clients are considerably below the average for the State and, if effect is given to Clause 2 of the Bill, this discrepancy should disappear. Previously a man could keep stock on his farm, and it did not come under the operations of the board. We have heard rumours that settlers have turned their stock into their crops and have not been bothered whether they got a crop or not. The stock received the benefit of the crop, the owners sold the stock, and the board did not get the proceeds of the sale.

The Premier: Where did that happen?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Where did it happen? Why, the dogs are barking it in the street.

The PREMIER: Give one instance.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Something of the kind must have happened. How is it the board's clients show an average of three bushels below the average for the State when the seasons were just as good in their particular districts? There must be some foundation for the rumour, and the Minister ought to be able to explain it. Of course some settlers would defend this action on the ground that it was good policy. Some of them consider it good farming to put sheep on to a crop so that the crop will stool out well. To some, it is immaterial whether the board obtain any results, and sheep might easily have been kept on the crop for two or three weeks too long and so jeopardised the success of the crop.

Mr. Lutey: The Minister said some of the farmers on the board had been selling their pigs.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is undoubtedly correct, and the introduction of the clause enabling the stock on farms to be brought under the operations of the board will have a tendency to check that sort of business. I object to the policy of the Government taking over the liabilities of machinery firms. The creditors, whether they represent big business or little business, should receive equality of treatment. I do not suppose we can expect anything very different from the present Government who are the friends of the big business people. The representatives of the big machinery firms have thus been able to get the ear of the Government, and make deals with them satisfactory to themselves. The small business people, however, have repeatedly tried to get meted out to them by the various Ministers who have been in charge of the operations of the board the same treatment that has been meted out to the big firms. They have, however, not been successful in their endeavours. Men have gone to the Minister and suggested a composition of 30 per cent. of the money due to them by the clients of the board, and, although a considerably greater proportion of the debts due have been granted to the International Harvester Coy. and to Messrs. Harris Scarfe, the smaller business people were unable to get such an arrangement made for themselves. If there are any credits to come in the future I hope they will be equally distributed amongst all creditors, and that two or three of the big business houses will not be able to come along and take the lot.

The Premier: That cannot happen now.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The International Harvester Coy. and Messrs. Harris Scarfe were owed a considerable sum by the farmers who are clients of the board.

Mr. Hudson: The board did at one time differentiate.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Either unconstitutionally or illegally the Government arranged a composition with the International Harvester Coy. and Messrs. Harris, Scarfe, and

in the course of his recent remarks the Premier indicated that something like that would happen in the case of Wills & Co. If it is good business for the farmers of the State I do not object to it, so long as we know we shall get the money back. I think the rate that is being paid is sufficiently low to warrant us in believing that the money will be paid back, but I do object to certain people taking the lot while others get nothing. Business people have put up to the Minister in charge a concrete proposition to the effect that they were prepared to accept even 30 per cent. of the money owing, and yet they have not been able to draw a single penny. I have received a letter in connection with this matter, which I will read. It will afford the House an excellent idea of what I am talking about, seeing that it is from a man who is directly interested. It says—

I beg to inquire if you can let me know if any dividend is payable or will be payable shortly from farmers in this district. My account against farmers here is about £3,500.

That is spread over operations extending over 10 or 12 years.

And I have not received one penny dividend all this time from the Government.

The machinery firms, however, have got from £30,000 to £40,000 in dividends.

It seems strange that some of these farmers have a good number of sheep and appear to be doing well, and yet they are kept under the I.A.B. and the storekeeper gets nothing, not even interest, after waiting all this time, and it is time the Government paid some dividends or put these farmers off the I.A.B.

This man has received nothing. The case is characteristic of many others of the kind.

Trusting you might be in a position to give me some information on the subject by bringing it to the notice of the proper authorities.

This man and others have brought the matter under the notice of the proper authorities on many occasions, but without avail.

As any reasonable people will agree that the storekeepers have not been treated fairly there seems to be no equity about it. Re National Bank, their clients that were kept going by the bank by consent of the storekeepers present a statement of each client and divide the surplus in a businesslike way. But all I have had from the I.A.B. is—surplus, nil. Yours faithfully, John Urch.

The writer of this letter has been in business in Geraldton for 15 or 20 years. I give the board credit for assisting the farmers who are now on the land, but many of the people on the land would not have been able to get there had it not been for the assistance rendered to them by country

storekeepers, such as the writer of this letter.

The Premier: You can only distribute the surplus proceeds of the individual farmer.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Whatever profits there were the International Harvester people were able to get their cut out of them.

The Premier: They got some money, but it does not follow they got their cut.

Mr. WILLCOCK: They got something but this man has not got anything. I do not know whether he has been particularly unfortunate with regard to his clients, inasmuch as not one of his clients has been able to pay him a penny.

The Premier: He is unfortunate.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I know of another man in Geraldton who has been hard hit by the farmers. Those people who have been assisted by the country storekeepers to get on the land have not done the right thing by them.

The Premier: Very likely they have not.

Mr. WILLCOCK: When they have had money from the board, instead of saying to the people, to those who stuck to them, "Whatever share of business I may get I will give you a portion of it," they have started co-operative stores of their own, and have turned down those who stuck to them for 15 or 20 years. That to me savours of ingratitude, and should not have occurred. This is a characteristic case of many others of the same kind. The neighbourhood of Geraldton contains very few farmers who are on the board, for the simple reason that they were not allowed to go on the board.

The Premier: Why; because they were too impecunious?

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, because their land was freehold and they had been too long established. It is a noteworthy fact that the more a man owes to the Government the greater amount will they advance him.

The Minister for Mines: The same as the bank.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes. Everyone knows the policy of the board in this respect. If a man owes the board £1,500 and there is any possibility of their getting it back he can always get a further advance of £500. If, however, a farmer only owes the board £200 or £300, when he applies for a further advance he is told to go somewhere else, and get the accommodation at a considerably increased rate of interest. There are others who possess good and sound securities who cannot get a shilling out of the board, and have to go to a bank and pay two or three per cent. more for the money than they would have had to pay if the board had advanced it to them. This is how they are rewarded for their thrift and industry. I take it that the board was brought into existence in order to help those who would help themselves. There are many people on the board who firmly intend to stay there, and who are always in receipt of assistance, but men who are al-

ready in a good sound position on their farms are unable to get on the board when they want a little help. The present policy of the board is to chase the bad debts so that they may recover their money, and to leave the good people to scratch for themselves, even though these more industrious persons may be forced to pay two or three per cent. more for their money than they need do if the board would help them.

The Premier: Can you give me the names of any people who cannot get on the board, and I will make inquiries?

Mr. WILLCOCK: I do not want to be an informer, but what I have said is well known in the country.

The Premier: Is it a matter of "they say"?

Mr. WILLCOCK: No. I could supply the names of individuals who owe £200 or £300, but were not allowed to get on the board. Because of that they were driven to the banks where they had to pay up to nine per cent. for their money, which they could have got from the board at five per cent. They were freehold farmers and either they or their parents had been on their farms for 25 years.

Mr. Maley: Did that happen recently or in the early days?

Mr. WILLCOCK: In the early days. Something similar to what has happened here is happening in New South Wales. I have here a Press cutting under date of October 15th. Imagine the feelings of Mr. Urch when he reads this—

On his assumption of the control of the Agricultural Department to-day, Mr. Ashford outlined a comprehensive scheme for the assistance of farmers affected by the serious drought conditions which prevail. "Provision," said Mr. Ashford, "is to be made at whatever cost to tide necessitous farmers over their period of adversity, so that they may stay on the land, and increase the general productivity of the State next year."

This is practically on all fours with what occurred in this State when Mr. Johnson was Minister for Agriculture.

The Government appeals to storekeepers, machinery firms and others to refrain from harassing their farmer clients.

Fancy a man being asked not to harass his clients! Almost the same thing occurred here when Mr. Johnson was Minister for Agriculture. The Government of New South Wales are now appealing to the storekeepers and the machinery firms and others not to harass their clients.

The Premier: The man who wrote the letter is not in New South Wales.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Fancy this man writing for advice in connection with the Industries Assistance Board, as to whether it had been good business for him or whether he should refrain from harassing his clients.

It is proposed to establish representative boards in each shire to ascertain what are

the actual needs of the farmers, and to distribute the aid which is necessary to save the agricultural industry of the State. Unfortunately the much needed rains have not fallen, and, although there have been light falls in some districts, the position is still very serious from a farming point of view. In some districts the drought has lasted more than two years.

In New South Wales the Government are appealing to the business people and creditors of the farmers not to harass them at this particular time. The same thing was done here. The business people in Western Australia, who five or six years ago assisted the farmers and refrained from harassing them all this time, are now in such a position that they will not get a single shilling out of the operations of the board. It is evident that there is something seriously wrong with the administration of this board. Whether things will be all right now that the wheat business is to be fixed up I do not know. I hope that when the goods, chattels and sheep, etc., come in from the clients of the board they will be taken over by the board, and used to pay some of these people the money that has for so long been owing to them. I know of one man who is owed £10,000, although he allowed £3,000 more to be taken off what was due to him. He has received very little by way of dividends from the board. There is another man in the Northampton district. I have frequently met him on the doorstep of the Industries Assistance Board, where he has been endeavouring to effect some arrangement whereby he can get something out of the operations of the board to enable him to carry on his business. When introducing the Bill the Premier said that if there was any profit accruing from these payments, the Government would keep it.

The Premier: Not on past transactions.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am sure that the farmers will be well able to look after themselves.

Mr. Maley: You do not think we have been consulted beforehand, do you?

Hon. P. Collier: Do you believe the farmer will pay the Government?

Mr. WILLCOCK: He will have to pay the Government, because his assets are assigned to the Industries Assistance Board. If the Premier is looking to business of this kind for the reduction of his deficit, he is leaning on a broken reed. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Hickmott) disclosed the attitude of the farmers when speaking on the water rate business last session. Someone in all seriousness pointed out that the Government had given the farmers "final notice," whereupon the member for Pingelly smiled and said that the farmers took no notice of "final notices." I hope the Premier will not continue the policy of fostering big business, and giving to big business all the money that comes out of the Industries Assistance Board. There are creditors of the farmers to be found all over the State, and the whole of those creditors should be

treated on a footing of equality. Why do not the Government say to the other creditors, "If you will accept the same terms as the machinery firms, we will deal with you also?"

The Premier: I give this assurance, that if the debts are bad, we will not touch them. It must be a good deal for the Industries Assistance Board if they buy a debt.

Hon. P. Collier: Will you buy all good debts?

The Premier: Certainly. Would not you do so at this rate?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Government should definitely treat everyone on a footing of equality in this respect.

The Premier: So we do.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The International Harvester Company and Harris, Scarfe, & Co. are the only people who have been able to get anything out of the Industries Assistance Board so far. People who have kept farmers on the land for 15 or 16 years receive nothing when there are profits to be distributed. That is the effect of what has been done by the Government. Big people with influence, the International Harvester Coy. and Harris, Scarfe and Coy., have had consideration; and George Wills & Co. are coming along now. The man who put the farmer on the land and kept him there is better than the man who merely sold machinery to the farmer.

The Premier: Every man who sells machinery is a rogue.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I do not say anything of the kind, but I do say that the man who put the farmer on the land is better than the one who merely sold him machinery.

The Premier: Have people away from Geraldton complained to you about not receiving payment of their accounts?

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am not the Treasurer of this State by a long way yet, and I do not expect people all over the country to communicate with me. If the "West Australian" were to print my remarks in extenso, I would not be surprised to receive letters conveying similar complaints from 20 or 30 different centres throughout the State, letters pressing me to get the Government to do something in the matter. I do know, however, that other storekeepers have been treated in the same way and are unable to get any money. Any assets resulting from the working of a farm, whether from wheat or from sheep or from pigs or from cattle, should be made available to the people who have helped the farmer for years.

Mr. HUDSON (Yilgarn) [5.21]: I think we are all agreed on the general principle of the Industries Assistance Board, but to-day we are concerned more particularly with this amending Bill, and in that Bill there is a proposal to which I take serious exception. The board at present advance money on the security of the land and crops and general assets of the borrower, with which the Gov-

ernment have supplied him. Under this Bill, however, it is proposed to extend the board's statutory security over the whole of the assets of the borrower, to the exclusion of all other creditors, unless those creditors are themselves secured.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the Government are paying the other creditors.

Mr. HUDSON: But there is no obligation on the part of the Government to pay the other creditors. If there were, my objection would have no weight. The Government are not giving any undertaking to pay those debts, and yet they are taking security over the heads of individual creditors. Thus the outside creditors will be deprived of their remedy. Let me quote an actual case to illustrate the position. I have a client who was formerly the possessor of two horses and two drays, with the necessary harness. He sold the horses, and was left with the drays and harness. He was one of those young-old men who wanted to go to the Front. He was imbued with the patriotic spirit, and he enlisted. He sold one dray and harness to one farmer, and the other dray and harness to another farmer; and he took what he thought to be some degree of security for the payment of the two amounts due, about £15 each. He accepted promissory notes payable at long dates. Returning from the war recently, he found that the farmers had not met the bills they had given, and he sought advice. Under his instructions I wrote to the two farmers demanding payment of the amounts of the bills. Both the farmers replied, quite casually, to the effect that they admitted having given the promissory notes to this soldier, that they acknowledged having got this credit, that they admitted owing the money, and that they referred me to the Industries Assistance Board. If the drays and harness are still in the possession of the farmers, the soldier has a reasonable possibility of recovering part of the money owing to him. But, if this Bill is carried, without the Industries Assistance Board being bound in any way to redeem the obligations of the farmers, the board can take security over all the assets, including the drays and harness, and not pay the soldier except rateably with themselves at a distribution of money being profits from the working of the farms. That is an injustice, and I think the matter may be dealt with more extensively in the Committee stage, when I propose to move an amendment.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [5.26]: I listened attentively to the remarks of the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) regarding the scope of the operations of machinery merchants and of individual storekeepers. The machinery firms have never sold any of their plant to farmers except on the hire purchase system, and if the farmer's bills were not met the machinery firms always had the right to take repossession of the machinery. The capital outlay of the Industries Assistance Board would have been in-

creased by almost another million sterling if the board had had to buy off all the machinery firms or to protect the farmers against the undoubted claims under the hire purchase agreements. Unfortunately for the storekeepers they were not protected by hire purchase agreements, or anything of that nature. I candidly admit that the country storekeeper of Western Australia has done a considerable amount towards the agricultural development of the State by giving the struggling farmers goods on credit. I trust some scheme will be devised whereby the storekeeper may receive consideration, as well as the machinery merchant. I may remind the member for Geraldton, and other members opposite, that the principal Act was introduced when members now in Opposition were sitting on the Treasury benches.

Mr. Willcock: It was introduced as a temporary measure.

Mr. MALEY: It was entitled an Act to enable seed wheat and other commodities to be supplied to farmers during a period of drought. I hold no brief whatever for the assisted settler who does not acknowledge his obligations to the State and to every other creditor. It is a fact that many farmers in the northern districts who were stricken in the same way as the farmers elsewhere who have received assistance, never approached the Government for relief, but went to their own banking institutions. It would be a sweeping assertion to say, as the member for Geraldton has said, that a fairly large percentage, almost a majority, of the farmers on the Industries Assistance Board went on the board in order to evade their obligations, and with the intention of disregarding their obligations to the board when they got on. Most of those farmers were never in a position to make a success of their holdings.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did the member for Geraldton say what you quote him as having said?

Mr. MALEY: I understood him to say that.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I do not think he said, a majority.

Mr. MALEY: Not a majority, but a very large minority.

Mr. Willcock: I did not.

Mr. MALEY: That was what I understood the hon. member to say.

Mr. Willcock: The member for Greenough has misunderstood me. I did not say even a large minority. I said, a considerable number. I specifically stressed that point.

Mr. MALEY: It has been the policy of the Government for some time to assist those settlers who were allowed to go on the board in the early days of its administration when there was a rush from all over the State to take advantage of the shelter offered by the board, and more particularly by those who were farming less than 100 acres of land. Hon. members must recognise that any man who farms less than 100 acres, or even less than 500 acres, has not much chance of making a success, and it has been the policy of the board in later years to make further advances through the Agricultural Bank to those people to give them a chance to make good.

It was a policy of the State that made our agricultural areas capable of development, and helped the settlers to make a living by wheat growing alone, which, many with experience know, is a big gamble. I intend to attack the amendment in Committee, because it seems to me to be like locking the stable door after the horse has been stolen. The Act has been in force since 1915, and if there was any occasion to protect the board in regard to assisted settlers in the intervening period, the Premier knows that the necessary action was not taken. At the present time the people who are on the board have a chance of making a fair recovery within the next few years, and that being the case there should not be the necessity to introduce an amendment of this description. The members of the board themselves are not unanimous on this point, and never have been. The member for Canning, when Minister controlling this department, made many misstatements, not wilfully of course, when he outlined the position to the House in 1917. The position was then so good that he declared it was a matter of only a year or two before the board, having fulfilled its functions, would be relegated amongst the things of the past. Those who knew something of the situation considered that that statement was too optimistic. As I have already stated, I do not hold any brief for settlers who have taken advantage of the Act in order to evade their obligations, but I am of opinion that as the measure was introduced for a special purpose it should be permitted to complete its functions. Every man who is trying to redeem his obligation will have a chance during the next two or three years to make good, and the opportunity should be given him to do that. Of course we all desire to see the termination of the Act, but it cannot be denied that it has been a useful piece of legislation because it has enabled many who were in a bad way to cultivate enough land to help them to get out of their difficulties. There will be some hope for the termination of the measure within the next few years, but not before. I would like the Premier when replying to state whether the board are unanimous in asking for this power the Bill proposes to give.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [5.37]: I have no objection whatever to the continuance of this measure, and neither have I any objection to the amendment.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The last clause is the only one that should pass.

Mr. TROY: With the member for Geraldton I criticise the action of the Government in making agreements to purchase assets of certain large corporations whilst at the same time they are neglecting the just demands of another body in the State who are equally, if not more, deserving. It has to be remembered that if it had not been for the small storekeeper the farmer would not have been in the position to purchase machinery; neither would he have had assets which induced the

machinery companies to sell him machinery on the hire-purchase system. I object to the special consideration which is being given to these large corporations, and to the neglect on the part of the Government to do ordinary justice to a body of citizens in the State. Some reference has been made to the fact that the Government in purchasing these assets have made a decent deal, and that they will have a considerable surplus over and above what they paid for the assets. In my opinion assets which may have been worth £200,000 when the Act was first passed are only worth half that sum to-day. For instance, second-hand machinery in very many cases has been badly handled. The farmers who are on the board have always been in such a difficult financial position that they have never been able to provide proper shelter for machinery. In a majority of instances it has been kept in the open field, and consequently it has deteriorated to a considerable extent. In my opinion the farmers will yet come along and ask the Government to wipe off some of their liabilities.

Hon. P. Collier: Oh, surely they will not.

Mr. TROY: The firms have made a very decent deal, and they have got out of this business very well. I cannot understand the objection raised by the member for Greenough (Mr. Maley) to the Government taking over livestock.

Mr. Maley: Why did they not put it in the Bill at the start?

Mr. TROY: A farmer on the Industries Assistance Board has creditors, and those creditors may have a lien on his property, and on his livestock also. Why should not the Government, which is the most benevolent creditor, be in a similar position? I cannot understand it. The hon. member's objection is because certain of his constituents have raised a cry against the Government taking livestock. The Government are in the position of trustees, and they have to administer an estate in the interests of the farmer and his creditors. The Government are not creditors; they are merely trustees. They have carried on the farm until such time as the farmer was able to meet his liabilities.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The farmer's hope of paying the storekeeper would have been Buckley's but for the Government keeping him on the land.

Mr. TROY: The Government provide reasonable sustenance for the farmer on the Industries Assistance Board, and since that farmer is assured of so much of his sustenance, and can produce the rest on his farm, he is in a very happy position as against other farmers not on the board, and so he ought to be exceedingly grateful to the Government. The Government give the I.A.B. farmers special consideration. How on earth can it be claimed that those people are badly treated in having their live stock and other chattels taken over by the Government as trustee? If one

requires to purchase bags, the merchant wants his cash; as against that, the Government wait until the farmer realises on his harvest. In my opinion, men on the I.A.B. are a specially privileged class. Like the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willecock) I do not condemn the farmers on the I.A.B. Some of them are of the very best of settlers. Not all of them are of this class. I know one who owns 3,000 sheep. He employed a man to put in his crop. When that man applied for his wages, he was referred to the I.A.B. The Government inspector allows the I.A.B. farmer a percentage of the wages paid for assistance, but those farmers can employ other men.

The Premier: And they have to pay them.

Mr. TROY: How are they to get the money? This farmer referred his labourer to the I.A.B., saying, "You were employed to put in my crop, and you cannot get any payment out of my sheep." It was a most dishonest action, notwithstanding which the farmer is sheltered by the I.A.B. Since the Government maintain the farmers on the board, make provision for them, protect them from prosecution, postpone their debts and carry them on from year to year, I think the farmers so favoured ought to have no objection to handing over their goods and chattels to so benevolent a Government. It has been said that it is time the Government pushed off the board farmers who are not doing a fair thing. I have heard of such farmers. But consider this remarkable feature: The arrangement made is to push off the board those men who are doing well, those who are industrious and are making good, whereas the Government are prepared to retain a number of farmers who for various reasons, principally for lack of industry, will never make good.

The Premier: They are fired off.

Mr. TROY: No, that is just the trouble. Of course failure is not always due to lack of industry. I know some farmers on land which they were induced to take up, when the Premier was Minister for Lands, on the assurance that it would grow wheat.

The Premier: Give us some names.

Mr. TROY: There are the Brenkleys brothers in my district, sober, intelligent, industrious men, deserving of the best of farms; yet the land they hold is no good. Such men ought to receive every consideration. But in many instances the non-successful farmer is not industrious, and never will be. I have heard it said that the farmer is the one man in the community who throughout the war stuck to his job and refused to go out on strike. Why should he, seeing that he is working for himself and has expectations of reaping the whole of his product?

Mr. Pickering: That is not quite true.

Mr. TROY: It is absolutely true. Of his own enterprise and industry he receives practically the full product. He works for no other man. The credit which it is sought to give the farmer for not having gone out on strike cannot be seriously entertained be-

cause, as I say, he is working for himself. I will admit that the burden of increased prices falls most heavily on the farmer and other primary producers, together with the wage-earners. But the farmer is borne up by the knowledge that the more he produces the greater will be his competency, whereas the railway worker and the miner realise that no matter how hard they work the result will be the same. I agree with the main principle of the Bill, but I cannot approve the special concern shown by the Government for certain interests. If the amendment proposed by the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Hudson) will afford a greater measure of justice, I will support it. The I.A.B. has been of material advantage to the people of the State. It is one of the measures which were introduced by the Labour Government and, like all other reforms introduced by that Government, it met at the outset with the bitterest opposition from those whom it was intended to serve. Just as the farmers have condemned the wheat pool, but now approve it, so did they in the beginning condemn the I.A.B. which they now applaud. I know several instances of farmers giving the Government less than a fair deal in return for what has been done for them. I have known come to a siding trucks consigned to persons who had no existence, and I have seen those trucks go back full of wheat railed by other persons. That is not giving the Government a fair deal. Still, I believe that a majority of the I.A.B. farmers are endeavouring to make good. I will do my utmost to see that those men get a fair deal. In my opinion the basis of successful land settlement is good land. I will support the Bill, reserving the right to fall in with any amendment which seems to provide a greater measure of justice.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.59]: I expected to hear members of the Country party on the second reading. Surely those who pose as representatives of the farmers should express their approval of a Bill specially designed in the interests of the farmers. At the very least we should have the opinion of the leader of the Country party as a guide, not only to those supporting him, but to those on this side of the House, who at all times are ready to assist the farmers.

The Monorary Minister: There are some members who can be neither led nor driven, but are utterly obstinate.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No doubt the Honorary Minister comes in that category. I am surprised that the Government have brought down a measure such as this. They are taking up the business of money lenders, an occupation followed for many years by people belonging to the Jewish persuasion.

The Minister for Works: Have we the usual sign hanging out?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is time the Government put the three balls up.

Mr. Harrison: Do you not regard it as relieving the farmers?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I shall deal with that presently. No doubt the Government, by this Bill, are making another bid for a continuation of the support of the party known as the farmers and settlers or Country party.

Hon. P. Collier: The Government have been instructed that the support of the Country party is conditional upon passing this Bill.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some years ago, before the present Premier took office, a deputation waited on the Government with a view to getting them to compound with the various merchants for the debts of farmers, the idea being to relieve the farmers from what was described as the power held over them by the merchants.

Mr. Harrison: That did not come from the farmers, but from the merchants.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It came from the Farmers and Settlers' Association. The outcome was that the Premier of the day, who ordinarily would not have attempted to do anything contrary to the laws of the land, immediately acceded to the request to pacify the farmers. That deputation was so successful that another well known gentleman who was not a member of the Farmers and Settlers' Association—I must take the word of the leader of the Country party, that he was not a member—a gentleman named S. J. McGibbon—

Mr. Harrison: I said it did not arise from the farmers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Based on the success of the action previously taken, Mr. McGibbon formulated a scheme in regard to some of the machinery merchants. This gentleman, of course, placed his scheme before the Farmers and Settlers' conference, and they approved of it without a dissentient voice.

Hon. P. Collier: Hence we find the Bill here.

The Minister for Works: What is that journal you have before you?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The only paper printed in Western Australia which gives the truth about the farmers.

The Minister for Works: What is it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The "Primary Producer." I commend this paper for not hiding anything; they are not even backward in claiming what they did not get. Dealing with this question at the Farmers and Settlers' conference, Mr. McGibbon was rather afraid there would be a popular outcry against the course of action he proposed.

Hon. P. Collier: He knew they had not a good case.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He was afraid the people might raise opposition if the Government took action on the lines he pro-

posed. According to the "Primary Producer" he said—

If there is going to be any popular outcry against the scheme proposed when the details are being arrived at, as the scheme will have to go before Parliament and the Country party will require to support that enabling measure, it will be necessary to guard against any eleventh hour retraction.

Hon. P. Collier: He put the whip on them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That was the crack of the whip. He was afraid that even some members of the Country party might realise this was a barefaced scheme to impose upon the finances of the State, and would even retract at the eleventh hour.

The Premier: There is not a word of his in this Bill.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That was the beginning of the scheme. The Premier's Bill is the result of representations made prior to the big scheme being developed.

The Premier: No, that is not so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is so; the present Premier was not in office when the representations were made.

The Premier: I am here now and I have the Bill.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Government of the day yielded to the request made by the Country party. The best thing which those members who do not belong to the Country party can do is to retire from the Chamber. The Country party control the Government. I do not remember one solitary request of any importance put up to the Government by the Country party during the last two or three years, that has been turned down by the Government.

The Honorary Minister: Showing how very genuine our requests were.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not at all. A party compact was entered into to turn out of office the Labour party, who would not go the whole hog.

The Premier: I do not know of a single request given effect to by legislation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The only member of the Country party who has spoken on this Bill is the member for Greenough (Mr. Maley). The very clause in this Bill to protect the Government for any advances which they make is the only clause to which the member for Greenough objects.

The Honorary Minister: And you object to all the others.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In other words, the member for Greenough says to the Government, "Take over our liabilities and pay our debts, but you must not touch us in any way or protect yourselves in regard to the assets you hold and which you have purchased for us."

The Premier: There is not one word about buying debts.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member's only objection to the Bill was in

respect to this one clause. I wonder he does not think himself justified in asking what right have the Government to take a lien over sheep or machinery which the Government have purchased for the farmer.

Mr. Harrison: Which were not bought by the Government.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for Greenough objected to the whole clause.

Mr. Harrison: You are wrong.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Government have no right to take security over anything even if they do lend the farmers money. That is the policy of the Government. I do not think they carry their policy out.

Mr. Pickering: It is time we got you on this side of the House.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is not the policy of the Government to enter into trading.

The Premier: No it is not; this is not trading.

Hon. P. Collier: This is worse; it is speculation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is some honesty in trading but we find that the Government have sunk beneath that and taken on gambling in which there is no honesty. The Government have entered into a gamble as regards the purchase of this machinery. I ask members whether they honestly in their quiet and sane moments—

Hon. P. Collier: If they have any.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Do they honestly believe that the machinery merchants of America, who are the biggest business people being dealt with, would hand over and compound with the Government if they could not see they were getting a benefit out of it? Does the Premier desire to inveigle us into the belief that such would be the case?

The Honorary Minister: It is a decent and honourable bargain.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: So far this year, we have not received the report of the Industries Assistance Board but, according to returns laid on the Table last year, the amount of money owing to creditors which even the Industries Assistance Board declared to be bad amounted to no less than £45,806. These are some of the machinery claims which the Government have purchased. The board said these debts were bad; in other words that it would never be possible to collect them. These debts represent to a very large extent the machinery purchased by the farmers to carry on their farming operations. Again, we find that doubtful debts amounted to £294,013, all owing to outside creditors, and these are the persons whom the Government have relieved of the farmers' debts. The Government have stepped in and relieved the merchants and compounded with them by accepting so much in the pound for these bad and doubtful debts. I guarantee there are not many good debts amongst them.

Hon. P. Collier: They would not part with the good debts.

The Premier: Yes, they parted with the whole of their debts.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: These firms accepted bonds for the payment of these debts, doubtful debts £294,000, bad debts £45,800.

The Premier: All for machinery!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, but all debts owing to outside creditors, and a very large percentage of farmers' debts represents machinery.

Hon. P. Collier: The Premier himself said it was mostly for machinery.

The Premier: I have not bought any debts. I do not care whether you pass the Bill or not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Most of these debts were purchased before the present Premier assumed office. The ex-Minister for Industries, the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson), said the Labour party should have been indicted in regard to the action they took. This is where the money of the State is going. I do not know where the Government will find the money to pay the deficit if they use their funds so recklessly as this.

Hon. P. Collier: Six per cent. loan money.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In 1915, when the Industries Assistance Act was passed, provision was made in the third schedule to show how the money, which was received by the Industries Assistance Board from the farmers in payment of their liabilities, would be distributed. The schedule is as follows:—

- (1) One half of one current or past due payment for approved machinery.
- (2) Current year's rates and taxes.
- (3) One year's interest due to other mortgagees or holders of vendors' liens.
- (4) Current year's Water Supply rates and charges.
- (5) Balance of one current or one past due payment for approved machinery.
- (6) Rent for not exceeding 12 months due to Department of Lands.
- (7) The applicant's cash requirements to not exceeding 25 per cent. of the surplus then remaining, and debts incurred in the working expenses of planting and harvesting the crop of the 1913-14 season.
- (8) Other debts including rents in arrear or moneys due for advances made to enable an applicant to pay arrears of rent, etc.

The basis on which this schedule was put into the Act was an agreement which had been entered into by the various merchants and business people, who had been trading with the farmers of the State. A very large amount has been paid by the I.A.B. for the farmers in accordance with the agreement. Anyone looking through this return cannot but come to the conclusion that instead of those persons who were trading in machinery, and who knew full well that a lot of that machinery would be in a badly damaged state through being left out in the weather without any cover for some considerable time, suffering any loss, in all probability the arrangement made by the Government will show them a profit.

The Honorary Minister: Do you not think that was taken into consideration?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know.

The Honorary Minister: I refer to the condition of the machinery.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A great number of the machinery merchants are alive to their interests in regard to this arrangement with the Government, and far more alive than those officers of the Government are in making the agreement with the creditors. I remember discussing this question on one occasion with a person who trades in machinery. At that time he had just received a letter from a farmer, who had bought a plough from him, telling him that he was leaving the land, that he had paid his first instalments on the plough, and asking him to take it back. This gentleman told me if he had sent for the plough, repainted it, and put in on the market again as a second-hand plough, it would have paid him better to have left the plough on the farm. He therefore did so. It paid him better to lose the balance of the payment than to send for the implement, do it up, and resell it.

The Honorary Minister: You are putting your farmer friend up to a pretty good point.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I quote this instance to illustrate the fact that in all probability a lot of the machinery the Government have purchased will be on all fours with this particular plough.

Mr. Harrison: I suppose it was a cheap single-furrow plough?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I did not inquire. The probabilities are that if the Government send for the machinery, which they will not do, and we know they will not do, instead of there being a profit for them, there will be a loss. Instead of the Government making a good bargain by this arrangement that they have entered into, the result will most likely be bad from the point of view of the State. In all probability, also, a large number of those persons for whom this arrangement has been made are on the list as bad and doubtful debts. We have many small storekeepers in the State, who, during the trying period, went bankrupt. Some lost everything they had owing to the fact that the farmers could not pay their accounts. There is no talk of any arrangement so far as they are concerned. If the Government adopt this principle so far as one industry is affected, it is necessary that it should be adopted in the case of other industries.

The Honorary Minister: Has not that been done?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not that I know of.

The Honorary Minister: Not in connection with the mining industry?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Have the Government compounded with creditors connected with that industry?

The Honorary Minister: We have stepped in between owners of machinery and the

mining people in order to enable them to continue.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Have they paid off the owners of machinery at reduced rates in order to protect the mining people? If a principle is good in one case, it is good in another. There are many citizens of this State, I do not care whether they are bricklayers, plasterers, or labourers who, if they are in debt and desire to make arrangements with their creditors to receive so much in the pound and get a clean sheet, have as much right to ask the Government to find the money for this purpose as the farmers have. If the Government are entering into this business as moneylenders, as they are doing—

Hon. T. Walker: Money givers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then they should embrace everybody. It is called a loan, though I think a good deal of the money is given. This is a bad principle. It is a principle in connection with which the finances of the State should not be employed. It was never intended that the Government should enter into this line of business. In order to justify their actions, the Premier, in effect, says, "We hold the assets of the farmer; we take his wheat; we only can sell his wheat; we will not allow any person to trade in it, and are going to make the farmer pay up the full amount although we have been able to get this machinery at a reduced rate. There will be no loss to us; the farmer will not get the benefit of it; we have entered into an arrangement for the full amount to be paid to us, and the farmer has to pay us instead of the merchant." That bluff will not go down with me. I do not believe the Premier has any intention of making the farmers pay anything more than the Government will pay, plus interest. In all probability in a number of instances the Government will not be able to realise the amount they have paid, and in such cases will lose on the transaction. Many wholesale and retail traders in the State would be only too pleased if the Government took over their responsibilities and debts from some of their clients on a basis similar to that which has been adopted by the Government in this instance. They would jump at the chance, and would be justified in doing so.

Mr. Harrison: That case is not on all fours with the other.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not expect the hon. member to think so. The Government should be no respectors of persons. Every citizen in the State should be served alike. If the Government do not do so, and do not realise that each citizen is of equal value with the other, in the matter of Government assistance, they will not be carrying out their duties fairly and honestly. They took their oath to do so at the time they were sworn in.

Mr. Harrison: They have assisted every unit in the State.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They have assisted only one unit; the other units have had to do the best they could for themselves. Take the case of the American company, which the Government were foolish enough to buy out. This company was sending money out of the State and had come here for the purpose of profiteering. They failed in their desires so far as agricultural implements were concerned, and they then found a fool of a Government, to buy them out. They go away to America laughing in their sleeves to think what fools they found the Government here. In my opinion the Bill should not pass, except as regards its last clause. The principle of the measure as a whole would be detrimental to the best interests of the State.

The Honorary Minister: It has been done.

Hon. W. ANGWIN: That is no justification whatever for passing the Bill. If it has been done, it has been done contrary to law. When the Labour party were in power, they were told that they ought to be impeached in connection with something not nearly so bad as this. In fact, for the action in respect of which we were told we should be impeached we had a law on the statute-book. We were legally authorised to spend the money. In this instance, however, the present Government have spent money wrongfully, and now bring in this measure to legalise their unlawful actions.

Mr. Maley: Your Cabinet made a very grave mistake in their administration of the Industries Assistance Act.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If we made only one mistake, we are very well satisfied. But the mistake of the present Government can hardly be termed a mistake, since the action was taken by the advice of the legal gentleman in the Cabinet. It was really a violation of the laws of this country. And that kind of thing has been done with the knowledge of the Attorney General, who should guide the Government in legal matters. I trust hon. members will deal with the Bill as I suggest. It is desirable that the Industries Assistance Board should be closed down as early as possible, so that the farmer may again have perfect freedom in dealing with his own affairs; which would be far better for him and for the State. Seeing, however, that the Industries Assistance Board cannot very well be closed down at the present time, the last clause of the Bill will have my support.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [7.49]: The member for Greenough (Mr. Maley) said to-night that there had been a rush of farmers from all over the State to avail themselves of the provisions of the Industries Assistance Act.

Mr. Maley: From the agricultural areas.

Mr. PICKERING: So far as the South-West is concerned, one of my constituents asked for assistance, with a view to purchasing stock.

Mr. Maley: There was no drought in the South-West.

Mr. PICKERING: That application was turned down. I mention the fact because the

member for Greenough singles out the South-West for contumely whenever he speaks. The South-West has gone on without the help of the Industries Assistance Board, and settlement in the South-West is in the main on sound lines. As regards the question of the agricultural implements to which the Bill more particularly refers, we know very well that in a great many cases these implements are left exposed to the weather, so that the wear and tear they receive is very severe and they must represent a wasting asset. It would be interesting to know over what period the Bill is to have effect. Will it apply only to implements bought to-day, or also to implements bought some years ago? I think it is intended to cover implements bought perhaps three or four years ago, in which case the asset would probably be of inconsiderable value. The member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) drew attention to the impossibility of various farmers making good under the Industries Assistance Board. After travelling through some of the wheat areas I am convinced that it is absolutely improbable that a large number of settlers in those areas will ever make good, owing to the nature of the land on which they are placed. The same thing applies to the South-West. Many settlers there have been unfortunate in obtaining unsuitable land, and consequently have not been able to make good as they would have done had they been placed on sound propositions. A parallel was drawn by the member for Mt. Magnet, and also by the member for North-East Fremantle, between labour of various kinds and farming; and those hon. members argued that Government assistance should be given equally all round. I believe that the farmer is singled out for Government assistance because of recognition of the fact that he goes out into the country, frequently without capital, and by considerable labour, self-sacrifice, and self-denial eventually makes good. In order to do so he gives up all the advantages to be derived from living in a city or a town. By years of consistent effort and unstinted labour, he is enabled to build up an asset which the State recognises as of value to the community in general. To my mind that is the reason why the State realises that it has a duty to assist the man on the land. On the other hand, the Government have done a good deal for the classes particularised by the members for Mt. Magnet and North-East Fremantle. The Government have liberally provided for workers' homes, a very good idea which has been availed of very freely. Very little security has been required by the State in connection with the workers' homes scheme—merely security for interest and sinking fund. For many years the farmer could obtain from the Agricultural Bank, under the Act governing that institution, only a sum of £30 for the purpose of building a home. The farmer had to struggle on in a bark hut or a tent for years, until he attained a sufficient measure of prosperity

to enable him to build a modest home. To the farmer the home is everything. When he finishes his hard day's work, what has he to go to if he has not a decent home? He has no amusements like the man living in a town, who has all the pleasures he desires. A question has been raised as to the disposal of the surplus, if any, which may arise from buying the farmers' debts under this Bill. I consider that if there is a surplus it should be allocated from one farmer to another until the expenditure of the Government has been wiped off. From reports which have been submitted, I believe that the great majority of farmers on the Industries Assistance Board will ultimately make good. Those who make good will contribute towards others who fail, and ultimately there should be sufficient money to wipe off the amount advanced by the Government. Any surplus should, in my opinion, go towards the liquidation of the debts owing to the unfortunate storekeepers. I am sure every farmer regrets exceedingly the circumstances in which those storekeepers are placed. However, I do not purpose to deal with that question at any length, because the Industries Assistance Board do not operate in that particular section of Western Australia which I have the honour to represent. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [7.58]: The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) seems to think that the Country party were the cause of this measure being introduced, and that the clauses dealing with farming machinery were inserted at the request of this party. The Country party, however, have not put any pressure whatever on the Government in this matter; nor have we had any intention of bringing pressure to bear on the Government. Had the member for North-East Fremantle read the report of the executive body who assist the Government in administering the Industries Assistance Act, he would have found that this Bill represents a recommendation of that body. I can claim to know something about the supply of farming machinery, having for years been connected with the selling of machinery to farmers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You were a middleman.

Mr. HARRISON: At that particular time, yes. I am in a position to state that the machinery merchant invariably obtains a hire-purchase agreement which amply protects him. If the first payment under that agreement is met by the farmer, the merchant's security is a pretty good one. After the Act came into existence the farmers were not making good at the rate it was expected they would do, and payments for machinery etc. were not being kept up. An agreement was entered into between the Government of the day and the merchants to divide the proceeds derived from the assisted farmers in accord-

ance with the third schedule of the Act. The asset of the Government to-day as mortgagee is the improved land together with the secured amounts through the Board. The purchase of the settlers' liabilities to machinery merchants at reduced values is good business on both sides. What did it mean to the Government when the Government were backing these farmers? It meant that the Government in reducing the liability of the individual farmers were carrying out a good business proposition for themselves because the money from the crops that would have gone to meet the deferred payments was reduced by the pro rata value. As a matter of fact this particular method of payment to the merchants was acceptable to the Government because it was realised that it meant a big difference to them if they could get a man to make good through this arrangement. According to the Premier's statement last night the farmer who does pay the full amount makes up for the defaulter. I do not like to use the word "defaulter" because many of these men have not been able to make good through no fault of their own. In many cases the land has not proved as productive as was expected and the rainfall in some cases interfered with the success of operations. The fact remains, however, that the Government have been on a good wicket so far as the payments to merchants for machinery are concerned, and now we have the member for Sussex advocating that this money over and above what is owing to the merchants by those farmers who have succeeded should go to the storekeeper. The Government have acted wisely in reducing the liabilities of these men collectively. Some time ago the merchants requested Mr. McGibbon to approach the farmers and settlers in the direction of seeing whether a compromise could not be arrived at so that the merchants and storekeepers should procure cash value instead of book value, which would be a larger amount. Would it not have been better for the State if the book values had been reduced rather than have the full amount of the bigger obligation still resting on the land held by the farmers? It depends upon a man's energy on his holding as to whether he pulls through. To-day, however, the obligation is heavy. There are the interest charges and the redemption of the obligation to remember, and it is a question whether even some of the most energetic will be able to pull out unless they get a succession of extra good seasons.

Mr. Munsie: It must be a dangerous business to advance money on farms.

Mr. HARRISON: A certain few under the board have not been acting fairly by the Government and there is a provision now that their live stock and machinery shall be a still further security to the Government. I am not going to plead for the dishonest man. If we have dishonest men amongst farmers the Government want machinery

whereby they can make a man meet his obligations, and I as leader of the Country party stand for giving the Government power to deal with dishonest men, no matter what their calling may be.

Mr. O'Loghlea: You would not put them away; I would not admire you if you did.

Mr. HARRISON: The Bill will enable the Government to act in certain cases where it is known that a man has not been keeping faith with the Government. I trust that if the Premier gets the Bill through, his officers will act wisely and will not deal harshly with the legitimate and honest worker who is doing his level best to pull through. I trust they will not foreclose on any man prematurely. We read in this year's report of the Industries Assistance Board that some of the men whom the board thought it was in the best interests to get rid of, are still working on their holdings, and doing their level best to pull through. I admire their pluck, even though the Government have withdrawn assistance. According to the report the clearances during the year numbered 104. These settlers sent to the board £205,132 worth of proceeds. Of this amount, £157,710 worth was utilised in redemption of the board advances and interest charges, £20,260 was paid to creditors representing 20s. in the pound, while an amount of £27,162 was handed to the settlers representing their credit balance. In every case of clearance, a settler's wheat warrants are endorsed and duly handed to him. During the last four years 476 clearances have been granted. Of the proceeds received by the board from such settlers during the year who obtained their clearance, the sum of £282,658 was in recoup of the board's advances, and £10,019 in repayment of interest, £49,127 was paid to creditors, while £63,537 was handed over to settlers after payment of all their liabilities. According to the report the advances made for the year totalled £661,908. The area under crop for the 1919-20 season was 521,986 acres. Hon. members went through those districts where a large number of I.A.B. men were engaged in farming and saw the lands and crops of these people. If an average of 10 bushels to the acre is obtained from this area, the value of the wheat at 5s. per bushel will be £1,304,965 secured to the State for a capital outlay of £661,908. Unfortunately last year the forecast was not nearly reached. The average for the State worked out at 7.7 bushels to the acre. We must realise that these men have not the capital with which to do as they would like with regard to farming, and consequently they cannot get the same results from the soil as the men who possess means. These much abused men, while their average did not reach the general average of the State, secured an average which was not very much below that figure. It worked out at 6.9. The deliveries to the Wheat Pool made by the settlers under the board during the last four years have been as follows:—1915-16, 4,954,608 bushels; 1916-17, 4,005,909 bush-

els; 1917-18, 2,370,753 bushels; 1918-19, 2,510,553 bushels. Those figures deal with the farmers assisted by the board. If assistance had not been given to these people, we can imagine—and it is only imagination—what would have been the condition of Western Australia to-day.

Mr. O'Loghlea: There is not much imagination in this Assembly to-night. Everyone is asleep.

Mr. HARRISON: It is very unfortunate that this Bill is going through the House without comment from the men who represent the agricultural interests. When those members left their homes at the beginning of the week they had no knowledge that it was proposed to sit on Friday, therefore they could not cancel other arrangements that they had made. One pleasing feature of this report is that over 50 per cent. of the land under crop this season was fallowed land, and therefore the results ought to be equal to 10 bushels to the acre. On page 16 of the report we find this—

The total amount of claims submitted by creditors for proof against the various estates of assisted settlers amounted to £678,228 12s. 11d. During the four years in which crops have been handled by the board these claims have been reduced by actual payments by no less a sum than £249,461 17s. 7d., which is a very creditable performance on the part of so many settlers. The balance of claims now proved amounts to £428,766 15s. 4d.

I trust that the measure will be carried, that the powers asked for will be exercised with sympathy, and that any man with land who is willing to do his best will be given an opportunity to continue his efforts.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—TREASURY BONDS DEFICIENCY.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the previous day.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL — COOLGARDIE GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY LOAN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [8.20]: I am not sure that we are not endeavouring to perpetuate what in some quarters would be considered an act of repudiation in reducing the payments to the sinking fund under the Coolgardie Water Supply Loan Act. Of course it has been the general opinion

of the House, and indeed of a previous Parliament, that owing to our financial position we would be justified in cutting out payments to our sinking fund where possible. I was not quite able to follow the figures supplied by the Premier when moving the second reading. For instance, he said that if we continue to pay at the present rate, namely, three per cent., until the loan falls due in 1927, we shall have contributed £589,000 in excess of the amount required to redeem the loan.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier also stated that our payments to the sinking fund now are about £75,000 per annum. If one multiplies £75,000 by eight, representing the remaining years of the loan, one gets, roughly, £600,00.

The Premier: With accruing interest it means nearly £800,000.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The sinking fund is invested and the interest coming in would represent the difference between the two sums? I was going to say it would not require £10,000 per annum from now to 1927 to meet the remaining payments. The Premier said he thought £5,000 per annum would be sufficient. I suppose we shall have to adopt some proposal such as this, although, having regard to the future, I doubt whether it would not be better to continue paying our interest until a sufficient sum has been contributed to redeem the loan, whereupon we could cease our sinking fund contributions altogether.

Mr. Brown: But we require to save the interest.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, the Premier is taking advantage of the situation to save £60,000 or £65,000 per annum. Past Treasurers have not received a fair proportion of this saving, because obviously it ought to have been spread over a number of years. As we have gone on paying three per cent. for some 24 years I do not know that it is worth while making any alteration when in two or three years' time the whole of the debt will have been liquidated. However, out of consideration for the financial position I believe we are justified in reducing the sinking fund where it can be done legitimately. This seems to be one of the instances in which it can be done without involving the charge of repudiation, because by the time the loan matures the amount will have been redeemed in sinking fund payments. So it does not matter whether we pay £75,000 a year or £10,000 a year so long as we contribute a sufficient amount to meet our obligations when the loan falls due. I have no opposition to offer to the second reading.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.26]: I think the Premier should give us some information as to how he proposes to meet the liability if the sinking fund payments are reduced. At present we

have approximately only £400,000 invested in the Coolgardie Water Supply stock, and to-day that stock, at the lowest quotation for $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., is £75. That appeared in the "West Australian" of last Monday.

The Premier: We have £631,000 in it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Out of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions we have to meet!

The Premier: We have seven years yet.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But is it likely that the money market will completely collapse? If the stocks we hold, other than the Coolgardie Water Supply stock, are to increase in price sufficiently to make up the difference on the loan, they will have to go up £25. The Premier might tell us what stocks he holds, how much of the three per cent. and how much of the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and what it will be necessary to realise upon for the purpose of meeting the loan when it falls due. If it is not going to realise the amount, it will mean a reduction in the price of the stock and possibly that reduction will be prejudicial instead of beneficial to the State.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [8.29]: The hon. member need have no fear. We have £631,000 invested in this stock now. It is quite impossible to so invest the sinking fund as to have it on hand on the day the loan matures. It may be that we shall have to realise some of those stocks in 1927. We may even have to raise a small amount by way of loan to meet the obligation. But that is legitimate business at any time. We have to meet the financial situation as it arises and no one can tell what may happen between this and 1927. We all believe that the position will be much easier long before then. The House need not have the slightest fear of the result and members will be fully justified in passing the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Third Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. P. Draper—West Perth) [8.31]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Under the Constitution, it is necessary that the second and third readings of this Bill be carried by an absolute majority. To ensure that there is an absolute majority, I shall divide the House.

House divided.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House and there is an absolute majority on the right. I declare the third reading passed by an absolute majority.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1919-20.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Foley in the Chair.

Vote—Lunacy and Inebriates, £70,100:

On motion by the Premier, the Lunacy and Inebriates and State Children Votes were further postponed until after consideration of Business Undertakings.

Business Undertakings.

Vote—Aborigines Cattle Station (Moola Bulla), £6,079:

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [8.37]: I should like to direct attention to the magnitude of business undertakings and I wish members to realise that we have also State trading concerns. Although we have the divisions of business undertakings and State Trading Concerns, the two are virtually one. We have always had our railways, harbours, and for many years our goldfields water scheme but under business undertakings will be found several concerns which are of comparatively recent acquisition. The expenditure on business undertakings totals £2,293,873, in addition to the expenditure of a million pounds on other trading concerns not included here. The total revenue from these concerns amounts to three million pounds. I wish members to realise that most of these concerns are the growth of the last few years. We are concerned about the deficit. It is the loss occasioned by the investment of money in these concerns which is responsible for the deficit. This year I expect the loss will be £729,000. A little more than one half of this amount is the estimated loss on the railways. If we are to get out of our financial troubles, we can only hope to do so by better management of these concerns. If we are to trade, we must trade on a proper basis. It is easy enough to face the loss on a trading concern for a year or two.

Mr. Holman: Why do not the timber mills appear among business undertakings?

The PREMIER: They appear under trading concerns, for which there are separate Estimates. We could have faced a loss on the State brickworks during the first six months and on the timber mills during the first year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are you dealing with the timber mills now?

The PREMIER: No; they come under trading concerns. I wish to impress members with the need for the proper management of these concerns. Although during the greater part of my term of office Parliament has been sitting, I have had time to look somewhat into the question of the management of trading concerns, and I am satisfied it is from this source that we must look for money to balance our revenue and expenditure. Our present contributions from taxation and other legitimate sources of revenue are more than sufficient to meet all the ordinary expenses of government, but a portion

of our revenue is being utilised to pay the loss on money invested in these concerns. If we did not have these concerns, our finances would show a credit balance. I want members to realise what this means. Here we have all these concerns under the control of six Ministers, who have to attend to this vast amount of business in addition to transacting the ordinary work of government. These concerns are spread about the various departments subject to the control of the under secretary. This is not the proper way to manage these concerns. If they are to be continued, they must be continued under proper methods, which will ensure good management and good results. Nobody else in the world would be content to have such concerns managed as are these, and I am satisfied we should receive more revenue by reason of the better management of these undertakings.

Mr. Smith: Why not give us a decent balance sheet?

The PREMIER: I should like to be able to give the hon. member a balance sheet, such as an ordinary trader would appreciate, for every one of these concerns; altogether there are about 70.

Mr. Holman: Where is the railway report; why cannot we get that?

The PREMIER: If the hon. member will give me till Tuesday I shall be able to answer his question.

Mr. Holman: Then give us till Tuesday to consider the Estimates. If you are losing a quarter of a million there, bring down the report before you put your Estimates through.

The PREMIER: I shall bring down the report as soon as possible.

Mr. Holman: Last year we had the report a month earlier than this.

The PREMIER: I shall have the report next week.

Mr. Holman: It must be here before your Estimates are passed.

The PREMIER: This House is charged with the management of our State trading concerns, of course through Ministers. These concerns are distributed about the various departments. Perhaps a small butter factory is controlled by one department and the great Wyndham Freezing Works which, when they are in full swing as they will be next year, will have a turnover of £300,000 or £400,000, are controlled by another department.

Mr. Holman: The railways mean nearly two millions of money and the report is not here yet.

The PREMIER: Realising how these concerns are managed, I am of opinion that it will be necessary to set up a department with a proper staff to satisfactorily manage them. We are losing £729,000 a year now, and there should not be that loss.

Mr. Smith: Are not the officers competent to manage them?

The PREMIER: These officers are not trained to manage such concerns. No State department is designed for that purpose.

That will always be the trouble, and it will take some time to break it down. I should be glad to make each under secretary the manager of each department, just as a man is made the manager of a department outside the Government service. It has been customary to have the departments staffed as they are. The departments have to administer the Acts of Parliament.

Mr. Smith: The under secretaries are managing the Ministers instead of the departments.

The PREMIER: That is not a fact.

Mr. Smith: They are doing what they like.

The PREMIER: These business concerns are managed by these departments that were never designed to manage such business, and these concerns are being managed by men who have not been engaged for the purpose or trained to manage them. They are trained to fill other functions. I think many of them do this exceedingly well. The administration of government is one thing, and the control of State trading concerns is another. We passed this year a great many Acts. In the past we have passed hundreds of Acts of Parliament, and each one means so much administration. The head of the Education Department has to administer the Education Act. The head of the Agricultural Department has to administer at least 20 Acts. The Under Secretary to the Minister for Works has to administer Act upon Act, and important Acts too, in connection with the goldfields water supply, the metropolitan sewerage works, road boards, and a hundred and one other things. That is the job of heads of departments, and that is what they are trained for. That is what they ought to do, and they do it well. It would be better if the activities of these officers were confined to the work for which they are trained. If men skilled in trade could be engaged to control these trading concerns, we should probably have a totally different position. We cannot get it in any other way. I remember the time, some 14 years ago, when it was a pleasure to be a member of Parliament, when the life of a member was an easy one, when members were treated with every courtesy by everyone, and when it was a great thing to be a member of Parliament. One's work in those days was exceedingly light, because only the legitimate functions of government were dealt with. Now it is a totally different thing. To-day Ministers and members are never finished. The member for Collie, for instance, represents a constituency in which there are timber mills. Another member represents a constituency in which there are brickworks. The member for North-East Fremantle represents a constituency in which we have the implement works. And so it goes on. All these State undertakings concern members. They must be cognisant of the fact that their work has greatly increased.

Mr. Holman: You have a manager for each and every one of them.

The PREMIER: Hon. members must realise what all these changes mean. The member for Kimberley will realise what it means when the freezing works at Wyndham are

operating. Hon. members will also understand what all this means to Ministers.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the Premier resume his seat? The question exercises my mind as to whether a general discussion on business undertakings is in order. When we came to these divisions I called Division 48—Aborigines cattle station (Moola Bulla) £6,079. There are various divisions here under several Ministers, and each one is a separate vote. I do not remember a general discussion ever having taken place on all these divisions together. I called Division 48, and I think it would be wise to discuss that. Members will then know where they are. It is only for the sake of saving the time of the Committee and hon. members that I bring the matter forward.

The PREMIER: If I confine my remarks to the aborigines cattle station at Moola Bulla I can use the division as an example of what happens in regard to these trading concerns. This cattle station is administered by the Colonial Secretary. Whilst he is perfectly capable of doing that, I doubt if the department is. If we are to get the best possible results out of our investments in this cattle station we must have men administering it who are capable of doing the work. I have said enough to enable hon. members to realise what the position is in regard to this and other votes. I want them to know what it means to run this cattle station. It is a £20,000 investment. It is a satisfactory investment and a paying one. One of the objects for which it was established was to serve as a centre for supplying the natives and keeping them together, and the other purpose was to make money out of it. We are making money out of it. Would anyone expect a cattle station to be run by a staff of Government officers? I think not. The Committee would be wise to give serious consideration to this question.

Mr. Holman: You have a manager there; what more do you want?

The PREMIER: We have a manager there. In every concern and in every branch of every concern we have managers and foremen and men operating in it.

Mr. Holman: What else do you want?

The PREMIER: At the head of them all there must be someone capable of controlling each concern.

Mr. Money: Directors.

Mr. Holman: Have you not Ministers in Cabinet, a board of directors?

The PREMIER: There must be efficient control in these cases, and Parliament must control the lot.

Mr. Holman: You have got Parliament.

The PREMIER: We must have permanent heads in control.

Mr. Wilson: Why not have a commission of three?

The PREMIER: If we had a commissioner controlling this cattle station would the Committee agree to his exercising all the powers necessary? Not they! They would very likely say that this House must control the finances. Members would say that Ministers should have a controlling influence.

We have often heard that these State trading concerns should be controlled by commissioners, removed from all political influence, but we cannot do anything of the kind.

Mr. Holman: Who has interfered with this department?

The PREMIER: The control must be centred in Parliament no matter what else is done, whether it be in connection with the railways, this cattle station, or any other concern. I am sure you, Sir, will agree that this House has the right to control the financial expenditure of the country. This small concern does pay. But for this we should be losing £734,000 per annum instead of £729,000. I have told the Committee what is in my mind. I want to warn hon. members what the added responsibility of this enormous investment represents, and what these trading concerns mean not only to Parliament, but to Ministers. Fourteen years ago the life of a Minister was very different from what it is to-day. There were no cattle stations then, and there were not the hundred and one trading concerns we have to look after to-day. Even a small concern like this causes the Minister in charge some little trouble. The work which Ministers and members had to do 14 years ago is more than doubled to-day, and one-half of the work in the Government departments is in connection with these trading concerns. I am anxious that the Committee should realise that it is from the better management of these concerns that they have to hope for better financial results generally in connection with the revenue of the country.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [8.55]: To those who have been for some years in the House a glance at the Estimates to-day and a comparison with the Estimates of ten years ago, reveals at once the growth of many of these departments. This cattle station is one of them. I think it was established seven or eight years ago by the Colonial Secretary in the Moore Government. Throughout these Estimates under the heading of "Business undertakings and trading concerns," we see that the State generally has grown enormously. I am with the Premier in his contention that the permanent heads of departments should do the routine work of their departments. This station is administered by the Colonial Secretary. I have no doubt the Minister in charge is quite capable of seeing that it is run on business lines, but the Colonial Secretary is in Perth and the cattle station is a long way from Perth. That which applies to the Moola Bulla station applies also to the Wyndham freezing works, in which a million pounds have been invested, and to many other works as well. During the time I was in office I found that there were officers in the department fully qualified to administer on sound lines the departments with which they were associated, and to carry out the proper functions of government. This applies to

the Railway Department, the tramways, the Police, Medical and Health, the Charities or Education Department. When, however, we launched out upon entirely new lines, undertaking functions which had not previously been undertaken by the Government, these officers, good and capable as they were, were apt to be entirely at sea, for the reason that they had not the necessary training for these new duties. Their whole lives had been spent in a different groove. I say, with the Premier, that he is on sound lines in his contention as to the management of these undertakings. Apparently, it is now the policy of the State, irrespective of what party may be in office, that for the future we shall continue to operate these business undertakings and trading concerns. Public opinion being what it is I have no doubt that no matter what Ministers may be in office these trading concerns will go on growing and increasing. Large sums of money, millions of pounds of public funds, have been invested in this and similar undertakings. If they are to be successful and run on sound economic and business lines they must be controlled by men who have had the necessary business training and experience, quite outside the ordinary routine of the officials of the public service.

Mr. Money: And political control.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. The State cannot afford to hand over to any manager, no matter how capable he may be, the absolute and entire control of any undertaking in which the public funds are invested. Parliament, through the Ministers of the Crown, must have absolute control. There must be that connecting link between the managing head of such a concern and the people's representatives in Parliament. It is true that these concerns have increased largely. What do Ministers know about many of them? What can Ministers know about many of them? In order that the Government may be fully acquainted with the manner in which these undertakings are being run, it is necessary to have a Minister with the time at his disposal not only to visit this cattle station, but also occasionally to visit the Wyndham Freezing Works, where so much public money has been and is being spent. He must occasionally visit the South-West and see how the sawmills are being run. I do not, of course, suggest that a Minister can be expected to exercise control over the actual management of these undertakings. But this is the point: it is essential that the Minister should be in close personal touch with, and have a personal knowledge of, the officials controlling the undertakings. I would not expect the Minister to visit the sawmills or this cattle station and tell the manager of either undertaking how it should be conducted. But if the Minister met, say, the manager of the cattle station and knew the class of man he was, the Minister would very soon have an idea of the manager's capacity, and then he would be in a better

position to decide, here in Perth, on recommendations submitted to him by the manager. As one belonging to the party that has been responsible for the expansion of the economic functions of the State, I am most anxious to see these undertakings successful, not only from the point of view of policy—I believe the policy to be good—but also having regard to the large amount of public money invested in them. In view of the manner in which this particular work has expanded—and this concerns not only Ministers but also hon. members—I say it would be money well expended if an additional portfolioed Minister were appointed to devote his whole time to the control of these concerns. It is false economy to have them administered, as they were in our time and also in the time of other Governments, by Honorary Ministers, who, after all, cannot be expected to enjoy the same consideration as a portfolioed Minister has. If the work of government 12 or 14 years ago was sufficient to occupy the time of six Ministers, the expansion of that work of late years, and especially during the past four or five years, has presumably created work for a seventh Minister. I know it will be said that the politicians are building up more positions in order to provide billets for themselves, and I know it will be objected that another Minister means an additional expenditure of about £1,300 a year. But it is well known that in the running of a department one may spend £1,300 in one place and save several thousands in another. Incidentally I may refer to an appointment made in the Railway Department, where an outdoor inspector, receiving a salary of £500 a year, will, if he is worth his salt, save the State from £30,000 to £40,000 a year. Instances of that kind could be multiplied in the departments. It is fortunate that the Moola Bulla station has paid almost from the inception.

Mr. Holman: One would not think so, to hear the Premier to-night.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think the Premier pointed out that the station shows a surplus. It is well situated, and the results obtained prove how fortunate one may be to secure a slice of country in our great North-West. Even a State trading concern there, isolated though it is and removed from the control of the Minister, shows good results. Moola Bulla station has turned out a good experiment both from a financial point of view and from the aspect of the welfare of the aborigines.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [9.7]: For my part, I do not intend to let these Estimates go through until the Committee have been furnished with up to date information. As regards many of the business concerns over which the Premier waited to-night, we have no reports this year, although last year the reports were available months before this period.

The Premier: There has been sickness and trouble in the Government Printing office.

Mr. HOLMAN: The reports are in the hands of the printer, and perhaps he has instructions not to let them leave his hands. I fail to see in what respect the work of the Government Printing Office this year differs from the work in previous years.

The Premier: There has been the influenza.

Mr. HOLMAN: Fortunately the influenza disappeared some time ago. I do not think that excuse should be advanced. The best course would be to hold up these Estimates until we have the reports. The Moola Bulla cattle station has proved a marvelously successful Government undertaking—one of the most successful undertakings ever established in this State. Only last year the station returned a profit of about £4,500. In spite of that fact the Premier makes his astounding statements of to-night.

Mr. Smith: How do you make out that the station returned that profit?

Mr. HOLMAN: From the reports. It cannot be seen in the Estimates, and that is why I say they are absolutely misleading. The sooner the Committee is in a position to know what it is actually dealing with, the better for the State. The Government of this country to-day are absolutely rotten. Out of respect for you, Mr. Chairman, I refrain from using a stronger term. Never in the Parliamentary history of Western Australia has a Committee of Supply been subjected to what we have to put up with. Although the reports are not available, the Premier has the audacity to tell us that we must have some other form of management for our business undertakings. That declaration amounts to an absolute condemnation of the abilities of Ministers. And the very first item the Premier has to deal with on these Estimates represents one of the most successful undertakings ever established in Western Australia. Do the Government think they are dealing with fools in this Chamber? The Government tell us, "We are not normal, you are not normal, nothing is normal." Let the Government exercise a little common sense, and refrain from taking everybody for a fool. From the Premier we have heard nothing but utter condemnation of State enterprise. The Premier says that some other form of management must be provided. And yet this very first item shows a profit of about £4,500 notwithstanding that hundreds, or possibly thousands, of pounds' worth of stock has been slaughtered at Moola Bulla to feed the aborigines there. What has been the expenditure?

Mr. Smith: Have not the Government the advantage of cheap black labour at that station?

Mr. HOLMAN: That may be so. We know nothing about that. We want an explanation on that point. But I can say that

the State has not exploited the aborigines of Western Australia to anything like the same extent as a lot of sleek, well-fed squatters have done. Those squatters have exploited the natives, and while doing so, they have drawn from the State food for those natives and blankets to cover them; and the squatters have utilised the blankets in other directions. That is an absolute fact. And then members talk about the Government exploiting black labour! The member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) as a public man exercises his right to criticise more than almost any other member on the Government side of the House. He has the courage to speak when he thinks something is wrong; but he does not exercise his vote when it comes to the point.

Mr. Smith: I have done it many times; and I shall do it again, too.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Government think they are dealing with a lot of fools who will pass these Estimates without comment. I do not know the manager of Moola Bulla station, and have never met him; but I say that as regards that proposition the Premier's statements to-night were absolutely unfair. If we have a good officer, let us give him due credit for doing his work well. Why has the Premier inflicted on us a wholesale condemnation of Government enterprise? Do Ministers believe that members of this Chamber are utterly abnormal? Or are they condemning men who have done good work by way of covering up their own incapacity to conduct the affairs of the country? Although these Estimates were introduced by him, I do not think the Premier has read either the report of the Aborigines Department or that of Moola Bulla station. Why should we listen to such rot coming from that side of the House? We are going through the most stressful times the country has ever known and we have practically nothing to look forward to. What is to be done? We know what the Government are doing. They are trying to buttress up some rotten thing just as they have always done in the past. Why do not the Government place in charge of these departments men who are competent to fill the positions? In that way they would get better results. They prefer to put wasters at the head of concerns, men who know nothing at all about the business they are entrusted to carry to a successful issue. The Government do this for the purpose of securing a certain amount of support. Then they wonder why trading concerns are not a success. In connection with the Moola Bulla station we find that there was an increase in the number of stock there and that the valuation placed on that stock was the lowest that has ever been heard of. This concern showed a profit last year and yet the Premier to-night decried it.

The Minister for Works: I do not think you are right.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Premier said that he would confine his remarks to the first item and in doing that did not give a scintilla of credit to the man in charge of that department who has done very good work. We should always give credit to those who do good work no matter who they are or where they are. I intend to show that the policy which has been adopted by the Government is not in the best interests of the State.

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

A quorum formed.

Mr. HOLMAN: Do the Government think that they can dope members on this side of the House into believing that they (the Government) are successfully carrying on the affairs of the country? It is a great pity that the Premier did not read the report of the officer in charge of the cattle station before making the remarks he did. He would not have spoken as he did if he had perused the published report. It only goes to show how indifferent the Government are. All they want is a soft Ministerial position, a big salary, the plaudits of the crowd, their expenses paid when travelling by motor car, and someone else to do the work they are paid to perform. Then if that work which should be done by them is not carried out satisfactorily they blame the officers and perhaps suggest that a Commission should be appointed to investigate matters or that someone else should be chosen to supervise the work. The whole thing is an utter absurdity. How different things were in the past—10 or 15 years ago—when Ministers of the Crown did not use their positions for their own glorification. In those days Ministers did their duty in the interests of the country. Those were more difficult times because they were pioneering days, when everything was being built up. It is far easier to carry on administrative work to-day when Ministers have an established road to follow. What do we find? We are not even given the information which should be placed at our disposal when we are called upon to deal with matters of public importance. Let me take the report of the manager of the cattle station and quote from it. He states that the profits for the year's transactions amounted to £4,315. Surely when he makes that assertion he accompanies it with a full statement of accounts. We suppose that the statement is audited and that everything is cut down to the bone, but we learn nothing whatever about that from the Premier. That hon. gentleman preferred to decry the State trading concerns, this one included. The manager of the cattle station also reports that the year's transactions were the most profitable since the establishment of the station, and that given fair seasons the profits must increase. We know well that year after year cattle increase in numbers and that the price of stock has advanced tremendously. This has given a great filip to that

particular trading concern, but we have heard nothing whatever about it since June, 1918. Why did not the Premier tell us whether the past season had been an average one and also something about the prospects of the future? Why did he not also tell us what they had done with the revenue which had been received from this cattle station? I suppose it has gone in the direction of bolstering up their own friends and supporters. The report goes on to tell us that the profits of the station since its inception have totalled £5,953, and the manager values the cattle at 30s. per head and the calves at £1. Fancy placing such an absurd value on cattle. Surely that must be the lowest valuation ever heard of. It shows, however, that they have a careful manager in charge of the concern.

The Minister for Works: Is that the same figure as in the previous year?

Mr. HOLMAN: I cannot say. As showing the up-to-date methods of the Government, we have before us nothing but a return dated June, 1918. We are just 16 months behind the times. To value stock in East Kimberley at 30s. per head in 1918 was to put the lowest possible figure upon it. There was an enormous rise in prices during the succeeding 12 months, indeed cattle were almost unprocureable here a few months ago, and meat went to a tremendous price. To show that he knew the position better than any of us, the manager went on to say—

That was a very low valuation, in the light of recent sales.

Why did not the Premier tell us what those cattle realised when brought down here, what it cost to travel them from East Kimberley to the port of shipment, how many stockmen came with them, what losses were suffered in transit, and where and how the cattle were sold? There are times when squatters and wholesale meat merchants combine, and while perhaps they got the Government to sell the stock at a very low price they themselves may have made immense profits. It has been done before, and the consumers have had to suffer. Perhaps the member for Claremont (Mr. Duff) could tell us what it costs to bring cattle from East Kimberley to the nearest port of shipment. Given that information, it would be easy for us to determine what it costs to shift them from the station down to market. Back in the days when I had a little to do with droving, we used to estimate £2 per head, including losses, from the station to the port of shipment, and another £2 or £3, including losses, from the northern port to the market. On this basis, with the cattle estimated at 30s. at the station, their lauded cost in Perth would be about £6 10s. During the last 18 months cattle have averaged about £15 down here. I do not know whether the Government sold their cattle at a lower price than did others, but at any rate the returns, if based on the market value, should have been considerably greater in June last than in the previous

year. We have no information from the Minister as to what the position is. It is no wonder the Government desire someone appointed to take the responsibility off their hands and leave them to recline in cushioned chairs and draw their salaries. We on this side should endeavour to get full explanation before the Estimates are passed. The manager went on to say—

The reserve fund of £1,500 against contingent losses of stock being no longer regarded as necessary has, with the approval of the Auditor General, been written back. Everybody knows what a martinet the Auditor General is. We can be quite sure he would not have allowed that amount to be written back unless he was on very good ground. He would look carefully into the question and, seeing that the seat of operations is so far removed from his own personal supervision, it must have been a very good case before he allowed that £1,500 to be written back.

Mr. Smith: What salary is the manager drawing?

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not know, but for the whole of the management, including temporary labour, last year the expenditure was £1,930, and the estimate this year is £2,474. As I go through these Estimates I shall require to know what necessity there was for the purchase of a jack donkey. Having regard to the lackadaisical manner in which Ministers are carrying on their work, I think that, instead of spending money in the purchase of a jack donkey, the manager should have sent for one of the Ministers. The country would have saved money on the transaction. It is very doubtful whether the expected mules will be satisfactory. The manager has shown that he intends to make the station one of the best in the country. I should like to hear the opinion of the member for Kimberley (Mr. Drnack) on this station, and I hope that other pastoral members will tell us something about it during the night. The manager also said—

Preparations were made to proceed with the water supply extension scheme decided upon, and several trial bores were made. In introducing the Estimates to-night, the Premier should have told us in a few words what was the result of those bores. I am convinced that the greatest bore we have heard for some time was the Premier when introducing these Estimates. We have no information, nothing to guide us as to what should be done. The Premier declared that someone must be appointed to assist the Government in making a success of these enterprises. I believe myself that unless some other form of administration is introduced, the State trading concerns one and all will come to a miserable ending. The manager reports—

One good well is sunk and the necessary tanks and windmill erected.

We do not know the area of the station. Even the Minister cannot tell us what is the area, how many cattle there are on the sta-

tion, how many horses, what is intended to do in the future, or whether the water supply is sufficient. I do not believe the Premier knows whether they have a well or not, whether they get their water supply from the dews of heaven, or whether they send niggers out to squeeze the roots in order to water the cattle. We cannot get any information from the Minister.

The Minister for Works: You do not give him a chance.

Mr. HOLMAN: We gave the Premier every chance to explain these Estimates. I do not know under whose control the department is. We do not even know who is in charge of the Estimates. We see that the business undertakings are under the Colonial Secretary's Department, and we gather that the Premier expects to get the Estimates through in a few minutes without a word, while the Colonial Secretary sits down like a dummy, saying neither yea nor nay. Even a jack donkey would give a bray, but probably that four-footed animal is more intelligent than the Minister. One of the objects of the cattle station is to breed good stock—a very laudable desire. The imported Percheron stallion "Invincible" was purchased from Mr. M. Corbett of Gnowangerup and it arrived at the station 18 months ago in good condition. The Minister has not even told us whether "Invincible" is alive to-day. One great mistake frequently made by the State Departments is that they do not avail themselves of the advice and assistance of practical men in this Chamber. The manager merely sends a recommendation to the Minister, and the Minister in the same old formal way endorses it. Instead of the Premier crying that something should be done to make the State business undertakings a success, he should consult members who have a practical knowledge of the requirements of their districts and avail himself of their advice. The present Government, however, have not sense enough to do that. No doubt the jack donkey that was sent to the station knew what he had to do, but I am doubtful whether Ministers when they received their portfolios knew what their duties were. They are content to sit down and enjoy a quiet time and appoint a commission to control affairs. The Government purchased from Mr. Murray Prior in Queensland two short-horn bulls and ten heifers to stock the station. Why did they purchase these short-horns in Queensland? I doubt the wisdom of their action. Extensive inquiries should have been made and, if necessary, the Government should have sent to the Old Country for the best stock procurable, regardless of cost. Who knows whether the Queensland stock is pure bred? Instead of the Agent General travelling about England as he has been doing, he should have been instructed to purchase prize cattle for the station. Then he would have been doing useful work for the State. I do not know how the shorthorns are getting on. We have had no information.

The Minister for Works: It is pretty good stock.

Mr. HOLMAN: I should like to hear the opinion of the member for the district. The whole desire of Ministers seems to be to retain their seats, to pass legislation, push their Estimates through, get away from Parliament and appoint commissions to carry on the State trading concerns. I do not think we shall allow them to do that. According to the report, the jack donkey was purchased from Sam Mackay. Why was it purchased from him?

The Minister for Works: Not many people keep jack donkeys.

Mr. HOLMAN: If the member for the district were in his seat, I would ask him why Sam Mackay was picked out. This might be a serious proposition.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like the hon. member to be a little more serious.

Mr. HOLMAN: Then I shall leave the jack donkey to those who know more of his ways than I do. We learn from the report that the stock arrived at the station in good condition. I would like to know whether it is still in good condition and what has been done with it. The stud cattle was transported via Darwin. Are all our cattle shipped from Darwin or from our own ports? Are our cattle being sent away or sent to the Wyndham freezing works to be canned and frozen? This is a question of vital importance to the people of the State. Are our cattle being treated at Wyndham, or are they being shipped away? When the Minister replies, I hope he will go fully into the matter. Is there any special means of conveyance from Darwin to our cattle station?

The Minister for Works: You have to take the particular port at which the ships are calling.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am pleased we have a Minister of ordinary intelligence who can assist me a little. If the Government exercised even the intelligence of a jack donkey, they would sometimes do the right thing at the right time.

The Minister for Works: We try to.

Mr. Brown: Darwin may have been used to keep clear of the tick.

Mr. HOLMAN: Are we selling any cattle to Vestey Bros. in the Northern Territory? Our cattle should be utilised in the interests of the people of the State. High prices are ruling for meat in the metropolitan area. Our own cattle should be used so that the burdens of the people might be lightened. The Government, however, are permitting the people to be exploited and we cannot get any information from them. The wet season at Moola Bulla was a short one. What will be the effect of that? Severe losses might be sustained. The profit made last year might be followed by a loss this year. What provision is being made for a possible dry season? According to the report, they had good branding that year. This shows they are making progress,

and that everything possible is being done to make the station a success. The report states—

An event of considerable importance to the residents of Hall's Creek and vicinity, which includes the Moola Bulla station, was the establishment at Hall's Creek of a nursing sister supplied by the Presbyterian inland mission.

Seeing that the influence of Sam Mackay and the Presbyterian mission have been brought to bear, there should be some good results. In the working of this cattle station everything has been done to make it successful. The manager went on to say that he was pleased to have been asked to place a proposition before the hon. member for the North-West with a view to enlisting financial assistance for the station. I should like to know what has become of the Minister for the North-West. Who is administering affairs up there to-day? Why did North-West members, who clamoured so loudly in the past, allow the administration of that part of the State to drift in such a way? It is remarkable to me that the people up there should be satisfied with the present administration. The manager (Mr. Ealy) went on to deal with the improvements, with the cattle, horses, mules, general, and the condition and treatment of aborigines on Moola Bulla and Violet Valley. In one portion of his remarks he says "A native woman 'Frogghollow Nelly' died in child-birth on the 31st December, 1917. This woman was employed at the tannery. A native stock boy 'Warloo Tommy' was fatally injured on the 28th May by a horse falling with him." Why did not the Minister report these things to us?

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

The Minister for Works: The hon. member is surely not serious?

Mr. HOLMAN: The question is as to the work that is given out to the tannery. Was this unfortunate woman overworked, underfed, or something else? What do Ministers care how the tannery is getting on? It is necessary that there should be ample water supplies at the station. Several wells were sunk and windmills erected. A well was sunk at Shepherd's yard, and water was struck at 11 feet from the surface. This shows what a valuable proposition this is from the water point of view. At 17ft. 6in. the inflow of water was so great that the contractor was unable to sink deeper, although the contract was let to 20ft. Was the contractor paid for the extra 2½ feet? It is estimated that the revenue next year will be £6,630, and the expenditure £3,600. The revenue was more than that the year before last, but we do not know what it was last year. This well was equipped with a 12ft. Alston windmill, three 10,000 gallon squatter's tanks, and 100 feet of troughing, the well and equipment costing

£180 Gs. 8d. Was this money spent out of loan or out of revenue? The Minister does not give us any information on this point. It is of course a sound policy to spend from revenue when improving a property like this. The well supplies water to one end of the bullock paddock, and also to stock outside. To whom does the cattle outside belong? If it belongs to some of the squatters who are utilising this water, some inquiry should be made into the matter. I should also like to know if the old game of cattle duffing is being played in the district. Is any protection afforded to the Government stock against duffing? What provision is made for branding the cattle? Is it all branded every year? What system of branding is adopted? Is a travelling cattle branding kit used, or are the cattle brought into the station to be branded? We do not know how many "mickies" there are or "clean skins," or what is being done with them if there are any. The manager goes on to say—

By utilising two miles of existing fence on one side and a range of mountains on the other side, the erection of four miles of new fencing has enclosed an area of over 2,500 acres to form another stallion paddock.

This is a most important question, that of horse breeding. We have had no information from the Minister on the point as to what is done at this station with regard to the breeding of horses. It has been proved that the hardness of the Australian horse is unequalled in the world. On the Continent, however, horses are used for food. Is the breed of horses at Moola Bulla most adapted for draught, or for speed, or for hardness, or for food? I understand there are prospects of opening up a large trade with the Continent in Australian horseflesh, and I suggest we should export our worn-out horses and secure up to £20 per head for them to be used as food. The question arises, should we export such horses alive, or frozen, or tinned? The Nationalist cry of "Produce, produce, produce," means that one section of the people are to work their soul-cases out while another section rest in peace. But to utilise everything in the country, as I suggest in connection with horseflesh, is true production. The manager of the station provided for the erection of a couple of stockyards last year, but their completion was delayed owing to illness of the contractor. Are those yards being completed? Do these Estimates provide for that work? Or is the work to be paid for out of Loan funds? In which case I cannot deal with the matter on these Estimates. What is being done to carry out the manager's suggestion that a considerable sum of money should be expended on water conservation? Have funds been made available for that purpose? They should be. I now wish to deal with the stock on the station. Of what breed are the Moola Bulla cattle? The Minister is not present to afford me that very necessary information. What number of stock can the station carry per acre? Is tick prevalent on the station? Would the breeding of horses be more profit-

able than the breeding of cattle at Moola Bulla? Who inspects the station? Have we up-to-date and experienced drovers there? The manager reports that the wet season was very short and that consequently the grass became very dry towards the end of the year. Provision should be made for carrying on the station when there is no rain at all. Bores should be put down for subterranean water. Has anything been done in that direction? We should next year spend a few thousand pounds in boring for water there. We have heard nothing about that from the Minister. The manager of the station speaks about branding the calves. Where was the branding done? It is difficult for us to understand how it was done unless the matter is explained. There is no explanation in the report. How many assistants were necessary, and what was the final result. The report goes on to deal with the operations of the year and it is shown that they finished up the season after feeding the natives and selling stock with 300 head more than they started with. No information is given to us on the Estimates. The Government say, "Pass the Estimates" and "Pass the Bills we submit" and we, like fools, do so. When things were flourishing in the country it was possible to let things go in a haphazard way, but now, when we are up against it, we should pay more attention to everything and in connection with trading concerns that are proving profitable we should launch out still further. It is a serious matter, too, to find that while we are discussing Estimates involving the expenditure of a considerable sum of money, Ministers are never in their places to give information which members may require. Neither is it possible for us to get reports which will enable us to deal intelligently with the Estimates. These are never available until the Estimates are disposed of. In days gone by it was always possible to study a particular report before the Estimates were brought down, and members knew what they were talking about when discussing items of expenditure. We should endeavour to induce Ministers to take these Estimates seriously. Reverting to the Moola Bulla station report I find that the breeding of horses there has not been so successful as was hoped for. Numbers have been lost through disease, and it is questionable whether the right breed was introduced. The manager wrote off 35 horses as being dead or missing. Of course losses must be expected, but surely not to this extent. Some inquiry ought to have been made by the Minister. We cannot get from the Minister any information in regard to these losses. I should like to know how long it is since the last mustering. I am pleased to learn that the manager of the station is going in for tanning with a view to utilising the raw material. It would be interesting to know whether there are any sheep on the station, and whether any experimental grain plots have been tried. Given the artesian water, there

should be no difficulty in growing Japanese millet and other grasses. The millet was tried in the eastern districts with considerable success. I notice from the manager's report that an aboriginal woman, Frogholow Nellie, employed in the tannery took ill and died. The reading of this unfortunate incident serves to direct attention to the omission to show how many employees are engaged in that tannery, and whether or not it is conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Factories Act. According to the report, the usual Christmas sports were held and the prizes provided, knives, tomahawks, razors, belts, handkerchiefs, combs, beads, looking-glasses, lollies, etc., were greatly appreciated. Now I should like to know who got the tomahawk.

Mr. Jones: Who ought to get it?

Mr. HOLMAN: Did the Minister have an opportunity to distribute the prizes. If the member for the district was unable to be there, the Minister should have been invited. He would have done better work there than he has done in his own department, and in introducing the Estimates, he would have been able to speak more intelligently than he has done to-night. Moola Bulla station is an important proposition because it is not only a profit-making concern, but is responsible for the welfare of the aborigines. The very fact that razors, looking glasses, etc., were distributed to the natives shows that they are being trained in the ways of civilisation, though perhaps it would have been more economical to send a good barber up there. There is another point worthy of consideration. Razors might not be safe in the hands of these natives. Does the Minister think it wise to give them razors and tomahawks? Of course, lollies would be all right. The report states that, after the sports, the bulk of the natives dispersed for their usual walk about during the wet season. What is this usual walk about? Why did not the Minister tell us what a walk about is? He should be in his place now to tell us. We have the further information that 150 blankets were distributed.

Mr. Brown: There is no mention of the quality of the blankets.

Mr. HOLMAN: No. Could not a few sheep be sent to the station so that they would have the necessary wool to manufacture the blankets on the spot? So long as the natives received the value of their output, there should be no cause for complaint and we might thus be able to prove that industries could be successfully built up in this part of the country. Ministers do not appreciate launching out. All they say is, "We are going to have a deficit; we cannot do anything, we want a Commission to inquire into matters." They do not care whether this station is successful or otherwise. That is why I am entering my protest. The sooner members realise that the financial position is serious the better it will be for the State. If the station were worked seriously, it could be made successful in many directions. It has

been a financial success in the past, but if it were opened up and worked in a proper way no one knows what the possibilities might be; but no effort is made. I regret that the Estimates should have been introduced in this manner and that so little consideration should have been shown to members. The Government want the whole lot passed without a word of inquiry.

Mr. Brown: And the Minister is not even in his seat.

Mr. HOLMAN: The time for tomfoolery has long since past. If we can make a success of this station we can make a success of our undertakings in many other directions. In conclusion, I hope the interests of the aborigines will be attended to. If Ministers in their administrative capacity cannot look after the aborigines, the time has come when they should be put out of office and others put in their places.

[Mr. Foley resumed the Chair.]

Mr. JONES (Fremantle) [10.59]: The Committee is entitled to a statement from the Minister regarding this vote. Members and the country are indebted to the member for Murchison for the interesting and able manner in which he has dealt with the whole subject of the Moola Bulla station. It is remarkable that a really important business undertaking like this should be passed by without any details being given regarding it, and I must protest against that method of dealing with it. This is the only cattle station in Western Australia that is owned by the State, and it is of vital interest to the entire community. The extension of the principle of the State ownership of cattle stations would mean a cheaper supply of meat to the people. It is not fair to pass this by in a cavalier fashion. This is the first year in which a profit has been made, and it offers a favourable opportunity for the Minister to say what he intends to do with regard to aborigines cattle stations for the future. The director of aborigines in his report has recommended the establishment of another station in the West Kimberley district. Does the Minister intend to follow up that suggestion? In Queensland there are no fewer than 12 of these cattle stations, and for the year ended June last these showed a profit of £43,975. In view of the high price of meat in the metropolitan and goldfields areas, something might be done in the direction of extending the principle in this State as it has been done in Queensland. This station offers an excellent method of providing for the natives of the State. It is better to employ them in this way than to allow them to work for the squatters for nothing, except a little meat and damper. The report shows that 40 natives are employed on stations. Are they paid or do they work for their tucker? The Government should be model employers in this direction, and I trust we are not exploiting these 40 natives. The report also refers to the number of natives who are fed and to whom

blankets are issued during the year. The Estimates do not show whether the cost of feeding and clothing the natives is debited against the profits of the station. It is to be regretted that there is now no Minister for the North-West. That the principle of having such a Minister bore fruit is shown by the fact of nurses having been sent by the Presbyterian mission to the Moola Bulla district. The management of the place is shrouded in mystery. There is a tannery on the station, and a native woman who was working there died in childbirth. Can this work in the tannery be considered a fit occupation for a woman? Should native women be allowed to be employed there? It is heavy work for which women are not physically suited. Had the fact that this woman was working in the tannery anything to do with her having died in this way? The Minister should give us full information on all these points.

The Premier: What do you want to know?

Mr. JONES: I want to know whether the Government intend to carry out the recommendations of the Protector of Aborigines to extend this cattle station, whether the natives employed there are paid, and whether the cost of providing for indigent natives on the station comes out of the profits of the station or is debited to the general Aborigines vote.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [11.13]: In reply to the hon. member's questions, I would say that it may be necessary to extend the principle of these State cattle stations. The sole object for which this station was purchased was to provide a place in which the natives would be cared for. I do not think the natives who work on the station are paid, but they are fed. We have to set aside £10,000 for the purpose of feeding the natives, who are properly looked after. It may be necessary to open other small stations in order that the natives may be civilised, and in order that other settlers may go into the country which is now infested with dangerous natives. The revenue expended on the natives comes out of the proceeds of the station, and, in addition, numbers of cattle are killed in order to feed the natives.

General debate concluded; items discussed as follows:—

Item, Manager, temporary labour, etc., £2,474.

Mr. JONES: The manager of the station (Mr. Haly) was temporarily transferred to the Wyndham freezing works. How long was he employed at the freezing works, and was the station allowed to go on without a manager while he was away?

The Premier: The station was properly manned.

Mr. JONES: I am anxious that the Agricultural Department should not take a cap-

able officer away from his position in order to suit their own requirements.

The Premier: It was necessary for the manager to go to Wyndham in connection with the purchase of cattle for the works.

Mr. JONES: Has he left yet?

The Premier: He is in Perth on leave.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Albany cold stores, £1,010; Avondale and Harvey estates, £1,850; Butter factories, £19,259; Electricity supply, £39,662; Goldfields Water Supply undertaking, £120,945; Government refrigerating works, £3,455—agreed to.

Vote—Kalgoorlie abattoirs, £3,455.

Mr. LUTEY: On the last occasion that the Estimates were before us I referred to the question of the change house at the abattoirs. At that time the Premier promised to look into the matter, but the same state of affairs still exists. There is plenty of hot water and other conveniences, and with a little expense the men would be enabled to change comfortably instead of doing so in the dead house and having their crib in the dead house. I hope that something will be done to make things better than they are at present.

The Premier: I will promise you that.

Mr. LUTEY: The other promise was not carried out.

The Premier: If you remind me I will keep my promise.

Vote put and passed.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.17 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 25th November, 1919.

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

RESOLUTION—PEACE.

His Majesty's Thanks.

The PRESIDENT: I have received from His Excellency the Governor the following Message:—

The Governor has the honour to inform the Hon. the President of the Legislative Council that a copy of the resolution passed by the Council on the 31st July last has been laid before His Majesty the King, and that he has been commanded to convey to the hon. members of the Council His Majesty's thanks for their message of congratulation. (Sgd.) William Ellison Macartney.

BILL—PUBLIC ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Education, and read a first time.

STANDING ORDER SUSPENSION.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.34]: I move—

That for the remainder of the session the provisions of Standing Order No. 62 be suspended.

This is the Standing Order which prohibits the taking of new business after 10 o'clock. Question put and passed.

SITTING DAY, ADDITIONAL.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.35]: I move—

That for the remainder of the session the House shall sit on Fridays in every week at 4.30 p.m., unless otherwise ordered, in addition to the usual sitting days as provided by Standing Order No. 48.