

NOMS.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Broun	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Draper	Mr. Scaddau
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Underwood
Sir H. B. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Maley	(Teller.)
Mr. Mitchell	

Question thus negatived.

House adjourned at 11.8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 21st October, 1920.

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

QUESTION—WATER SUPPLY, DEPARTMENTAL AGREEMENT.

Mr. ROCKE asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it a fact that the Water Supply Department demand an agreement for an annual payment of £2 2s. 4d.; in addition to the statutory rate, before granting a water supply service to residents and others desiring to build on Cockburn Sound Location 134? 2, If so, by what authority is the additional charge of £2 2s. 4d. per annum made? 3, In view of the fact that the estate has paid water rates during a period covering 25 years, for which no service has been rendered in return, will he remove the hardship operating against the interests of citizens of the working class, by giving them the necessary water supply service without the enforcement of the demand for the additional payment of £2 2s. 4d. per annum?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, Yes. 2, Section 38, Metropolitan Water Supply Act, 1909. 3, The department require sufficient annual revenue to cover annual expenses, interest, etc., on each main extension. If rates do not produce sufficient revenue, a guarantee of deficiency is required as in this case. The total water rate on the whole estate is £3 15s., which is levied because the estate was held in one ownership, and portion thereof was within the prescribed distance of our mains.

QUESTION—WHALING STATION MACHINERY.

Mr. MUNSIE (for Mr. O'Loughlen) asked the Minister for Railways. 1, Was the Railway Department the purchaser of the machinery dismantled at the whaling station at Albany? 2, Is it a fact that engineers and fitters from the Railway Department were engaged in removing this machinery and plant? 3, What was the price paid? 4, Has the plant been since sold, if so, what price was realised?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The Department purchased the tanks and tank plates (83 tons), and one lathe. 2, Boilermakers were employed on the removal of the tanks. 3, £2,000 for the tanks and plates; £260 for the lathe. 4, One 97,000 gallon tank, and three small tanks (weighing 17 tons) have been sold to the Water Supply Department for £1,180.

QUESTION—RAILWAY PROJECT, YARRAMONY-NORTH BAANDEE.

Mr. HARRISON asked the Premier: Seeing that the Railway Advisory Board's report on the proposal to construct a railway from Yarramony to North Baandee is favourable, and that the railway is likely to bring in a surplus of £1,793 per annum over working expenses, excluding interest, is it his intention to introduce a Bill authorising the construction of this railway during the present session?

The PREMIER replied: The question will have consideration.

QUESTION—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BOARD, COMMISSION AND ADVANCES.

Mr. HARRISON asked the Premier: 1, What was the amount of commission paid by merchants to the Industries Assistance Board on super. supplied to board clients for the year 1919 (1919-20 crop)? 2, What was the amount of commission received by the Industries Assistance Board on account of the purchase of machinery, jute goods, and other supplies to farming clients of the board for the same period? 3, What was the total amount of commission received from all sources? 4, Were these amounts paid to revenue or used for the cost of the administra-

tion of the board? 5, What amounts have been advanced to industries other than farming, the nature and names of such industries, and what securities are held for such advances? 6, What interest does the board pay and what interest is charged to clients—farmers and others? 7, What is the percentage of administrative cost of the board on account of capital used?

The PREMIER replied: 1, £6,481. 2, (a) Discounts and commissions—machinery, etc., £706; insurance, £2,925; total, £3,631. (b) Gross profit from trading, cornsacks and bran bags, £1,832. 3, £10,112. (Note.—Total income other than interest earnings on advances was £13,782 5s. 1d., inclusive of 1, 2, and 3 above.) 4, Towards cost of administration of board and provision for bad debts. 5, Development of limestone deposits at Gingga, £200 at 6 per cent. per annum. Security over equitable interest in property known as Molecap Hill, machinery, chattels, etc. (Note.—Other advances under Part 3 of the Act are administered by the Colonial Treasurer.) 6, On £801,633, $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum; on £558,170, $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. per annum; temporary accommodation by Treasury, 5 per cent. per annum; rate chargeable to settlers to 31st March, 1918, 6 per cent. per annum; subsequent to that date, 7 per cent. per annum. 7, £1 8s. 3d. per cent.

QUESTION—HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, ESCAPEES.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is it a fact that several patients at the Claremont Hospital for the Insane have escaped therefrom during the present month? 2, If so, how many were concerned, and what were the circumstances which enabled them to leave the institution?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, Four. Following the practice adopted for years past patients were permitted to visit the Royal Show under escort of attendants. One patient failed to return on the 6th inst., two on the 7th, and one on the 9th. All but one have been recaptured.

QUESTION—GOLD STEALING, PAYMENT-OF BONUSES.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Mines: 1, What amount was paid by the Chamber of Mines last year to defective members of the gold stealing staff as bonus, rewards, or gratuity? 2, What are the names of the officers who received any such payment and the amount received by each?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, The hon. member will be pleased to learn that as Minister controlling the Police, I issued instructions last year that the system of receiving a bonus, reward, or gra-

tuity from the Chamber of Mines should cease forthwith, and in consequence no bonus, reward, or gratuity has since been received by the staff from the Chamber. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—PARLIAMENT, PROVISION FOR WOMEN.

Mr. JONES asked the Premier: 1, Now that a measure has become law which will permit women (subject to the approval of the electors) to mix with men on the floor of the Chamber, will he make representations to the proper authority to allow them to mix in the public and Speaker's galleries of the House? 2, In view of the probable presence in the House of some lady members after next March, what accommodation in the way of retiring rooms is being made for them?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. It is considered that the arrangements for the accommodation of ladies in the public gallery are more convenient than would be the case if the suggestion of the hon. member were carried out. 2, When the occasion arises this matter will receive the necessary attention.

QUESTION—POLICE SERVICES IN WAR TIME.

Mr. JONES asked the Minister for Mines: 1, What amount has been paid by the Commonwealth Government to the State Government for special police duty under the War Precautions Act? 2, How many officers participate in this payment? 3, What are the names of such officers and the amounts received by each?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, £8,075 17s. 1d. was received from the Commonwealth Government for services rendered during the war period. 2, No such distribution of this money took place. 3, Answered by No. 2.

QUESTION—BASE METAL INDUSTRY, CONFERENCE.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Minister for Mines: 1, When and where is it expected that the proposed conference in regard to the base metal industry will be held? 2, In view of the importance of the result of the conference in regard to the establishment of the proposed refinery works, will he give a fortnight's notice to those whom it is proposed to invite to attend the conference?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, I have tentatively arranged for the conference to take place at my office on November 19th, and a notification has been sent to all those interested. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—WHEAT SCHEME, GERALDTON DEPOTS.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Wheat Marketing Scheme to retain the present depot sheds at Bluff Point, Geraldton? 2, If not, what portion of the sheds is it proposed to dismantle? 3, What is proposed to be done with any portion that may be dismantled? 4, What arrangements are intended to be made regarding storage of wheat for export from the Victoria district?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, Eventually the whole. 3, Sold to best advantage. 4, Similar to those for last season.

QUESTION—ESPERANCE RAILWAY, SLEEPER SHIPMENTS.

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it true that the s.s. "Eucla" is lying idle at Albany owing to sleepers not being available for Esperance? 2, Is it true that while there are no sleepers available for Esperance, the s.s. "Phra Nang" is loading thousands for Java?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, No. 2, State sawmills are not shipping timber by this vessel.

SELECT COMMITTEE—FACTORIES AND SHOPS BILL.

Extension of Time.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, the time for bringing up the Select Committee's report was extended to the 30th October.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Angelo, leave of absence for four weeks granted to Mr. Duff (Claremont), on the ground of ill health.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH ENDOWMENT LANDS.

In Committee.

Resumed from 19th October; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 39—Powers of council over lands:

The CHAIRMAN: The Attorney General has moved to amend Clause 39 by striking out the following words in lines 2 to 4 of Subclause 2: "In such manner, and for such purpose as the council may from time to time, determine, and until otherwise determined shall be accumulated."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: When progress was reported, I had moved to strike out certain words in Subclause 2 with a view to adding other words and a proviso. The difficulty confronting the Committee was the

question of the disposal of the proceeds of the sale of endowment lands. I propose to get over that difficulty by moving the amendment standing on the Notice Paper and then to add a proviso dealing with the sale of the lands. If the subclause is passed as I suggests, it will read as follows:—

The proceeds arising from any sale or sales shall be applied by the council in the development of the said lands and to provide a sinking fund for the repayment of any money borrowed under this Act, or which may be due and owing on mortgage over such land, and the surplus if any shall be invested in such securities as trustees are by law authorised to invest trust funds.

That will deal with the proceeds of the sale of all lands unless limitations which I subsequently propose to move, are provided. By the means suggested we will secure that the proceeds of the sale of endowment lands will be used, either for the development of the land, or the repayment of loans for the purpose of development of these lands, and the surplus, if any, will be held by the trustees for the City of Perth. That, I think, will get over the difficulty. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subclause 2 the words "in such manner and for such purpose as the Council may from time to time determine and until otherwise determined shall be accumulated" be struck out, and "in the development of the said lands and" be inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move an amendment—

That the following words be added at the end of the subclause: "And the surplus, if any, shall be invested in such securities as trustees are by the law authorised to invest trust funds."

Amendment put and passed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move an amendment—

That the following be added as a proviso "(a) Provided that the proceeds of sales of the endowment lands shall not be applied to the development of any other land than the endowment lands or by way of contribution to the sinking fund for the repayment of any moneys borrowed under this Act, except in proportion to the amount of such moneys as may have been expended in the development of the endowment lands and (b) The surplus proceeds of all sales of the endowment lands shall be invested as aforesaid in the joint names of the City of Perth and the Colonial Treasurer."

Mr. MUNSIE: I have not had an opportunity to read the amendment, but as I heard it read it will give the council the right to use money received from the sale of endowment lands to repay loans borrowed under this Act.

The Attorney General: No, only to the extent of such moneys used in the development of the endowment lands.

Mr. MUNSIE: If that is so, I am satisfied to let it go.

Amendment put and passed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move an amendment:—

That after "provided" in line 1 of Subclause 3 the words "also that" be inserted.

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

Clauses 40, 41—agreed to.

Clause 42—Additional powers of making by-laws:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move an amendment—

That after "tram car" in line 3 of Subclause 19 the words "or motor omnibus or motor car" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move an amendment—

That after "tram cars" in line 1 of Subclause 20 the words "or motor omnibuses or motor cars" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move an amendment—

That at the end of Subclause 20 the words "motor omnibus or motor car" be added.

Amendment put and passed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move an amendment—

That after "tram car" in line 2 of Subclause 21 the words "motor omnibus or motor car" be inserted.

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

Clauses 43 to 46—agreed to.

Postponed Clause 25—Government right of purchase:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: When we previously discussed this clause it was pointed out that the Government ought to have the right to purchase this tramway at any time for the convenience of working their own system which, no doubt, would be linked purchase should be made the city council constructed. I pointed out that when the purchase should take place the city council would not be entitled to anything for goodwill, and that it was certain that during the first few years of its running the city council's tramway would result in a loss. It is only fair that the Government should have the right to purchase at any time, but some provision ought to be made to prevent the council suffering loss during the initial

period. I propose to get over this difficulty. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subclause 1 the words "after the expiration of 25 years from the passing of this Act" be struck out.

The clause will then read, "The Government shall have the right at any time of purchasing from the council any tramway constructed under this Act." In order to protect the council I propose to add a proviso to Subclause 2 as follows: "Provided also that if the working of the tramway for the first seven years after such tramway is open for traffic has resulted in a loss to the council a sum equal to such loss on the traffic shall be added to and paid as part of the purchase money." I think a period of seven years will be fair to both parties.

Amendment put and passed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move an amendment—

That the following be inserted at the end of Subclause (2): "Provided also that if the working of the tramway for the first seven years after such tramway is open for traffic has resulted in a loss to the council, a sum equal to the loss on the traffic shall be added to and paid as part of the purchase money."

Hon. P. COLLIER: Instead of setting down the period and stipulating that the council shall be paid a sum equal to the amount of the loss for the seven years, it would be equitable to the city council and to the Government to provide that the amount of loss be determined by arbitration.

The Attorney General: I intended it to be fixed by arbitration.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The amendment would make it mandatory to pay the amount of the loss sustained during the first seven years. The court of arbitration should have discretionary power to say whether the whole or any portion of the loss should be recouped, just as they will have power to decide the amount of the purchase money.

Mr. HARRISON: The tramway will be one of the chief factors in the settlement of this land. During the first seven years the working of the tramway will doubtless result in a loss, and if the council are to be recouped when the Government take over the tramway, the council will be on velvet. I agree with the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Bearing in mind the possibility of the council incurring an annual loss, it would not be fair if the Government could step in when the tramway reached the paying stage and deprive the council of it. To meet that objection the arbitration court should have power to award the council the whole or any portion of the loss during the seven years.

The Minister for Mines: The council might grant free passes for two years to encourage people to settle on their lands.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The council might run the system for a number of years regardless

of loss, knowing that they would be recouped the total amount of loss for seven years.

Mr. Pilkington: The council would only be recouped in the event of the Government taking over the tramway.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They would take that risk, of course. There would be no guarantee that the Government would purchase.

The Minister for Mines: You say that the court should not award more than the amount of loss during the first seven years?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The court should have discretion to award the whole or any portion of the loss incurred up to seven years. This would mean that the seven years' period could not be exceeded.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Perhaps an amendment in this form would meet the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition—

Provided that if the working of the tramway for the first seven years after such tramway is open for traffic has resulted in a loss to the council, the court of arbitration may add as part of the purchase money to be paid a sum equivalent to the whole or any part of such loss.

Mr. Pilkington: Would that meet the case if the Government took over the tramway after four years?

The Minister for Mines: The court would award the loss for the period only.

Mr. Pilkington: That is the intention but it obviously is not expressed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The simplest way out of the difficulty is for me to ask leave to withdraw my last amendment, with a view to moving a new amendment to the proviso.

Mr. FOLEY: The Committee should allow the other amendment to be proceeded with, when a more appropriate amendment could be moved in another place or the Bill re-committed here and the amendment put in then.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of the proviso after the word "purchase" the following be inserted:—"Allowance may be made to reimburse the council for any loss or portion thereof sustained in operating such tramway during a period not exceeding the first seven years after completion, but."

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

New clause:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—

That a new clause be added to stand as Clause 47 as follows:—"In determining the price to be paid for electric current supplied to the council under the provisions of 'The Government Electric Works Act, 1914,' for the council tram-

ways, the proviso to clause six of the agreement set out in the schedule to 'The Electric Light and Power Agreement Act, 1913,' shall not apply, but the price of current to be supplied shall not exceed the charge made for the time being for current supplied to the Government tramways."

This was overlooked when the Bill was drafted. Under a binding agreement made between the council and the Government, the council are entitled to a supply of electric current for lighting purposes, etc., from the Government at a fixed rate. It was never intended that this supply should be used for tramway purposes, and without this new clause the Government might be forced to supply current at a loss to run such tramways. The council have approved of this.

The Minister for Mines: They get at us very badly there.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Is there any reason why we should tie our hands at all in the matter of the price of current to the council for tramway purposes? The agreement with the council for the supply of current for domestic and other purposes will last for the next 50 years. If the council decided to construct tramways as a trading concern of their own, I do not see why the Government should not make terms with them for the supply of the necessary power. The electric light undertaking at the power house belongs to the whole of the people of the State, and if any loss is incurred the taxpayers will have to meet it. The Government should have a free hand in this matter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: A municipality that is running a trading concern or business undertaking is only carrying on a function for the central government. What we might do is to say to the council that the cost of current for tramway purposes shall not be less to them than the cost of supplying current to the tramways if they were being operated by the Government. This amendment provides that we must supply current between, say, Selby-street, Leederville, and the Ocean Beach at the same price as we supply current to our own tramway system right alongside the power house. I believe the actual cost per unit delivered at Selby-street would be about 1½d., since to supply current there would involve the laying of an expensive cable. The supply of electricity for tramway purposes was never taken into consideration when the agreement was made to supply the Perth City Council with current at a fixed price for 50 years. Nobody then thought of the council running tramways. At the same time, I do not desire that a profit should be made out of the council in connection with current supplied for tramway purposes; neither, however, should the State suffer a loss in that connection.

Mr. PILKINGTON: The Perth City Council want some right to be supplied with current for tramway purposes, because other-

wise the Government might refuse to supply current except at a prohibitive price.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite so. The price should include extra cost involved by reason of increased distance over which the current is carried.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I still hold to the view I expressed previously. I agree that the Government should not indulge in anything like profiteering in their dealings with a municipality or other public body; but the hands of the Government should be entirely free as to the price to be charged by a State trading concern. Any Government endeavouring to impose extortionate charges on a public body would be subjected to very strong criticism. Of course the Perth City Council would not be allowed to set up in opposition to the Government as regards the running of tramways.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This new clause is proposed, with the consent of the Perth City Council, in order to protect the Government against having to supply, as they now have to do, current at cost price.

Hon. P. Collier: But are the Government bound to supply the Perth City Council with current for tramway purposes at cost price?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Undoubtedly. That is so under the schedule to the agreement with the Perth City Council for the supply of electric current. In the absence of this new clause, therefore, the Government would have to supply the council with electric current for tramway purposes at cost price. At present the Government supply the Government tramways at some slight increase on the cost price; and the object of the new clause is to place the Perth City Council, as regards the supply of electric current for tramway purposes, in exactly the same position as the Government tramways.

Hon. P. Collier: Unless the Perth City Council agreed to this new clause, we would have no power to break that agreement by this measure?

The Minister for Mines. Of course we could do that. It is only a question of morals.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Here is an agreement in existence, recognised by statute, which is entirely in favour of the Perth City Council; and the council are quite willing to consent to a reasonable modification of it, because they admit that when that agreement was made it was never contemplated that they would run tramways. I ask leave to add to the proposed new clause the following words:—

Plus any additional charge necessitated by reason of increased distance of supply for the purpose of council tramways.

Leave given, the words added.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1920-21.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 14th October, Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Department of Forests, Hon. J. Seaddan, Minister.

Vote—Forests, £13,754:

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND FORESTS (Hon. J. Seaddan—Albany) [5.50]: The estimated expenditure of the Forests Department for the ensuing year shows an increase of £792 over that of the actual expenditure of last year. This is almost entirely due to the increased salaries and wages paid to the members of the staff; there is little or no increase in the actual staff so far as the administrative side of the department is concerned. The estimated expenditure as shown only deals with the administrative side and not with the expenditure under the scheme for the improvement and regeneration of the State forests. That is provided for under an appropriation as set out in the Forests Act and dealt with on the basis of the scheme which will be submitted to Parliament for approval.

Mr. O'Loughlen: When will it be submitted?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It has been on the Table for weeks, and as it will be discussed on the Appropriation Bill I do not propose to say anything about it now. It will be noticed that the anticipated revenue of the department this year is £62,400 as against an actual revenue of £59,220 last year, and I am assured by the Conservator of Forests that his estimate of the revenue is on the conservative side, that being necessary because of the provisions of the Forests Act which compel a certain amount of the revenue to be set aside for definite purposes, and an over-estimate therefore would land the department in a rather serious position. The expenditure, as I have stated, shows an increase of £792, but when we take into account the total expenditure of £13,754 and the estimated revenue of £62,400 it is evident that we shall have a fair sum to bring to general revenue over and above the actual cost of collecting it. We can fairly say that up to date our forests have been a good asset to the State, and while, under the provisions of the Forests Act we have allotted to the Conservator of Forests, subject to the approval of Parliament, an expenditure of three-fifths of his revenue for reforestation, etc., notwithstanding that, I am satisfied that the forests of the State still remain a good asset and will be an asset of a more permanent nature because of the expenditure now taking place in connection with the work of reforestation.

Mr. Lambert: What would you call that road around the Mundaring Weir?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is part of the scheme. It is a scheme which will

be very valuable from more points of view than perhaps the hon. member has in mind. I had the opportunity on Tuesday evening last of meeting a professor from America. I may explain, by the way, that this gentleman is not really an American; he is a British subject, having been born in the British Isles. He spent a great many years in the eastern parts of Asia and finally took up a professorship at a university in America.

Mr. Robinson: Harvard.

Mr. Harrison: You do not think his imagination is elastic.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The reason why I am referring to the fact that he is a British subject is that we are liable to discount statements when they are made by Americans. In this case I am satisfied from the conversation I had with this gentleman that he is not prone to paint pictures that are not really correct. He stated that in his travels he has been able to discover that in many countries where they have not given consideration to the regeneration of their forests, the people were actually demanding that the forests should be cut out so that provision might be made for agriculture and horticulture, and that the people engaged in those industries had become the greatest sufferers. He stated, and I think correctly, that where the forests had been cut out there was being experienced a difficulty in holding the land together. He quoted New Zealand as an example and stated that that country had been denuded of timber and the land in many places was being actually washed out to sea, that they were suffering from great landslides, all because the timber had been removed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And that does not apply only to the coast.

Mr. Harrison: It applies to the land near the rivers as well.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Exactly. We know also that the denuding of a country of its timber affects the climate. I am glad to say, however, that we are a long way from approaching such a condition of affairs in Western Australia. Let me point to the position existing at Mundaring. When we started out at Mundaring to conserve water for the goldfields and the agricultural districts, we thought that the proper thing to do was to ringbark all the trees, to kill all the timber on the catchment area. We discovered, however, that that brought a tremendous amount of salt to the surface, and that salt of course affected the water. There was then a big problem to face. Now we are setting out to remedy it and certain things require to be done. First of all, we have started to remove all the dead timber, and we are bringing that to the coast and disposing of it as firewood. In that way we are getting something in the shape of revenue which will go towards the regeneration of the catchment area, while at the same time we are ridding the land of the dead timber. We have had to construct a road all around the lake to enable us to carry out the work.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What has the road cost?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The cost is included in the scheme. The road will be open at about Christmas time and I hope members will be given an opportunity to visit the locality and see what we have done. The regeneration of the forests is an important matter from the point of view of adding to our timber supplies, but the work will also have a bearing of value on our water supplies. From the standpoint of the life of the pipe line the work that is being carried on at Mundaring will be of great value to the State. We might come to the conclusion of course that, because we do not see immediate results, there is no value attached to the work of reforestation which is being carried on. There is no doubt, however, that the question of future timber supplies is one which affects not only Australia, but the whole world. When those in a position to speak met recently in Tasmania to discuss the question of future timber supplies in Australia, they pointed out that if our ratio of increase in population were to continue for the next 20 years, we would not be able to export a single ton of timber, but would probably have to import a great quantity unless we took immediate steps to conserve that which are now available. This is what we are doing under the Forests Act. We have made a survey of our timber supplies, and have provided that a part of the State may be permanently reserved. Whilst in years to come we may not even be able to supply our own requirements, the position will be such that we will be able to claim that in the Conservator we had a man who was able to look further ahead in matters of this kind than most of us. Whilst we may be prone to criticise, and rightly so, a great deal of sympathy should be extended to any officer who sets out to completely change public opinion so as to get beneficial results. We should therefore be charitable and admit that while the Conservator may make mistakes—we all make mistakes—we may say that taking it in the gross, the policy of Mr. Lane-Poole will unquestionably be beneficial to the State. It is interesting to know that we have discussed at various times the subject of the proper control of the whole of our forest areas. We have issued huge concessions to certain companies, and for the period of those concessions we have no control. Those companies may disregard all our regulations and do as they choose, but hon. members will be glad to know that even those companies are now recognising that they require to change their policy in order to enable them to maintain their supplies of timber.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is due to higher prices, too.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and we shall shortly finalise arrangements by which the concessions and leases will be cancelled and permits given on the basis of the payment of royalties. From that standpoint the State will reap a greater advantage. Of

course it is not likely that they are going to give us control and pay us royalties unless they know how their operations are to be carried on in the future. Probably we shall not get as much as if it were virgin country that was being operated on; we shall, at any rate, get some royalty, but we shall get something even greater than that, we shall have control, and thus we shall be able to work our forests on a more satisfactory basis than we have done in the past. I do not know that there is anything more that I can say at the present stage, except to point out to members that, in view of the revenue we receive, it can be fairly claimed that the cost of administration is not unduly high.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [6.1]: I wish to say a few words with reference to this vote, which covers an industry which I regard as one of the most important brought forward for our consideration. The Minister is to be congratulated on the appointment to the position of Conservator of Forests of a man of the calibre of Mr. Lane-Poole.

The Minister for Mines: I think the leader of the Opposition found him.

Mr. PICKERING: I said the Minister.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, well, it was the leader of the Opposition who found him.

Mr. PICKERING: If that is so, then I think the thanks of members are due to the leader of the Opposition and I have very much pleasure in according him that measure of praise. It must have impressed members as being truly remarkable that since the advent of Mr. Lane-Poole there has been a wonderfully increased interest in matters affecting forestry work generally. Members of Parliament, including the member for Sussex, have increased their knowledge by leaps and bounds since public attention has been specifically drawn to the importance of the industry. When one considers the relation of forestry to our lives, it is indeed an important subject. The forests throughout the world are rapidly becoming exhausted and, as the Conservator of Forests has pointed out, it is essential that Western Australia should take steps to retain her forest areas and to conserve her timber supply generally. It is essential that we should not only retain our present forest supplies but, as far as possible, extend them. A reference to the report submitted by the Conservator on our local forests will demonstrate the necessity for conserving and increasing the timber industry. The Conservator has been carrying out a classification of the forests of Western Australia, and the total area classified since he took over his position is something like 3,550,000 acres. A great part of the time has been spent in classifying the karri forests. Members probably were under the impression that great portions of the south-western districts were really dense karri forests, but I regret to see that the investigations made so far show that the karri forest areas are inconsiderable in comparison with what

was originally estimated. It is true that there are stretches of country where the karri grows in association with red gum or marri, by which name red gum was formerly known. It has been held by members interested in the settlement of the South-West that the karri land is the best in that part of the State. The report of the Conservator, however, shows that that is not so, and that the better class agricultural land is that where the karri grows in association with red gum. I believe that an understanding has been arrived at between the Government and the Conservator of Forests for reserving areas covered entirely with karri, and for cutting up those areas where the karri and red gum are growing, the Government, of course, utilising the karri only and not making the portions where that timber grows, available for settlement. It is astounding to note that the growth of jarrah is so inconsiderable as the report shows. From the results of 18 experimental plots covering five acres, the annual growth of jarrah is only about five cubic feet per acre and the total growth for the State would be about 270,000 loads per annum. When members realise that we are cutting at the rate of about 806,000 loads every year, the necessity for conserving our position will be realised. We are going to the bad something like half a million loads per year.

Mr. O'Loghlen: The war pulled our average down a lot.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes, I understand that was so, but the position is a very serious one and has to be confronted. If the war had not occurred, undoubtedly we would have been cutting at a greater pace than even the report shows, and with the war conditions passing and normal conditions returning, the destruction of this valuable timber will increase at a greater ratio.

Mr. Nairn: How many years will it take to cut it out?

Mr. PICKERING: I do not know, but I think the report shows that it would take something like 50 years. The Conservator draws attention to the fact that there is only one way to deal with our forests, and that is to properly cultivate and safeguard the forests. We have appointed the Conservator for that very purpose and it is to be hoped that the Government and members of Parliament will support him in every way.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Let him stick to his forests, then, and leave State sawmills alone. Let him refrain from dealing with the policy of the Government and then we will support him.

Mr. PICKERING: One of the greatest avenues for the exploitation of our forests has been sleeper cutting. Unfortunately, the specifications for the sleepers have been very severe indeed, and a great deal of most valuable timber has been used for purposes which were really wasteful. From

experiments that have been carried out, it has been found that a comparatively inferior class of timber can serve the same purpose. Some countries already recognise this fact and it is to be hoped that the authorities here will agree that the quality of the sleeper need not be such as has been demanded up till now.

The Minister for Mines: We have reduced the specification already.

Mr. PICKERING: There are some countries which do not realise the position and it should be brought home to them as speedily as possible. I know from my own professional experience that we have in this State very valuable timbers indeed, and it is regrettable to see such beautiful timbers used for sleepers. The sooner this country recognises that fact the better it will be.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What would you use for sleepers?

Mr. PICKERING: I would use some of the inferior timbers and limbs for wane-edged sleepers. There is no reason why we should use these square-faced sleepers; so far the square-cut sleepers are the only ones which have been used.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you suggest using the round-backed sleeper?

Mr. PICKERING: Yes. That was in my mind.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That was the cause of the failure of the Kojonup line, you know.

Mr. PICKERING: Well, the Conservator of Forests contends that they will serve as well.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He might, but the railway officials do not. Let him induce the railway engineers to agree first, and then let him decide the question.

Mr. PICKERING: I understand that the Minister says that he has reduced the specifications.

The Minister for Mines: I did not say we were using round backs.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not think it is necessary that the best of this splendid timber should be used for sleepers. If the Conservator is of this opinion, the Government should listen to his suggestion. Another important question dealt with by the Conservator in his report is that of fire-breaks. I regret that the Conservator does not lay down the principle we fought for when the forests Act was before this House. We contended that the Conservator should be responsible for the fire-breaks, which work should rest with his department. It is ridiculous to think that any farmer, or any other person living on the border of the forests, should be responsible for the fire-breaks. Regarding timber reservations, we have in my own district a large tuart reserve. I am glad to hear that the Forestry Department have acquired that area, which formerly belonged to private individuals. It is one of the most valuable timber areas in Western Australia and has been used extensively by the Railway De-

partment for wagon building. Unfortunately, the Railway Department have taken only the best and longest logs and a great deal of most valuable timber has gone to waste. It is interesting to note that the Conservator of Forests has taken this matter in hand, and has made arrangements for the establishment of a spot mill in the forest. At that mill timber which would otherwise go to waste will be used. Over-mature logs, which would not be touched by the Railway Department or other buyers, will be put through the mill, which is situated at Wonnerup.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Who started that?

Mr. PICKERING: The Conservator of Forests, I suppose.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Another State trading concern.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not know whether you would call it that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Perhaps they will try to sell that one to the French Government.

Mr. PICKERING: Like many other State trading concerns, I regret to say, it is likely to be run at a loss.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, because it will cut up bad timber.

Mr. PICKERING: The only alternative was to ringbark the trees and destroy them. The attitude the Conservator takes up is: is it better to wilfully destroy the timber or cut it up at a minor loss?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It all depends on the loss.

Mr. PICKERING: He estimates that it will be a minor loss, and when the consumers get to know the value of the timber for use in various directions, that loss may be converted into a profit. There is a question affecting the management of this tuart mill that I desire to refer to. Being member for the district, I naturally had it brought under my notice that the management of this mill has been given to a foreigner. I understand there were a number of applications and among them several Australians, and I regret that such a position should have arisen.

Mr. O'Loughlen: A Norwegian was appointed, I believe.

Mr. PICKERING: I understand so. I think his name is Neilsen. I am not prepared to admit that a foreigner knows as much as our own saw millers but I regret that it has been found expedient to appoint a foreigner. I saw the Conservator of Forests regarding this matter and he pointed out that the man in his estimation was eminently suitable, and that he thought him the best man available for the position.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. PICKERING: Several questions have been asked in the House as to the reason why the pines in the Ludlow plantation were cut down. I understand it was owing to the

fact that the trees were of an unsuitable variety. This is but another proof of the necessity for having a skilled forester to decide upon the proper type. It is most unfortunate that something like 100 acres of pines had to be cut out. There is very little said about this in the report of the Conservator, but I urge on the Minister the desirability of replanting that area with suitable pines at the earliest possible moment. It was interesting to hear the remarks of the Minister in connection with the firewood supply of Perth, and the expenditure on many of the roads constructed in the Mundaring weir area at a cost, I understand, of £335 per mile, to enable them to obtain all the dead timber available for the Perth market. The object of clearing up this area, I am told, is that pines may be planted at the rate of one square mile per annum. I realise the necessity for doing the utmost possible in this connection. It is to be hoped that the department will be able to considerably increase its proposed annual planting. One of the serious difficulties we have is the importation of softwoods for building purposes. Some £60,000 or £70,000 is sent out of the State every year for softwoods, and other countries will not for long be in a position to supply the requirements of the State in this regard. It is of the utmost importance that we should have a large supply of softwood.

Mr. Robinson: But that is not reforestation; it is brand new forest.

Mr. PICKERING: Call it what you like. It is necessary that we should have the pines as soon as possible. In this respect, dealing with the State sawmills in their relation to the Forestry Department, the report of the Conservator states—

Without wishing to unduly disparage the management of the State sawmills, there is no doubt that, under existing conditions, the particular portion of the people's heritage covered by the State sawmilling permit areas is being exploited with a maximum of waste and without any view to the future. The same may be said of other large private firms operating in the jarrah country. The only remedy is to find new markets and so sell wood which to-day is either being burnt at the mill fire or is left standing in the forest to rot; and for this purpose the advent of a French sawmilling company would be of special value.

When the proposition of selling the State sawmills to a French syndicate was before the House it was viewed with general disfavour. But it seems that France is one of the few countries that will take the timber we have to spare and which we otherwise cannot get rid of. Another important advance which has been made since the advent of the Conservator is that of a system of kiln-drying for our timbers. The honour of having introduced this method to Western Australia lies between Professor Tomlinson and Mr. Laue-Poole. It represents a great

advance in the seasoning of our local timbers, and has made the handling of jarrah and karri very much easier and more profitable than it was in the past. I should like to read a short passage from "Notes on the Forests and Forest Products and Industries of Western Australia," in which it is stated—

A second kiln was erected in the grounds of the University at Crawley, and at it perfectly dried timber is turned out. The product of this kiln is eagerly sought after by furniture manufacturers and others whose business demands timber in a thoroughly dry condition. Messrs. Millars Timber and Trading Company at their sawmills at Yarloop have erected a drying kiln on the principle of that at Crawley, and are turning out kiln-dried timber on a commercial scale. The times occupied in converting by kiln-drying green jarrah into commercially dry timber are approximately as follows:—One inch in thickness, 28 days; 1½ inches in thickness, 40 days; 2 inches in thickness, 56 days; and 3 inches in thickness, 84 days. Karri takes longer to dry than jarrah, the approximate times being, 1 inch, 35 days, and 1¾ inches, 70 days.

This is indicative of its commercial value. When one recalls that in buying timber in England one specifies timber of some years in seasoning, it will be understood what an appreciable benefit has been conferred on the State by this kiln-drying process. I wish to draw attention to the sandalwood industry. Owing to the very high price that was paid for sandalwood, there was a boom in the industry. On page 9 of the Conservator's report will be found the following:—

The overcutting of the sandalwood supplies of the State reached frenzied proportion. The average quantity of sandalwood absorbed by China during the past 70 years has been 4,500 tons per annum. During the year under report the cut amounted to 17,269 tons. It is difficult to ascribe the exact cause of this very large increase. It is probably due to a number of factors, of which the very high rate of exchange which followed the rise in the price of silver, and consequently of the Chinese dollar, is the main reason.

We have been exploiting our sandalwood industry purely for marketing purposes, and are fast denuding our sandalwood reserves. In a previous debate attention was drawn to the seriousness of the position and the desirability of reforestation of sandalwood. Some years ago, when the late Mr. Ednie Brown was in charge of our forests, an experiment was carried out which seemed to indicate that it would be possible to secure an effective measure of relief in this direction. I notice that in the allocation of funds for the ensuing year, £1,000 has been set aside for the propagation of sandalwood and mallet bark. That brings us to another important factor in our industry, namely, the condition of the mallet bark industry, which promised very great things for Western Australia.

Mr. Harrison: It was cut out in about three years.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes, owing to its exploitation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Only the Germans would buy it.

Mr. PICKERING: That is so. The real value of mallet bark was demonstrated by the Germans. Here is a passage in the official publication of the Forests Department—

The wattle is Australia's national floral emblem. Its rich golden flower has inspired poets, and it is always referred to with admiring pride. The other side of the shield exhibits no idealism whatever, and presents only a scene of systematic destruction. The bark of the wattle contains a powerful tanning agent, and has therefore a commercial value. The consequence has been that everywhere in Australia the wattle has been ruthlessly sacrificed for the sake of its bark. At one time the export trade in wattle bark was very large. To-day the quantity sent abroad is negligible. Australia, indeed, is now unable to supply her own wants for tanning materials, and imports largely, principally from South Africa. The irony concealed in the last-mentioned fact is that South Africa imported the seed from Australia, started growing and kept on growing wattle while Australia was destroying it, and now Australia has practically no wattle, while South Africa's export of wattle bark and wattle bark extract runs into hundreds of thousands per annum, and is yearly increasing.

Mr. Robinson: But all that appeared in the Press months ago, and everybody has read it.

Mr. Underwood: That is no reason why he should not read it again.

Mr. PICKERING: It may have appeared in the Press months ago, but not everybody has read it. I give the hon. member every credit for what he did while he was Minister for Forests.

The CHAIRMAN: We are discussing the Estimates; let us stick to them.

Mr. PICKERING: I will endeavour to do so. We still have a bark suitable for tanning purposes. We can use this bark in conjunction with the pearling industry, because in the search for pearls men have to use a certain amount of timber in their fires for cooking, and other purposes. The timber they use is the mangrove, the bark of which is excellent for tanning but has been wasted in the past. It is now, however, in consequence of its high tannin properties, being sold at a profit. It is interesting to know that at the conference of Premiers two very important forestry matters were dealt with. At the conference held in May resolutions were passed relating to the establishment of a forestry school and to the area of land to be reserved for the needs of the Commonwealth. It is very necessary to have a school of forestry and I regret extremely that it is not to be established in Western Australia. I am glad, however, that it has

been decided to establish the forest products laboratory in Western Australia. It is highly probable that we shall lose the services of Mr. Boas, who has been very intimately associated with this movement. I believe that he has accepted an appointment to a position carrying a higher remuneration than this State was prepared to offer him, and I hope that another officer will be appointed to succeed him.

The Minister for Mines: I do not want to be unkind, but I do not think Mr. Boas has been very generous in his attitude to the State.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is so, especially after having had a trip around the world for which the State found the money.

Mr. PICKERING: I believe Mr. Boas was eminently suited for this work.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The State trained him for it.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes, and it is a matter for regret that, after having had such privileges conferred upon him, he should have turned down a State like Western Australia. I daresay, however, that there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. It is essential that the forest products laboratory should be got under way as early as possible, because it is most important that we should discover means for getting in this State timber suitable for pulping purposes. In other countries the timber suitable for pulping is rapidly being cut out, and I believe it is difficult to grow such timber in this State. Therefore, we should endeavour to discover among our indigenous timbers one that is suitable for pulping purposes. This is a very strong reason for getting the laboratory working at the earliest possible date. We owe a very great debt of gratitude to the Conservator of Forests for the interest he has created in this State in matters relating to forestry. The timber industry is one of the most important in the State, and it is one which prior to the advent of Mr. Lane-Poole was gradually waning. By the adoption of a proper system of forest conservation, we might yet be able to retrieve our position, and even improve it. Nothing is more vital to the welfare of the State than the conservation of this industry and the introduction of timbers not grown here, but very urgently needed, particularly soft woods. Instead of decreasing any item on the Forest Department Estimates, I am sure it will be the desire of every member that the most generous assistance should be given to the department to help forward the industry.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [7.48]: I wish to deal almost exclusively with one phase of forestry, namely the sandalwood industry, and I intend to quote somewhat from the report of the Conservator of Forests for the year ended the 30th June, 1920. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) touched on this matter to some extent when he dealt

with what the Conservator describes as the over-cutting of sandalwood supplies. The Conservator states—

The over-cutting of the sandalwood supplies of the State reached frenzied proportions. The average quantity of sandalwood absorbed by China during the past 70 years is 4,500 tons per annum. I believe that total is correct. Further on the report continues—

The alarming rate of cutting made it necessary to attempt to regulate the industry. In the past, the slumps that have followed boom years have been so disastrous as to cause a general cessation of the industry. The trade is a purely Chinese one and is mainly carried out by the Chinese through agents in Perth or Fremantle working on letters of credit. The Chinese thus entirely control the industry, and, as is only natural, the bulk of the profits, instead of coming to Western Australia, go to China, while the Western Australian Government only obtains a royalty of 5s. per ton. It was decided to try to curtail the cutting to 5,000 tons per annum as a maximum, and to effect this tenders were called on a royalty basis for the exclusive right to remove this quantity of sandalwood from the major portion of the sandalwood country. The proposal met with so much criticism that the tenders were cancelled, and instead, the royalty on the wood was raised from 5s. to £2 per ton. Whilst this will certainly give the Government a considerable increase of revenue, it will not effect the main object of regulating the supply of wood to that quantity which China can absorb, and so assuring a continuous trade at a maximum price. The matter cannot be left as it is and steps should be taken to remedy it. Since China now has between three and four years' supply on hand, the problem of regulating the industry and at the same time doing as little hurt to the cutters as possible, is one which presents some difficulty.

I quite agree with the Conservator regarding the difficulty of regulating the trade in a way that will do justice to all parties concerned—

Mr. Harrison: What do you suggest?

Mr. MULLANY: But I certainly cannot congratulate the Conservator on the attempts he has made. The Conservator states that the average export of sandalwood to China from this State during the last 70 years has been 4,500 tons a year. That is correct so far as figures go, but for practical purposes it is entirely misleading. I do not know of what interest it can be to anyone to be informed of the average export per year over a period of 70 years. If the Conservator had given the average for the past 10 years, his figures would have been of greater service. The average export of sandalwood from Western Australia during the past 10 years has been 6,200 tons per year.

The Minister for Mines: Does that include last year?

Mr. MULLANY: Yes. To show how useless it is to average exports over such a long period as 70 years, I would point out that in the third decade—from 1850 to 1860—the quantity exported was only 4,209 tons for the whole 10 years. To quote the average for 70 years, is of no practical use. We want to know what quantity China is taking each year, and what she is prepared to take at the present time. In his report the Conservator says that it is the desire of the department to curtail the export of sandalwood to a maximum of 5,000 tons per year. I want to know why the department desire to deliberately curtail the export of this commodity, which we ourselves do not use, by over 1,000 tons on the quantity annually sent away during the last 10 years. I cannot imagine what the Conservator's object is, and I feel sure that the Minister will find some difficulty in explaining the object of this proposal.

Mr. Pilkington: Is not it because the wood is being cut out?

Mr. MULLANY: There is no need to worry about that. It is true that in years gone by sandalwood was much more accessible than it has been during the last few years. It is now necessary for the pullers to travel further from the railways in order to reach the sandalwood areas, but the idea that our sandalwood areas are being denuded is to a large extent erroneous. There are vast areas of sandalwood producing country which have been scarcely touched, but undoubtedly these areas are somewhat difficult of access. Even the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) would exert his efforts to prevent the sandalwood from being cut out altogether. If we were adopting a policy of growing sandalwood, there might be some sense in imposing this restriction, but to curtail the supplies by more than 1,000 tons on what we have been exporting during recent years is absurd.

The Minister for Mines: The quantity exported last year, 13,000 tons, was not an average year's export.

Mr. MULLANY: I have taken the average for the past 10 years.

The Minister for Mines: That is just as bad as taking the average for 70 years.

Mr. MULLANY: It might not be quite fair to include an abnormal year, but why should the Conservator seek to restrict the cut to 5,000 tons a year?

Mr. Underwood: If we are going to cut it out, we might as well do so this year as next year.

Mr. MULLANY: A few weeks ago when moving in this House to disallow a regulation made under the Forests Act by which it was proposed to limit the size of sandalwood to 15 inches in circumference, I complained that the Conservator of Forests had misled me when the proposed contract was under consideration some little time before. The Con-

servator stated that he had no intention of limiting the size of the sandalwood which pullers would be permitted to take; it was a regulation which had been in existence for many years and which had never previously been enforced. The Minister assured me that there was no intention to mislead me or anyone else on the question, and I accepted the assurance. When the Minister gave that assurance, he made an explanation to this effect—

The Conservator pointed out that at the time the member for Menzies approached him in connection with the regulation regarding the size of sandalwood, the question of granting a permit under the Forests Act to any one firm or individual was under consideration and had not been disposed of. He (the Conservator) points out that under conditions then being imposed to limit the output in any one year, it would not have been possible to permit sandalwood pullers operating under the direction of any firm to take sandalwood as implied under the regulations, and when the regulations were altered and new conditions were under consideration, what the hon. member understood did not apply.

There is only one construction I can put upon that explanation by the Conservator. The contract had caused such an outcry that the Government felt impelled to cancel it. The Conservator was under the impression that the contract would be let. The only construction I can place upon the explanation is that if the contract had been let, the regulation would not have been enforced. When the contract was cancelled and the individual pullers were operating, the Conservator, apparently out of official spitefulness that his pet project had been turned down, was prepared to deliberately harass the small sandalwood getter. The Conservator said he was under the impression that the big contract would be let.

The Minister for Mines: Under a permit you can make any conditions you like.

Mr. MULLANY: The Conservator told me, that the Minister repeated the statement, that he was then under the impression that the contract would be let, and that the regulation would not be enforced.

Mr. Pilkington: Would it have been that if one limitation was imposed the other would not be necessary?

Mr. MULLANY: Why was not the other restriction necessary? Is the member for Perth advocating the claims of the big combine?

Mr. Pilkington: Was that not the Conservator's point? If one limitation was there the other was not necessary.

Mr. MULLANY: If one concession was granted to a big firm.

Mr. Pilkington: With a limitation as to the amount of sandalwood to be cut.

Mr. MULLANY: What has the limitation as to output to do with the size of wood to be cut? I think the Conservator would have been better employed in endeavouring to obtain a

practical knowledge of the sandalwood forests of the State than in going away to attend conferences in England and Europe. He has never taken the trouble to become personally conversant with the areas in which sandalwood is cut. I do not think he has ever been there.

Mr. Hudson: He has never been on the goldfields.

Mr. MULLANY: There may be difficulties in the way of regulating the trade, in endeavouring to see that the State gets a fair recompense from it, and that the men in the bush receive due reward for their labours, but it appears to me that the Conservator thinks that he alone knows what to do, and does not take the trouble to confer with people who are interested and understand the conditions. From the tone of the report one can only judge that he contemplates restricting the output of sandalwood. I hope, before he imposes any further restrictions on the industry or suggests any further alteration to the Forests Act as regards sandalwood, he will make himself more conversant with the industry than he is to-day. Unless he does so, he will encounter even greater trouble in the future than he has in the past.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [8.3]: I will be brief in my remarks, because I shall have an opportunity at a later stage of discussing various phases of the management of forests as this appertains to the Conservator. The Minister was also brief in introducing these Estimates, because they naturally contain the usual items which appear from year to year and which do not call for much comment. I intend to confine my remarks chiefly to the report of the Conservator as presented to Parliament. In comparison with reports presented in previous years it is fairly informative. Although not strictly accurate in some respects, inasmuch as political opinions are expressed in it which might well have been left out, it covers all the ramifications of forest wealth in Western Australia. We have, therefore, reason to be grateful for the information supplied, particularly with regard to the tabulated form in which the information is presented. As pointed out by the member for Sussex keen disappointment was felt that, judging from the classification reports, the amount of karri that was available was not as great as had been represented in previous years. The Conservator points out that the desire for settlement in the karri regions is still fairly pronounced, but that the experiments made with mixed timber country show that this offers the greatest inducement to settlers. He further recommends that on this country alone settlement should not be allowed to take place. I do not know that I am right in saying that this is his recommendation. Judging from his remarks and conversations he appears to be entirely opposed to settlement there. I, also, am opposed to it where it can be avoided. There are some small areas in the gullies which

might be made available for settlement, but when we consider the increased price of timber and the feverish desire on the part of timber companies operating here to utilise every available piece of timber, that it was the custom in previous years to pass over, postulating a big demand in the future as well as big prices, the Conservator would be right in demanding that the karri areas, as well as other commercial timber areas, should be preserved for timber purposes. We have other big areas in Western Australia which can be given up to rural pursuits. Opportunities can be given to settlers to develop such areas, whilst we reserve that portion in the South-West, which is in the generous rainfall belt, for the purpose of producing commercial timbers for all time. I am prompted to give the Conservator my support in this one direction by reason of the fact that the market for karri timber, so long dormant, is now beginning to revive. A few years ago, for a comparative song, anyone in Western Australia could have taken up half the countryside; that was before the Labour Government, by establishing State sawmills and opening up a new province, gave a commercial value to this particular class of timber. One or two companies did take up big areas of country, but because there was no market for the timber they abandoned them, and the whole countryside was a dead letter so far as State activities were concerned. By a method of treatment known as the powellising process, which won the support of the Federal Engineer (Mr. Bell), and other experts who had an opportunity of testing it, karri became a commercial proposition; and yet so great and deep rooted was the prejudice against it as a commercial timber, that it was not until some ten weeks ago that it found its way at last into the Indian market. The first shipment is now on its way to India. This indicates that the Government and the department would be well advised to preserve that area as far as possible, seeing that it is an area so lavishly blessed by nature for increased production, as the timber comes to maturity and grows in greater density than other commercial timbers that we deal in. I hope the Minister will support this project, even if the experts and authorities, enthusiasts and optimists in agriculture try to put aside the claims of our timber areas. As he has done before, the Conservator points out the very great denudation that is going on, his estimate being something like 800,000 loads per annum. The natural recuperation he estimates to be 270,000 loads per annum. He suggests in his report that the exportable amount of timber should be limited to the quantity which is gradually won each year by this re-growth. We must admit straight away that such a thing is unworkable. Western Australia possesses all too few industries that are showing buoyancy, and these should be permitted to assist the State in the very parlous financial times through which it is passing. Provided the

right methods are employed, and money is applied year after year to the management of our forests on right lines, I think we can safely go along with our exports. I admit that if we spend annually a certain amount of energy or money, and only get a return equal to a quarter of that expenditure, the time must come when, in the natural order of things, a crisis occurs. I do not think that such a state of affairs will arise in this State. During the last two or three years a commercial value has been given to scores of thousand loads of our timber that it never had before. I will illustrate this point. The other day I was visiting one of the big concessions. I noticed some short-butted logs which no one would have looked at four or five years ago, and on which the mill owners would have wasted no time in cutting. Owing to the fact that sleepers have reached as high a price as £8 a load, and other timbers have gone up in proportion, the companies to-day are paying higher felling rates, and are even building special trucks or short wagons to pick up every available log of this description in the forest. This, of course, means that they are not so fast cutting out. It is probable that at the present time there is a great deal more for production available than there was in previous years when the market was not buoyant.

Mr. Harrison: Is that timber matured?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, it is timber which will never come to anything. I believe the Conservator's estimate of the existing supplies of what we may call commercial timber can be refuted. I have not noticed that he has referred in his report to that development. Anyone going through the bush to-day, using a fair amount of observation, can see that the condition of affairs is such that did not exist before. The companies have only a limited period to clear up their leases and concessions. If the change foreshadowed by the Minister, namely, the cancellation of these leases and concessions and the issuing of permits, thus limiting the period is brought into effect, the companies will naturally endeavour to obtain the greatest break up value from their leases that is possible, so that they may take advantage of the present high prices. They are endeavouring to prolong the life of these leases and concessions in view of the changed outlook. It is only this position that has brought about the Conservator's remarks and estimate as to revenue. I do not know whether the question of the world's parity, or the high prices that will probably exist for years to come, will apply in this case. Personally, I think the price of timber has gone up to such a degree that it is unlikely ever to come back again to normal conditions.

Mr. Harrison: The law of supply and demand, I suppose, will operate?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Probably so. If there is one industry to which the law of supply and demand more particularly applies, it

we are to judge by the opinions of experts, it is the timber industry.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no world's parity in this case. The price is fixed by the Commission.

Mr. Pickering: It is a very high price.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Just now there is visiting this State an American timber expert, and an interview with him recently appeared in the Press. He pointed out the desperate position which confronted the United States a few years ago before the situation was properly grappled with. I have been in communication periodically with Professor Pinchott, the leading forestry man in America. He is a most competent judge of timber, and I have read his reports. He said about five years ago that unless steps of a drastic nature were taken immediately, there would not be a stick of timber left standing east of the Rockies in 16 years. He awakened the public conscience of America to such an extent that all over the country, that was at all favourable to the growth of timber, seed beds were laid down in large areas. I understand that the problem which confronted America is now not half so serious as it was ten years ago. In continental countries such as Germany, and eastern countries such as Japan, the authorities have been for a considerable period aiding nature in the recuperation of the natural timber supplies. In Australia, owing to the generosity of nature, we are not compelled to adopt these methods. In some countries the law stipulates that a certain number of trees must be planted for every one that is destroyed. A proper application of the scientific methods necessary to aid nature is all that is required here. We have no need to plant hardwoods in Western Australia. We believe that the various natural processes now operating, aided by that attention which I hope the department will continue to give, will be instrumental in preserving this industry as a permanent factor in our progress, instead of our possessing only something of an uncertain description. However, I do not want to get on to that subject, but to deal with the Conservator's report. Still, the point is worth noting that there is a greatly improved outlook by reason of the increased price of timber, so that logs which four years ago were anything but a commercial proposition are to-day being utilised. That fact must have a powerful effect in adding to the life of our forests and in continuing our export trade at the level which it has now reached. The Conservator draws attention to the question of the ravages of fire, and the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) took him to task on this point to a certain extent. The member for Sussex and myself disagree on the matter. I recollect that I stood to the Conservator as regards the provision which he had introduced into the Forests Bill, and I have yet to learn that any great harm would have resulted from it to the primary

producer, who, in the opinion of some people, is the only person on earth to-day.

Mr. Pickering: That provision has not been enforced.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Then the Conservator has not done his duty, and if he has not done it the reason is probably that he fears the growing power of the primary producer, who objects to that provision. We have repeatedly heard from the Conservator about superior classes of timber being utilised for inferior purposes. There is a good deal in that contention, but I am not going to accept the Conservator's remarks as gospel truth when he states that other countries besides our own will take wane-edged sleepers and inferior sleepers cut out of the tops and limbs of trees. I regret the Conservator included that remark in his report, because in my opinion—though I do not wish to be dogmatic—it displays a lack of knowledge of local conditions. We know that the Conservator some years ago issued a regulation as to stacking the tops of trees—one of the most ridiculous propositions ever put forward; and I thought that three or four years' acclimatisation in Western Australia would have prevented the Conservator from making other mistakes of that kind. It is true we have utilised round-backed sleepers in Western Australia, but the line in which they were used had to be dismantled because the road would not set. While the Conservator is continually harping on the utilisation of inferior qualities of timber, I should think that one of the functions of his office would be to popularise the use of that inferior timber, even at a reduced price, in other countries that are buying from us. Suppose that to-morrow the purchasers in other countries received a report from the Conservator, a report which ought to have some weight, in favour of the use of sleepers of inferior timber, the first thing they would ask would be, "What has been the effect of your recommendation in your own country? What are you doing right on the spot, where you can get the timber cheaply, where there is no obstacle in the way of utilising the inferior timber? How many miles of railway have you laid down with this particular type of timber?" That is what the buyer in Burmah or India or China, or any other country that is buying our timber, would ask. The Conservator has to admit that our own railway engineers will not take sleepers of inferior timber. My own opinion is that they will not take them because they know what they are doing, and because they are endeavouring to secure economical working in our transport system by utilising the commodity that will fill the bill. Unless Mr. Lane-Poole can get that recommendation in his report backed up by the authority of at least one railway engineer—which should not be difficult to obtain—it can have no effect. The opinion ought to be buttressed by that of technical railway men. Without such support it loses all weight. Whether based on

long experience, or short experience, or no experience at all, the recommendation can carry no weight in any country that is buying our commodity unless we ourselves show confidence in that recommendation. I hope that if Mr. Lane-Poole includes a similar suggestion in his report next year, he will demonstrate that one of the functions of a well equipped Forestry Department is to popularise in all the markets of the world the goods that we have to sell. Reference is made in the report to the clearing up of the tuart forest acquired by the Government from private ownership. This is being done by the erection of a sawmill. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has pointed out that here we have one more instance of a State enterprise being launched by a Government who have declared themselves utterly opposed to State enterprise. I think it will be found that, under the general allocation of money for the regeneration of our forests, there is no hindrance to the Conservator of Forests cleaning up that tuart country by means of a sawmill and utilising some of the commodity for the State's commercial benefit. It is no crime for the Government to have established this State enterprise. I applaud them for having done it. Still, it has been done by the members of an Administration who won their way to power because of the heinousness of State enterprises, which they undertook to scrap for good and all—State enterprises which the Chambers of Commerce and certain other public bodies declared, day after day, were bringing Western Australia on to the rocks. An Administration elected to abolish our State enterprises have been hypocritical enough—I applaud them for it—to extend our State enterprises. The fact demonstrates that public men appealing on the hustings for support do not mean what they say. I am glad that I am not one of those public men. A point which I would like the Minister to note in this connection is the duplication, or triplication, that exists in connection with State enterprise in timber. We have now a sawmill run by the Railway Department, a sawmill run by the Public Works Department, and a sawmill run by the Forestry Department. I do not think any business man possessing the acumen with which Ministers credit themselves, would consider it was economical procedure to have three staffs, three departments, three systems, all working the timber industry.

The Minister for Mines: But those three sawmills are for entirely different purposes.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I quite understand that. But a large proportion of the output of the tuart mill which is being run by the Forestry Department will be sold to the public. We know there is always a surplus. The report mentions that the whole of the tuart output will not be absorbed by the Railway Department. We know that the Railway Department's sawmill was established to supply

that department with necessary timber; but this sawmill also has developed a huge surplus, which competes with the product of private sawmillers in the open market. As portion of the output of the tuart mill is to be sold to private manufacturers in Western Australia, that mill will develop into a commercial proposition.

The Minister for Mines: That is essential in the first instance, because of the huge quantity of matured tuart. Later on the mill will only deal with the yearly growth of tuart.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I understand that, but I think I make a fair point when I say that the Government should make a determined attempt to amalgamate the three departments in this matter of sawmilling. No doubt the Commissioner of Railways says to the Public Works Department, "You are not going to get my mill, because I can manage it better than you can." And doubtless the Public Works Department will say, "The Railway Department are not going to manage our mill, because they cannot do it properly." However, the manager of the State sawmills, the Commissioner of Railways, and the Conservators of Forests are all of them servants of the taxpayers of Western Australia. The report of the Conservator deals also with the necessity for fencing in the tuart area so as to prevent indiscriminate grazing. When the Forests Bill was passing through this Chamber the Conservator laid great stress on the damage done by straying stock, but I have never been able to assess that damage at the same rate as the Conservator.

The Minister for Mines: What about the tuart forest?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Straying stock may have done damage there, but that does not apply to other forests.

The Minister for Mines: I do not think the Conservator proposes to fence any others.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister was not in the House at the time the Forests Bill went through; he was away on a holiday. I appreciate the difficulties experienced by the Conservator in getting officers who can take charge of the working plans. I have watched the results of the efforts to get a classification, or what might be termed a national stocktaking, of our timbers; and I observe that the Conservator ventures the opinion that in the very near future he will be able to secure officers possessing the knowledge requisita for the purpose. In his report he points out, however, that forest rangers are scarce. That came as a shock to me, because I understand that if the Forestry Department have one application for the position of ranger, they have 45, and all from qualified and experienced men. If the Conservator requires forest rangers to-morrow, the applications are there. The system of preference to soldiers is applied, and rightly so; but I venture to assert that if the department are suffering from a lack of efficient staff, then some of the applications on hand should be inspected.

I myself know of returned soldiers now working in the timber industry who have a lifetime of experience qualifying them in every way for the position of forest rangers. I have spoken to Mr. Lane-Poole in regard to the appointment of a forest ranger. In fact, I hold a letter from the Conservator now regarding the appointment of a timber inspector; and the letter states that there is only one vacancy. Of course, the position of a forest ranger is different from that of a timber inspector. A forest ranger needs to have had long experience in the bush, and also requires to be possessed of the balance necessary for filling a Government position with special responsibilities attaching to it. However, I am utterly astounded to learn that there is a dearth of these officers. If there are any shortcomings in the administration of the Forestry Department due to this reason, the Conservator ought to explain to the Minister whether he has made any serious efforts to recruit the staff. I say emphatically that if the Conservator wants forest rangers, I will find him 100 applicants to select from next week. An advertisement in the public Press would bring 100 applications, and at least 15 or 20 of these would be from highly qualified men. I observe that the Conservator stresses the point that there is a possibility of karri making its way on to the overseas markets to the detriment of jarrah. That happened once before, to the serious injury of the jarrah export trade. I am rather surprised, however, at such a reference coming from a Government officer who knows that the principal Western Australian exporter of hardwood for many years to come, perhaps for all time, will be the State saw-mills, which cut karri. There is only one other mill cutting karri for export, and that mill does so only in a very small way. If there is anything done to deceive purchasers in other parts of the world—

The Minister for Mines: It is not a case of deception.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There was deception before, and there may be again.

The Minister for Mines: That is not the point.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Of course I do not expect the State to practise deception.

The Minister for Mines: It is not a question of the State practising deception, but of an agent doing so. We cannot follow every stick of timber sent out of Western Australia.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But most orders are booked in bulky quantities.

The Minister for Mines: But there is resale.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I admit that when I was working in the karri mills, about 18 years ago, it was common rumour that large shipments of karri went away to be sold as jarrah.

The Minister for Mines: I think that what the Conservator has in mind more than anything else is the sleeper trade.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Indian sleeper trade was started from the karri country. Reference has been made to the pine plantation at Ludlow. I was looking through the report of the Conservator to see what the whole of the pines, cut out at Hamel, realised by being sold to manufacturers in Perth. I can only see that the small amount of £172 was obtained. Possibly there was a sum included in last year's return. The member for Sussex referred to the fact that the pines planted at Ludlow were unsuitable and were being destroyed, and another lot were being planted. I am safe in saying that before any other variety is planted in the same place there should be a complete analysis made of the soil. I know that Mr. Mann, the Government Analyst, has made several trips through different parts of the State sampling soil, but I have not noticed any report giving the results of those investigations. I suppose there is an object in not disclosing those results; it may be unwise to publish them in the interests of the settlers; it may be unwise to publish broadcast that soils in certain places are not of a high standard. I hope, however, that if other pines are to be planted they will be planted in country that is most suitable for their culture. The Albany district has appealed to me in this respect more than any other. In the Kalgan locality and in the Mt. Barker district we can see some of the finest samples of pine in the State. That shows that the soil is good enough to grow a tree that will become a commercial proposition, provided of course we get the right class of trees. After all, it is a question of soil. We find a reference in the Conservator's report to a scarcity of labour, notwithstanding the attractiveness of the wages offered. Again, I would wish that the Conservator had not put on paper that which is not correct. I am in close touch with the daily activities in the timber belt, and I have yet to learn that a scarcity exists to the extent that it should be recorded. We may pick up the "West Australian" and find occasionally an advertisement for skilled labour, but perhaps the following week there will not be any demand for labour. Taking it all round there has not been any difficulty in starting mills, and there is no mill to-day held up owing to the want of competent men. Therefore, I fail to see that there is any advantage to be derived by pointing out that there is a dearth of labour. As regards the attractiveness of the wage, every hon. member with a knowledge of economics is aware of the fact that even though the wage were a couple of shillings in excess of what it is to-day, it would not carry the same value as the wage of 9s. which was current before the war. The position in that regard might have been left alone by Mr. Lane-Poole. All the mills have been reopened with the exception of perhaps one or two, and those are closed not because of any difficulty in securing

labour, but rather on account of being unable to transport the commodity. I take exception to the tribute showered on this officer by the member for Sussex. I am prepared to show appreciation of the services rendered by any public officer where the results warrant it, but in this case I think the Conservator has unnecessarily butted in by referring to the failure on the part of the Government to complete the sale of the State sawmills to the French syndicate. After all, that is a political matter. The reference the Conservator has made to it is a damning indictment of the Government who employ him. We have a Government whose party consist of 34 members promising to bring down a Bill to effect the sale of the State sawmills to a French syndicate, but the Bill never reached Parliament and consequently was never discussed. Mr. Lane-Poole informed me that he had no special desire to foster the sale of the State sawmills. I challenged him once about this, because a couple of friends of mine waited on him as a deputation to get a small Government mill, and the Conservator asked them why they were opposing the sale of the State sawmills. When I challenged him about this, he denied it, but in his report he deplores the fact that the Government did not effect the sale. Are there not scores of private sawmills that the Frenchmen can acquire?

Hon. P. Collier: In any case it is entirely outside the Conservator's province to comment on the matter.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It was a question for the Government, and they in their wisdom decided that the sale should not take place.

Hon. P. Collier: It was a question of public policy.

Mr. Angelo: We were told that the deposit was not paid.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The explanation given to us was that the French Government refused to allow the money to leave the country owing to the depleted state of the French finances. The syndicate, however, were prepared to offer bonds, but bonds were stated here to be not acceptable. I have yet to learn that a public officer, after a question of this description has been dropped by Parliament, should be able to comment on the matter in the way that the Conservator has done.

Mr. Hardwick: We have lost a good deal.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We would lose a good deal if we lost the hon. member.

The Minister for Mines: It is only an expression of opinion on the Conservator's part.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have heard the Minister for Mines when not occupying a Ministerial position rap officers over the knuckles for daring to intrude on such matters, or commenting on the failure of the Government policy, and that is what the comment of the Conservator is. I am not going to say why the Government did not

bring the matter before Parliament. I think the reason was that the people of Western Australia, generally speaking, National, Labour, and nondescripts, were opposed to the sale of a public utility. Mr. Lane-Poole put up the argument that a lot of our inferior timbers would have been utilised. I put it to hon. members as business men—I am not looking at the member for East Perth—that if the French in common with every other nation want timber they will get it, provided we can supply it at a cheap price. And if we are not able to give them that commodity in competition with Japan or Norway, or anywhere else, we will not get the business.

Mr. Hardwick: There are not the boats to take the timber away.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There will be votes, not boats, to take the hon. member away next March. The hon. member will not be on the political map. It is not a very powerful argument, even if it be advanced by a Minister, to try to negotiate the sale of an asset of the State which promises so much in the future. Whatever the value of that asset may have been 12 months ago, it is much more valuable to-day, and whatever the value may be to-day, its value as the years go on will be considerably in excess. The position of the timber industry to-day should be sufficient to prevent the Government contemplating the disposal of the State sawmills, and that being the case it is not politic for the Conservator—who after all is a public official, and who, I think, sometimes does not hold a high opinion of Parliament, and that is only natural because we freely criticise his methods—to comment as he has done.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is outside the power of Parliament.

Mr. Lambert: Which is unfortunate.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We can still draw attention to the defects which we notice in his administration without showering eulogies on him as was done by my genial friend the member for Sussex, who is not a native of Australia but who has acquired an extensive knowledge through his residence here. The Conservator and I have been engaged in conversation on the telephone when some blistering comments have been made. This officer, with his little knowledge of Western Australia, sought to deprive some hundreds of men of the right to follow their occupation as sleeper-cutters. He sought to break down a custom we were harnessed to, to introduce a proposal that was not sanctioned by Queensland, Victoria, or New South Wales, in which States the axeman was regarded as a useful factor in forest production. We, in this House, decided that those who had previously been following the calling should be allowed to continue to follow it, but there should be no apprentices. We realise that there may have been a certain element of waste in producing timber by these means, but we said that those men who were engaged in

the calling and who numbered over 2,000 should have the right on their return to go back to their old occupation. Unfortunately, owing to the ravages of war, instead of there being over 2,000 employed in hewing, there are not 600 to-day. Consequently, it is a dwindling industry. Whose opinion should be taken in a matter of that kind? That of the members of this House who have been here all their lives, who have a knowledge of local conditions, or the opinion of a man who was imported from the other side of the world? Who is the best judge, I ask? Even the member for East Perth could pit his opinion in this respect against that of the Conservator, for did not the hon. member in his boyhood and bare-legged days wander through the swamps and watch the methods of management as applied to our forests.

Hon. P. Collier: And watched closely, too.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have no doubt that other members will deal with this little lapse of an otherwise competent officer, as his work in the past in carrying out the forestry policy has shown him to be. I hope the Minister in his reply will inform me how the money was expended on the forest products laboratory, for which £5,000 was provided for research work. I would like to know what comes under the definition of research. I am not questioning the amount, but I do hope for results. I believe that the Conservator of Forests and the Minister as well, have done their best to get the laboratory established here. The Federal Government acting in an unauthorised way for two years did not pass the Bill and have been operating without it. Without the Science and Industries Bill there was, of course, no authority for starting this work.

The Minister for Mines: That does not come under this vote. That will come up under the scheme of expenditure.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have been looking into this matter and I hope to get an explanation before long. At the present time regulations are being framed. The Minister did me the courtesy to send me a copy of them some months ago. I perused them and returned them with my comments. I suggested some amendments, but, of course, the bulk were necessary and I approved of them. These regulations have not yet been gazetted, I understand.

The Minister for Mines: No, they will be, though.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Conservator of Forests has asked me to call upon him in order to see the regulations again and to state whether I approve of them. I hope nothing is to be attempted that will be at variance with the provisions of the Bill. I express that hope because I know that when the Bill was going through the House, the Conservator, and others as well, were particularly anxious to eliminate altogether a big section of people in this industry. It is often possible by a regulation to deal a reeling blow, which it is difficult to give under

the existing legislation. The areas in some cases are so poverty stricken that only by good management and hard manual toil are the men there able to make a living. In many cases they cannot make a living. That was owing to the restrictions which necessarily were involved in the new Forests Act. The Conservator is not doing anything to make the living of the men there easier by looking for, and in fact getting, higher royalties. He has only got that increased royalty because of the increased trade. When we realise that he has got this high royalty from cut-out areas and poverty stricken bush it is astounding, more particularly when we consider what we can get from the big areas. There was an instance at Bowelling recently and the royalty obtained was absolutely surprising, as anyone with a knowledge of the industry will readily admit. It clearly indicates that the estimates which the Conservator of Forests has submitted, will be exceeded. When the remaining permits are submitted to public tender, the prices realised will be considerably higher, and will augment still further the estimates of the Conservator. I intend to look at the regulations to-morrow, and I hope that if the Conservator endeavours by means of those regulations to do something that is not in the best interests of the industry, I will have the Minister's support in retarding his efforts. I mention that because by means of these regulations or by a pronouncement from an official quarter, it is possible to inflict a grievous wrong. I have a vivid recollection, which will be within the memory of members, of an instance where the little township of Nannup was threatened with extinction by the Conservator of Forests, who demanded that the whole of the axemen operating in that district should leave the work offering them on a permit there and go 50 miles away to operate on a concession. That meant that about 16 men who had built their homes there and who had returned from the war, would have to keep two homes, and would not be allowed to operate in their own districts. The Conservator took up a very strong stand on this point. The road board telegraphed to me and a public meeting was held. As a result we succeeded in inducing the Conservator to withdraw his pronouncement and thus enabled between 30 and 40 men to earn their livelihood there, and they have been doing that for some years now. The timber there would not go on perhaps for ever, and the Conservator expressed the opinion that if we tore the line up, he would get there in 50 years. That was not the observation of an altogether practical man, because anyone going there would see old, maimed timber, and butts that required harvesting if any improvements were to be made in the forests. Let them stay there for another 50 years and their effect would be seen in a most marked manner.

Mr. Hardwick: If you see anything wrong, come along and see me and I will ascertain what I can do.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The hon. member resembles the strength, outline and other attributes of an old jarrah tree. I am, however, dealing with the Conservator of Forests now. That is one instance that I can point to and it is quite possible that such a thing could happen again. Neither the Conservator of Forests nor any other official has any right to stifle the prosperity of any township that may be dependent upon work available in that district. I hope that in his future administration, the Conservator of Forests will be guided to a little extent, but not wholly, by the advice of men in the South-West who have been there for a long time watching this problem, and who are anxious to help him. When the Conservator came here first I appreciated his position. I realised that for a man to come in as he did with the objective before him of creating a public opinion on forestry matters, was to court criticism and censure in some quarters. I realise that very few people took any interest in this subject and that only by a judicious publicity campaign and journals to interest the people of the State in this great problem, would he succeed. It was obvious that he had to bring about a drastic change of opinion. I proffered my assistance and said I would co-operate with him if his policy was to be a gradual one, weaning the people from the customs they had followed for years past. I emphasised that the great change should not be brought about by precipitate action, which would only encourage hostile criticism. He has acted upon different methods and, although censure has been directed against him in different quarters, I believe that now there is more harmony and a better spirit of co-operation and a desire to help in bringing about what is, after all, a radical change in Western Australia. This has been particularly shown during the last year or two. I have very little more to say further than to express the hope that in the framing of these regulations I have referred to, particularly as they apply to the poorer areas that are now being submitted to public auction and made available to the axemen, no provision contained therein will prove of a hampering nature. I appreciate the Conservator's point of view, although I do not agree with him. He stands for the elimination of the axeman because of the waste following on his methods. At the same time there is no reference in his report—a fact I have mentioned before—to any steps contemplated in the direction of saving that good timber which is wasted every day in our forests. There is no information showing that the department are doing anything in this matter, although, of course, they may be taking action. Particularly is it necessary in conserving the timber where piles are being cut. The youngest trees providing tall, straight poles, are being taken out in their thousands, and people can go through areas to-day and see the waste that is going on. Much of this wood that is wasted, could be utilised for many purposes of considerable

commercial value. Both the workers and the employers could do something in the direction of conserving these timbers. I have a knowledge of this subject, for I have been swamping myself. I put it to anyone who has any experience of this, that if you are swamping and on one side there is a short, stumpy old butt like the member for East Perth—

Mr. Lambert: Did you say buck or butt?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: And on the other side there is a tender juicy young tree—

The Minister for Mines: Like the member for Forrest.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The man in the bush will demolish the young tree as he goes, and the employer will condone the action taken. Time is the essence of the contract and he wants to get the log swamped as quickly as possible. One other point and then I conclude. I regret that there is no reference made in the report to what I consider is one of the most serious problems in connection with the regeneration of our forest growth. I regret that jarrah is cut out in some places as, for instance, at the old Wellington mills and that instead of young jarrah seedlings growing there, a forest of red gum is springing up throughout the whole area.

Mr. Pickering: That is so.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That is the case in that particular area. That means that in years to come this area which should have been productive of much good jarrah timber, will be practically worthless. This is a most serious proposition. It is very evident to men who are moving about the bush. It may be due to the quality of the soil or to some other reason. I do not profess to have any knowledge of this business, but the fact is obvious to-day. The Conservator has not mentioned anything about this in his report, but I hope he will direct the attention of scientists to it, as well as giving it his own attention, to see whether a remedy can be obtained.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [8.57]: I am glad to endorse the references that have been made to the position regarding forestry and the last remarks of the member for Forrest emphasise the necessity for having a good Conservator of Forests.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We have got one now.

Mr. HARRISON: I will not reiterate what has been said by previous speakers, but I would like to draw the attention of the Minister in charge of our forests to the manner in which agriculturists are taking up land which would be more valuable under timber than under cultivation. I mentioned this matter when speaking on the Address-in-reply and I think that the time has come when I should emphasise this particular point. If soldier settlement and other settlement is to take place in the South-West, we should have an officer of the Forestry Department available to advise men taking up land and to indicate to them where such timber would

be more valuable to them than the land would be if under cultivation. At the present time there are valleys suitable for intense culture and even some hilltops and yet there are included portions of valuable timber belts in those areas. Those areas ought to be pointed out to the settler, to the end that the timber might be conserved. As has been emphasised by various speakers, timber has largely increased in value in consequence of the war. It is said that American supplies are being cut out and that America is now reforesting. What we require to do is to conserve our timber. The export market is very tempting, but we need much of our timber in Western Australia for our own work. An area east of Lake Grace, and running north to Burracoppin, is now being classified for further wheat settlement. Something should be done to see that the timber on that area is not ruthlessly sacrificed. To my knowledge, for 20 years past farmers have cleared out the whole of their timber. Many such farmers have had to go short of timber for their own use, and have even run out of firewood. Presently there will not be any timber anywhere in the agricultural areas for works on the farms. It is the duty of the department to do what it can to conserve the timber in those areas as well as in the South-West. The Lands Department and the Forest Department ought to be able to work in conjunction for the preservation of our timber. After clearing the fence line on the west and north of any area of over 500 acres, there should be a reserve of at least four chains of live timber. That would give us a checkerboard formation of alternate clearing and green timber. Among the advantages that would accrue from this plan would be that of a splendid wind-break, which is of very great value in agricultural areas. The more exposed to the wind a place may be the greater is the evaporation that goes on. Stated another way, given the wind-breaks, there would be less evaporation and a greater conservation of the necessary moisture. Moreover, if belts of green timber were left they would serve as fire-breaks, because it is well known that grass will not grow within two chains of green indigenous timber. Thus we would have a fire-break, a wind-break, and permanent shelter for stock. Our wheat belt areas are being denuded of indigenous timber and in consequence we shall be in serious difficulties in the near future.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [9.5]: I must lodge a protest against the attempt on the part of the Conservator of Forests to deal with the policy of the Government. As a forester Mr. Lane-Poole ranks high in his profession, but nevertheless it is not for him as Conservator of Forests to express an opinion as to whether or not we should sell our State sawmills. Neither is it for him to say whether we should start new sawmills. Such questions are outside his jurisdiction entirely. I do not know why Mr.

Lane-Poole should be specially interested in endeavouring to get a French company to come to Western Australia and buy a State mill. When, two years ago, the papers were tabled I learned on perusing them that Mr. Lane-Poole had taken a prominent part in the negotiations with the French syndicate; in fact, Mr. Lane-Poole and the then Minister for Forests—although he had nothing whatever to do with State sawmills—almost completed the negotiations before the matter went before the Minister for Works, who controlled the State sawmills. In his report now before us, Mr. Lane-Poole is disposed to condemn the Government for not having proceeded with the sale. Mr. Lane-Poole should mind his own business. No judge of the Supreme Court would criticise the action of Parliament and the Government as Mr. Lane-Poole has done in his report. The explanation of it is that the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson), when Attorney General, placed Mr. Lane-Poole beyond the jurisdiction of Parliament. Such an officer should not be in that position; Parliament should have power over all such officers.

Mr. Griffiths: What about the Commissioner of Railways?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He is not outside the power of Parliament; we have to appoint him, and we can raise his salary. Mr. Lane-Poole and the Supreme Court judges and, possibly, the Auditor General are the only officers by statute placed beyond the power of Parliament. I call it impertinence on Mr. Lane-Poole's part to attempt to deal with matters that do not concern him. I regret that the Minister for Works is not here to-night. No member is more tenacious of his views than is the Minister for Works; no member more strongly resents unjust and unfair criticism than does the Minister for Works. Mr. Lane-Poole has been criticising the Minister's control of the State sawmills. If I were Minister controlling this department, and if Mr. Lane-Poole presented this report to me, I should ask him what business was it of his to criticise the methods adopted by my colleague in controlling his own department. We find this in Mr. Lane-Poole's report—

Without wishing to unduly disparage the management of the State sawmills, there is no doubt that, under existing conditions, the particular portion of the people's heritage covered by the State sawmilling permit areas is being exploited with a maximum of waste and without any view to the future.

That is Mr. Lane-Poole's opinion of the management by the Minister for Works who, he declares, is exploiting the people's heritage in carrying on his business as a State sawmiller. The management of the State sawmills discloses just as much care and economy of timber as are to be found in the management of a private company. It is true the Conservator remarks that the same might be said of other large private com-

panies. Probably that is put in to soften the previous statement. This was a hint to the Minister because the Minister refused to accept French bonds in lieu of cash for the sale of the State sawmills. Mr. Lane-Poole has gone out of his way to insult the Minister because the Minister did not gratify Mr. Lane-Poole's wish that a French company should have one of our sawmills. It is a most improper attitude for Mr. Lane-Poole to adopt. Of course it is of advantage if a departmental officer can show how improvements may be effected for the benefit of the State; that is what he is paid to do. In this report Mr. Lane-Poole, no doubt, has shown where improvements could be effected; but this paragraph which I have quoted follows immediately on a criticism of the policy of the Government in declining to sell the State sawmills, which suggests that Mr. Lane-Poole felt rather bitter about it. It makes one wonder what is at the bottom of it all. Again, Mr. Lane-Poole, after stating that the peoples' heritage covered by the State sawmilling permit areas is being exploited with a maximum of waste and without any view to the future, goes on to say that the only remedy is to find new markets, and so sell wood which to-day is either being burnt at the mill fire or is left standing in the forest to rot. And for this purpose, declares Mr. Lane-Poole, the advent of a French sawmilling company would be of special value. If that is so, why did not Mr. Lane-Poole, instead of using the country's money—which I think he has no power to do—why did he not get his French company to go into the tuart country for the purpose of cutting those logs which other sawmillers did not think it wise to cut?

The Minister for Mines: In the tuart forests?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. I am referring to the timbers which the Railway Department have passed over.

The Minister for Mines: You are not serious about that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: According to Mr. Lane-Poole, no one else knows how to deal with this waste timber; what we need is the advent of a French company to deal with it. The managers of our sawmills, during all the years they have been operating here, have not thought fit to expend money on this timber. Mr. Lane-Poole says that the timber left in the tuart country is mature. It is timber on which the Railway Department do not think it wise to expend money. Wisely or not, I think not, we gave Mr. Lane-Poole certain power to spend money, and he has used it to erect a sawmilling plant. Mr. Lane-Poole had no right to do that without the sanction of Parliament. In the report is another matter which does not concern Mr. Lane-Poole in any way whatever. He is very anxious that the output of sandalwood should be limited.

The Premier: Quite right, too.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not finding fault with that. He is also anxious that it should be placed in the hands of one firm so that that firm could control it. He states—

The trade is a purely Chinese one and is mainly carried out by the Chinese through agents in Perth or Fremantle working on letters of credit.

How does he know that?

The Premier: He does know.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He might, or he might not know. I should like to be informed how he comes to know that.

The Premier: How else would they work?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No doubt many business men work to a large extent on letters of credit, but not altogether as agents; they purchase and sell.

The Premier: They must have letters of credit.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But they might carry on through the financial houses. The Conservator in his report continues—

The Chinese thus entirely control the industry and, as is only natural, the bulk of the profits, instead of coming to Western Australia, go to China.

How does he know that? I repeat that this criticism of the mercantile community of Western Australia who trade in this line of timber did not concern Mr. Lane-Poole in the least. So long as they carried out the provisions of the Forests Act and regulations, and so long as they paid royalty on the timber which they were entitled to take, this was all that concerned the Conservator. The manner in which they carry on their business has nothing whatever to do with him.

The Premier: Of course it has.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Mr. Lane-Poole is Conservator of Forests and is in that position to see that our forests are protected. So long as traders carry on their business in accordance with the regulations, it matters not whether they sell the timber or give it away.

The Premier: Yes, it does.

Hon. P. Collier: How does the Conservator know that they work on letters of credit?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: These people might be the principals. It is not a matter which concerns the Conservator of Forests.

The Minister for Mines: Of course it does. Why not?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the Conservator of Forests confined himself to the duties which he was appointed to carry out, it would be better for the State. He should leave alone these matters which affect the policy of the Government. There is not the least doubt that any person going through the report could come to no other conclusion than that Mr. Lane-Poole is trying to dictate to the Government. Even if the other Ministers permit him to dictate to them, I am thankful that we have one in the Minister for Works who would not permit him to do so.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a pity he is not here to-night.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I regret he is not present to-night to combat the statement made in this report with regard to the management of the State Sawmills.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Hold the Estimates up until he is present.

Hon. P. Collier: It would not be fair to the Minister for Works to pass them in his absence.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We cannot hold up the Estimates. It is entirely wrong for any officer to use extreme language in regard to the Minister controlling a department with which he is not concerned. The Conservator of Forests would not have dared to tell the Minister for Works what he has stated in his report.

Hon. P. Collier: The Premier should protect the Minister for Works.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: And so should the Minister for Forests. If I were Minister for Works do members think I would allow an officer to present such a report concerning another Minister's administration? I would tell him to go to blazes in very quick time. Whether the officer was right or wrong, I would not permit such a thing. It was no business of his and he had no right whatever to interfere in the matter. In my opinion the Minister for Works did the right thing in turning down the proposed sale of these sawmills. The business men of Western Australia are quite as capable of managing these business undertakings as is any person whom Mr. Lane-Poole could bring from France. I believe that our men are as competent to manage such works as are any French experts.

Hon. P. Collier: To say that any French expert could manage our sawmills better than the Minister for Works is a reflection.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [9.22]: After the very fine speech of the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen), I feel some diffidence in rising to speak on this subject, but there are one or two phases to which I wish to refer.

Hon. P. Collier: Are there many pages?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Not many. Some time ago I asked a question regarding the waste of timber. The member for Forrest has assured the Committee that what was hitherto regarded as waste timber is now being used as never before. I am glad to hear from the hon. member that there is less waste than there was in the past, when so much timber was put into the fire chute. Still, we have it on the authority of the Conservator of Forests that timber is being burnt in the fire chute or left standing to rot in the forests. A mill hand who came to Perth from the South-West recently informed me that two out of every three loads of timber cut went into the fire. Whether

this is correct, I am not prepared to say, but it must be admitted that a great deal of timber which could be utilised is being wasted. On the 26th August the Minister for Mines, in reply to a question, informed me that the forest products laboratory was likely to be established in Western Australia before long. It is about time something was done to bring this laboratory into existence. The Council of Science and Industry state that they have not been able to overcome the difficulty regarding the use of red gum for tanning purposes. Eighteen months ago the select committee which investigated the rabbit question displayed skins which had been treated with red gum. These skins were beautiful in colour and of excellent quality.

The Premier: But it was thin leather.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yet the Council of Science and Industry state that they have not been able to overcome the difficulty. The sooner the council get to work and find out this commonplace thing, which has been known to and used by settlers for many years past, the better it will be for the State.

The Minister for Mines: But it is only used to tan light skins.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am afraid this is like many other things which get into ministerial hands; they are not followed up as they would be by business men. Some time ago I read a report to the effect that the Minister had been in touch with a gold-fields' resident who was utilising for tanning purposes the shrubs that grow in great profusion on the fields.

Mr. O'Loughlen: A company was formed.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: In this State tanning agents abound, and yet we do not utilise them as we ought to do. We need co-operation between the farmers and the Forests Department with regard to the timber growing along the creeks and rivers that run through the wheat belt and empty into the Avon River. I have pointed out on more than one occasion that, whereas many of these pools are to-day very salt, 20 years ago they contained comparatively fresh water which was utilised by the settlers. Since the banks have been denuded of much of the big timber, the water has become very salt. The Honorary Minister recently informed me of a particularly striking example: the cutting down of one large flooded gum tree had resulted in a well becoming salt. The tree, however, revived and the water in the well became fresh once more. The timber along the creeks and rivers is wonderfully effective in eating up the alkaline matter which threatens to render large areas of country unfit for cultivation.

Mr. Jones: That is true of the creeks which feed the Mundaring supply.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That is so. A good deal could be done to combat the serious menace of this alkaline matter, which has a tendency to rise to the surface in all arid

and semi-arid country, and I intend to keep pegging away at this question until something is done.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [9.28]: I wish to refer briefly to the matter of firewood on the Eastern Goldfields. The Conservator of Forests in his report states—

On the goldfields the rapidly diminishing supply of accessible fuel and mining timber is a matter of very grave concern to mine managers in the older centres which still continue to produce gold, and pressure is constantly being brought to bear on the department to throw open the State forests, small and large, which have been declared from time to time for the requirements of mines in the locality. To permit the exploitation of the timber on these areas would serve to relieve the situation for only a short time, when the question of extending the timber tramways further afield would have to be faced.

There are some very important forests adjacent to the Coolgardie township and, as the Minister knows, representations have been made that some of them which were closed should be re-opened. Only recently the Conservator of Forests issued instructions that not even dry kindling should be taken out of these forests. It is fairly hard to get suitable cutters by means of whom the two big firewood companies can supply timber to the mines. There are many people around Coolgardie who, if permitted to cut dry wood, would do so, and in that way relieve the serious shortage which is being experienced on the eastern goldfields in the matter of domestic firewood, and also being experienced by the breweries, and by small mines not only around Kalgoorlie but along the Norseman line. I hope the Minister will go into the question of whether it is necessary to close these forests for the cutting of dry wood.

Mr. Lutey: There is a famine in wood.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am sure he will agree that no good purpose can be served by closing these forests against this class of wood. If they are only open for small getters with one dray and a cutter they could supply a considerable quantity of wood and probably make a decent living out of it. I have been requested to make representations to the Conservator in connection with this matter. Some little time ago the Assistant State Mining Engineer (Mr. Blatchford) and one of the other officers of the department, instructed by the Minister, visited Kalgoorlie and asked if there would be any objection to the forests adjacent to the town being thrown open. I went to considerable trouble in submitting the plans supplied by the department to different prospectors there, and out towards Gibraltar, who would be more or less affected by the conservation of these forests. There is a feeling to-day that some of these forests should be made avail-

able for the purpose of making good the scarcity of firewood that is required by the big mines in Kalgoorlie. If more discretion were used in the matter of opening up these areas adjacent to Coolgardie, some good purpose would be served. I can see no necessity for limiting the supplies of firewood to these particular companies. Owing to industrial troubles it can readily be claimed that mines should have a reserve of firewood that would last a considerable time. I was at Kurrawang a week or two ago, and could see the necessity for quantities of firewood being held in reserve. Unless the Minister makes a move in this direction we may at any time be faced with a serious problem on the eastern goldfields and probably a stoppage of work. In any of these industrial centres there may be an upheaval, which will almost immediately put a stop to all work on the big mines. This would be most regrettable and undesirable. The Government could do a lot if they ran out a small line to encourage the getting of timber from some of the forests that are now locked up. The Minister took commendable action recently, although I had to make representations to him, when he had the timber around Widgemooltha, which is now named Ives' Find, reserved for mining purposes. There are also forest areas around Coolgardie which will not be required for mining operations in the vicinity. Seeing that the big mines are at the mercy of the two firewood companies, I hope the Minister will see the necessity for running out one or two spur lines in the way I have suggested. A considerable amount of timber could thus be reached, and I do not think anyone would be injured. In my opinion the Conservator would be going too far if he prevented people from cutting dry wood on these areas. I only hope that the matter will be considered, and that the forests containing dry timber will be made accessible so as to relieve the serious shortage of domestic and other firewood on the goldfields.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [9.35]: I cannot see eye to eye with the member for North-East Fremantle or the member for Forrest in their criticism of the Conservator regarding his remarks on the sawmilling department. Mr. Lane-Poole is not an ordinary civil servant. He has been appointed under a special Act so that he may be placed outside political control, and a continuity of policy may be assured. He is in exactly the same position as the Auditor General. Would anyone say that the Auditor General was going outside his functions in criticising some mal-administration of our finances? It is for that purpose that he is appointed. The thanks of the House would be due to Mr. Lane-Poole if at any time he called attention to the fact that a particular department was not carrying out the policy of conserving our forests as they should be conserved. It is part of his duty to do that.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How are our forests going to be conserved under different ownership?

Mr. ANGELO: I hope the Conservator will continue to point out those things which he thinks are wrong.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddau—Albany—in reply) [9.37]: Hon. members will agree that it is necessary to have their expressions of opinion on these various matters, such as we had from the member for Forrest. Although we may appoint an officer with scientific knowledge, such as that possessed by Mr. Lane-Poole, with the object of having the best interests of the State conserved in the matter of our forests, one would hesitate to suggest that Parliament should not be in a position to criticise the administration of his or any other department similarly situated. But when criticising an officer we should not do it in the way that, unfortunately, the member for North-East Fremantle has done to-night, merely selecting that which would enable him to condemn the Conservator without at the same time doing the right thing, as was done by the member for Forrest, and expressing approval of some of the proposals and some of the work done by the Conservator. It is essential, if we are to get the best work from our public officials, that credit should be given where credit is due. I do not agree with the member for North-East Fremantle.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did say that he was a man of ability at his own work, but that he had nothing to do with the particular question to which I was referring.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are all of us entitled to do our own work.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But that was outside his work.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not agree with the hon. member.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you had been Minister for Works instead of Minister for Forests you would have agreed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I know that the hon. member has always held the view that Parliament was wrong in passing the Forests Act and giving the Conservator the powers he now possesses. He has taken umbrage at the action of the Conservator in expressing a view similar to that which he himself expressed. The only difference in the position is that one man is Conservator and the other the member for North-East Fremantle.

Hon. P. Collier: One is elected to express such opinions on these matters, and the other is appointed to serve the Government.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the member for North-East Fremantle is entitled in his place in Parliament to take to task the Conservator appointed by an Act of Parliament, by the will of the people, although the hon. member as a minority objected, I should say that the Conservator in his turn is entitled to criticise the hon. member if he so desires, because he holds his position by virtue of the will of the majority of the electors.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am prepared to answer the Conservator any time that he criticises me, but I cannot write a report.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot understand why the hon. member should lay so much stress upon the paragraph, in which the Conservator criticises the wasteful methods at the State sawmills.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He said the French people alone could remedy that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He said nothing of the sort. That is unfairly criticising the Conservator.

Mr. Lambert: He said the big companies were doing exactly the same thing.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He said there was no remedy except that of finding new markets for the timber that we were sending over the log chutes. He did not suggest that the Minister for Works or the manager of the State sawmills was wilfully mismanaging the concern. He merely stated that there was no market for the timber, and that because of this it had to be sent over the fire chute. He goes further, and says that the only remedy is to find new markets, and he suggested that a new market could be found in France where the timber would not be wasted. I do not say whether he is right or wrong in this assumption, but I do say that the hon. member takes a wrong view in his criticism of this officer.

Mr. Lambert: Why cannot we supply the timber?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know. Representative specimens of our timber have been taken to France and displayed there, and it is possible that a market will be found in that country for it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We had French engineers in London long before Mr. Lane-Poole examined the timber, and before he came to this State.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That does not prove much, except that since Mr. Lane-Poole has been to London as our Conservator he has further interested the French people in the direction of taking timber in the hope that we shall be able to open up a market there. Surely the hon. member does not object to the Conservator holding the view that France should take some of the timber that we are now destroying? It is the correct view to take. Boiled down, that is all that Mr. Lane-Poole says in that paragraph.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He wants the French people to have the sawmills.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I think he does.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: As a matter of fact the greatest shock I received to-night was the statement of the hon. member. He was the last one I should have thought would make such a statement. He wound up in the calmest and coolest manner by saying, "It makes me wonder sometimes what is at the bottom of it all."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He wants a French sawmill here.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He asked why the Conservator was so anxious about this French syndicate, and wanted to know what was at the bottom of it. The hon. member would be the last man in the Chamber to suggest by such a statement, which might easily be accepted in that sense, that Mr. Lane-Poole was personally interested in the sale.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not say he is personally interested in any way. I do say he is anxious to see French sawmilling operations conducted here.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Why? For the reason that Mr. Lane-Poole was trained in France?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He has some special interest then.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is no special interest about it. Mr. Lane-Poole knows that timber is treated in France in a different way from that in which it is treated in Western Australia. He holds the view that France can provide us with a new market, and that they may possibly be able to take timber that to-day is being destroyed and must be destroyed for want of a market. He does not criticise the management of the Minister for Works or of the manager, Mr. Humphries. They understand each other's position thoroughly, so far as the management of the State sawmills is concerned. The Conservator wants to conserve our forests and to get the most out of our timber. Instead of only 40 per cent. he wants to get 97 per cent. out of it. All he says is that under existing conditions, with the markets available, we must send that timber over the fire chutes unless we can find new markets for it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If there were the same desire to dispose of that timber otherwise than by the sale of the sawmills, we would get the same results.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Surely we cannot ask the Conservator of Forests, whose first duty is in this State, to travel round the world looking for markets for our timber.

Mr. Lambert: It appears that the Frenchmen will not use our timber unless they get a monopoly of it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Neither Mr. Lane-Poole nor anyone else has suggested a monopoly for the French syndicate. Why deliberately attack the Conservator, who has no particular concern with this transaction, apart from the fact that he speaks French fluently, having been trained in France?

Mr. Lambert: The Conservator is cavilling in the expressed policy of this country.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not at all.

Hon. P. Collier: The Conservator is justified in pointing out to us that the French markets will yield better results, but I submit that he is not justified in expressing an opinion on a subject which has evoked strenuous political controversy in this House. He says he is sorry the sawmills were not sold.

That matter has been the subject of debate here, and he has no right to offer an opinion on it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Granted all that, I say the Conservator of Forests is not entitled, and no public servant of this country is entitled, to dictate the policy of this State, or to criticise the actions of the Government—

Hon. P. Collier: That is what the Conservator has done.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have given the Conservator a certain power, and that power carries a pretty heavy responsibility. We may differ from the opinion he has expressed, but we are entitled to hear his opinion.

Mr. Lambert: He has set himself up as a distinct political partisan.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Nonsense! That is utterly absurd. I know of no public servant in this State who takes less interest in political controversy than Mr. Lane-Poole. I doubt whether he understands political questions at all. As regards political matters, I consider him a mere child. The inference left by the criticism on Mr. Lane-Poole is that he had some personal interest in the establishment of the French syndicate here.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I think he expressed himself injudiciously.

Hon. P. Collier: I think he went too far.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: What was at the back of Mr. Lane-Poole's mind was that if we could get this French syndicate established here, markets would be found for that portion of our timber which to-day is being burnt.

Hon. P. Collier: I am not saying at all that the Conservator was influenced by political considerations.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I know of no public servant who has less regard than Mr. Lane-Poole has for political views or partisan opinions.

Mr. Lambert: But he has expressed such opinions unconsciously.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not in the sense that the member for Coolgardie seeks to imply.

Mr. Lambert: I am not implying anything.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Let me say that when the Conservator of Forests to-day brought along to me a new regulation for my approval, I asked him to consult the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen), whom he had seen previously, with a view to altering the regulation so as to overcome certain objections raised by that hon. member and also by the Honorary Minister (Hon. F. E. S. Willmott). My desire was to remove, if possible, certain features which the member for Forrest regarded as being restrictive on the industry. I believe that eventually we shall get a set of regulations which will tend to the best use of our timbers and to the conservation of the industry. Acts of

Parliament, after all, only lay down principles; and the regulations under an Act are frequently of more importance than the Act itself. For that reason I think that the Government ought frequently to consult members who are interested in particular industries. I consider that some of the suggestions made by the member for Forrest have been for the benefit of the timber industry.

Mr. Lambert: What about firewood?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The practice is to proclaim State forests in order to have timber adjacent to a mining field. Coolgardie, for instance, has the Burbanks forest. The timber in that forest is being conserved in the event of a mining revival in Coolgardie. I do not think the member for Coolgardie will suggest that we have done for ever with the possibility of mining in Coolgardie and the surrounding district. Therefore it would be wrong if the small forests conserved for the benefit of Coolgardie were cut out for the benefit of Kalgoorlie. Then, in the event of a mining revival in Coolgardie, the Coolgardie mines would have to go perhaps hundreds of miles for their firewood. In the case of the St. Ives field a small reserve of three or four miles around St. Ives was suggested. I refused to act on that suggestion, and decided on a considerable reserve, so that the mines there would be able to obtain their timber at the least possible expenditure. I object to the taking of the timber of one mining field for the benefit of another mining field. As regards the question of reserves, no doubt a place consisting of a dozen hotels and one livery stable would be anxious to have a few woodcutters around. But in such a case the opinions of the hotel keepers are not worth a straw. I consider these questions from the point of view of the best interests of the mining industry.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are not very careful as regards imputing motives to the hotelkeepers.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am imputing no motive to them that I would not impute to the hon. member interjecting. The hon. member looks most carefully after his own interests to-day—that is to say, after the interests of the electorate of North-East Fremantle. I sent Mr. Bradford to the goldfields to inquire into the matter of timber supplies, and his report states that the forest near Coolgardie would not take long to cut out if it were utilised for the Kalgoorlie mines. Though nobody would say much either in praise or blame of me if I allowed that forest to be cut out at the present juncture, it is certain that the future residents of Coolgardie would, in the event of a mining revival there, curse me for having permitted the exhaustion of the timber supplies in the neighbourhood. The interests of each mining centre have to be conserved. Recently there have been pretty valuable discoveries between Bonnievale and Kunnanalling. There is not yet by any means an end to mining in the

Coolgardie district, and in view of the possibilities of a revival, I cannot permit the cutting out of the Burbank forest.

General debate concluded. Items discussed as follow:—

Item, District Forest Rangers, £1,614:

Mr. LUTHEY: I wish to draw the Minister's attention to the action of the forest ranger on the goldfields, who is preventing the carters from taking the dead wood out of the timber reserves. There is a serious shortage of firewood in Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and the removal of the dead wood would be to the benefit of the reserves; therefore I hope the Minister will deal with this matter promptly.

Item, Timber Inspector, £252:

Mr. SMITH: While the timber industry is in a highly flourishing condition, and the State Sawmills expect to earn a profit of £50,000 this year, the Government are advertising in to-day's newspaper for a timber inspector at the munificent salary of 14s. per day.

The Premier: Plus an allowance of £75 a year.

Mr. SMITH: But that allowance is made for special reasons. The inspector will have to spend the £75, or perhaps even more, in keeping a horse to travel through his district. Fourteen shillings per day is the payment of a man who sweeps the streets. How can the department expect to obtain the services of a competent and reliable timber inspector at such a paltry wage? It is false economy. I hope the Minister will see that timber inspectors are paid a decent salary.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have made a note of it.

Item—Manager State Nursery, Hamel, £274:

Mr. SMITH: I protest against the small salary paid to this officer. It is a very important position and the officer has done excellent work. Yet he only gets £274. It is a ridiculously low salary.

The Minister for Mines: That salary would not stand by itself. He gets a free house and so on, which makes that a fairly good salary.

Mr. SMITH: Even so, it is not sufficient.

Item—Incidentals, £1,800:

Mr. WILLCOCK: Will the Minister inform the Committee what is contained in the item grouped under the heading of incidentals, which provides £185 for travelling.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is probably the expenses which have to be paid to officers from time to time when they are out from their home station. They have to be paid travelling allowances.

Item—Imperial Conference, £150:

Mr. WILLCOCK: Does this item refer to the expenses incurred by the Conservator in his trip to London in connection with the Imperial Forestry Conference?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. I take it that is the position.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was a very cheap trip, then.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think the Federal Government paid some of the expenses.

Vote put and passed.

Department of Police, Hon. J. Scaddan, Minister.

Vote—Police, £175,470:

Mr. Smith: Is not the Minister going to say something to introduce this vote?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, I think the Minister might give us some information about this. I want to hear something about the item "Constabulary."

The Minister for Mines: What is the need? There is nothing fresh to say. I will give you all the information you want.

Mr. Jones: But surely the Minister is going to say something about the vote.

The Premier: We are on items.

The CHAIRMAN: I would explain to the Committee that the member for North Perth rose to speak, but did not call any item. The member for North-East Fremantle asked whether the Minister was going to make a general statement and called the item "Constabulary." Now the member for Fremantle wants to discuss the vote generally and if he wants to speak on any item before that, he can do so.

Mr. JONES (Fremantle) [10.5]: I want to speak generally on this vote and if the Minister does not think it worth while to introduce the Police Estimates, it is probably because discretion is the better part of valour in this matter.

The Premier: Perhaps you will introduce them for him.

Mr. JONES: I had no intention of introducing them, but I do not intend to let them go by without a word on this most important department. There is no department that calls more for a little light and publicity than this one. I know it is practically impossible to get any information about it, smothered up as it is with that thick darkness of privacy. It is said "You must not ask anything about the police, or you will let all the wrong-doers in the country know what the police are doing." The Police Department in this State is perhaps one of the most peculiar in the world. It is absolutely obsolete, and is governed by an Act passed in the early nineties, before even the gold boom. The Act was framed under the shadow of the gallows, amid the clank of chains and the lash of the whip. It is an Act governed by the dead hand of the past. To-day, despite Ministerial control which, however, has not much to do with the police, the department is governed by men whose heredity and environment are those of the Royal Irish

Constabulary, and the members of that force are having their opportunity of seeing the next world. They are men schooled in the work of exterminating fenianism, the Clan-na-Gael, and men who fought for freedom in the eighties and early nineties. True, a few smart Yankee methods have been introduced, but as everyone knows in ground never properly tilled, weeds will grow. There is nothing Australian in the police force in this country. If there is anything this department needs, it is to be modernised, and tuned to the Australian point of view.

Mr. Brown: Bovrilised, in fact.

Mr. JONES: To deal with all the miscreants and wrong-doers in the State there are 505 regulations under the Criminal Code. Perhaps I am not correct in the absolute figures, but the number is approximately what I state. Those regulations deal with every crime in the calendar from murder down to spitting on the footpath. While 505 regulations only are needed to control all the criminals in the State, there are no fewer than 570 regulations necessary to control the police. I do not want to go at great length into matters affecting this department, but there are one or two things I must mention. The present Commissioner—the kaiser, the head serang of the police force—has under his control the men who go into the force and the men who stay there. The present Commissioner is known by various names from "Black-hand Bob" to "Koltchak Connell" among the men under his control. He has never gained the respect of his men.

The Premier: That is not true.

Mr. JONES: They know him too well.

The Premier: They respect him.

Mr. JONES: The Premier does not know what he is talking about. I can understand that men who are forced to be sycophants to the Commissioner, will be prepared to agree with what the Premier has said, but let him get the men away from him and get their candid opinion, and he will find that it is much different.

The Minister for Mines: Well, the men would not meet him where you did—in the urinal.

Mr. JONES: That remark is worthy of the man who made it. His mind does not rise above that and never will.

The Minister for Mines: You never had a mind.

Mr. JONES: If my mind were perverted with matters calculated to give expressions to such a remark—

The Minister for Mines: It is like a saffron cake.

Mr. JONES: That interjection is unworthy of a Minister of the Crown, a man who carries a portfolio on behalf of His Majesty the King. That is the standard he sets in interjections. I never had much of an opinion of the Minister, but I did think that, out of respect for his colleagues and others, he would not have given expression

to an interjection like that. I am astounded to think that a Minister of the Crown should so demean himself as to use an expression like that in this Chamber. Now perhaps I may be free from the vulgar interjections of the Minister and I may be allowed to proceed. The present Commissioner has in his hands the power of selecting who shall enter the Police Force. Once a man is in, the Commissioner has the power to say how long he shall stay in. As though 370 regulations were not enough, the Commissioner has added, as the Prime Minister did, under the War Precautions Act, further regulations to carry out his desires. He now has a regulation which says that at any time his august majesty shall decree, men under his control must present themselves to a medical board. If they do not comply, they are under penalty of a fine or imprisonment. It would be interesting to know how many men and how many commissioned officers have been medically boarded and dismissed in that manner. The point is that when this country was divided on the great national question of conscription, the man who held the position of Commissioner of Police and who should have shown himself absolutely impartial, became a bitter partisan and took sides. He wore the badge showing which side he took. This fact clearly stamps the class of man who is the head of the Police Department of this State. Take his handling of the wharf trouble, and of the position on the goldfields when ex-detective inspector Mann raised his phantom army to go and shoot down the phthisis-ridden men of the Golden Mile. The handling of those two troubles clearly shows the partisan in the Commissioner. Practically every promotion made by that man has gone to men who showed bitter partizanship against the workers. I do not wish to enter into details, or to name any of the officers who have been promoted. However, if we take the case of the man promoted to be head of the detective force, we shall see exactly the kind of promotions the Commissioner is making to-day. The present detective-inspector was promoted, I believe in 1899, to the position of sub-inspector, and was reduced in 1902 for tyranny and overbearing behaviour towards the men under his charge on the goldfields. It is a curious fact that one of the men who has been retired by the Commissioner under this infamous regulation is the very sergeant who got the present detective-inspector reduced to the rank of sergeant for bad behaviour on the goldfields in 1902. The history of this man would make very interesting reading. I do not propose to give it to-night, but I want to deal with one case which has happened since he held that office. I do not think the Commissioner himself has too much faith in him. But, owing to the fact that they were old pals, and were mixed up together in the Sholl affair, in the Post Office scandal in the nineties, when special police protection was needed for the Prince

of Wales, the present detective-inspector was not considered capable of performing the job, and the late detective-inspector had to be brought back at a salary of 25s. a day to show the Commissioner's lack of confidence in the man he had just promoted to the position of detective-inspector. A few months ago a probationer detective was walking down Barrack-street when a constable, who had been called into a fish-shop to remove an intoxicated man, emerged with his man. Seeing the probationer detective—who was not on duty—the constable asked him to look after the drunk while he went back to get further particulars. While the constable was in the shop the intoxicated man fell down on the pavement and injured his head. He was removed to the hospital where, later, he died. The present detective-inspector immediately suspended this probationer detective, who was not on duty at the time of the incident, and, when the inquest took place, forced that probationer detective to give evidence before the coroner and jury—with his case already heard, and the verdict already given by the detective-inspector. Nobody having even an elementary idea of British justice would have first condemned a man and then forced him, with the stain of suspension on him, to go before a coroner's jury. Fortunately, the probationer detective's comrades realised that he was not getting a fair deal, and thereupon provided counsel to defend him. Those comrades paid for that counsel's services, but although the suspension has been removed and the probationer detective is on duty to-day, the department has not seen fit to offer to recoup the men that expenditure. That is a matter which, I hope, the Minister will make a note of and inquire into. The Commissioner's latest report is a very curious document. In it he arrogates to himself the position of adviser to the Government, telling them that they have done well in some things, whereas, on the other hand, they have left undone certain things which they should have done; and commenting that there are in this State men who are trying to undermine constituted authority and supersede the existing parliamentary form of government. It would be interesting to know who the Commissioner means by that.

The Minister for Mines: I think he had you in his mind.

Mr. JONES: If he really believes it, if he has sufficient knowledge to warrant that statement in his report, why does he not do his duty and arrest the man?

The Minister for Mines: He cannot, because you said it in Parliament. You said you would support a Soviet Government.

Mr. JONES: I defy the Minister to prove that I ever said anything of the sort.

The Minister for Mines: You said it only the other night.

Mr. JONES: "Hansard" is here, and if the Minister can prove that I said anything of the sort, I will give a guinea to any charity he likes to name. The Commissioner of Police, the man in charge of criminal in-

vestigations in this State, has no right to make such a statement unless he is prepared to show in evidence exactly what he means. The Commissioner, who says there is a man undermining constituted authority, ought to bring his man to justice, or get out and let somebody else do the job. On the other hand, if that man does not exist, then the Commissioner is equally culpable in making a false statement in his report. I know well what the Minister is thinking of. What I said was that if any body of men were thinking of setting up a Soviet Government, I would give them advice.

The Minister for Mines: You said that you would lead a Soviet Government.

Mr. JONES: No, I did not. I am not sorry for what I said, because if I could get people to form a different sort of Government from that which includes the Minister, I would be only too ready to do it.

The CHAIRMAN: We are discussing the Police Estimates.

Mr. JONES: Over which, unfortunately, the Minister for Mines has control. Evidently the 570 police regulations are not sufficient for the Commissioner. He has just issued to every police station in the State a nice calico sign, at what expense to the State Heaven only knows, containing this wonderful advice—

Police duties. Civility, forbearance and good temper.

Mr. Teesdale: Why ridicule that?

Mr. JONES: Has the hon. member read it? It reads as follows:—

All persons are to be treated with the utmost civility, forbearance and good temper by the police. Whenever a question is put to them by any person they are not to answer in a short or abrupt manner but with the greatest possible attention; at the same time they are to avoid as much as possible entering into unnecessary conversation with anyone. A perfect command of temper is perfectly indispensable in the proper discharge of police duty. A constable must not allow himself to be moved or excited by any language or threats, however insolent; the cooler he keeps himself the more power will he have over his assailant. Idle or silly remarks are unworthy of notice, and if the persons making them sees that they have no effect upon the constable, they will soon leave off. Forbearance and moderation will always be understood and appreciated by the public, the magistrates, and the Commissioner. The police are not to apprehend or unnecessarily interfere with any person unless some specific act has been committed by which the law has been broken. To deprive a person of liberty is a very serious matter, and great discretion is necessary in trifling cases where one person charges another with having committed an offence. (Sgd.) A. Connell, Commissioner of Police.

Mr. Teesdale: It is all too decent for you, is it not?

Mr. JONES: There are 570 regulations dealing with the police force, and these qualities of patience, civility, forbearance, and good temper are fully dealt with right through the whole of them. The hon. member will notice that civility, forbearance, and good temper are worthy of a calico sign to be nailed up in every police station, but that there is not a word about honesty, justice, truth, equity or fair play. Probably those qualities are too good for the hon. member. Civility, forbearance, and good temper! What about those other qualities which are more essential to the police than are civility and good temper? What a waste of the people's money! What a little, childish, schoolboy thing to do. Fancy a man holding the office of Commissioner of Police sending round this sign to his constables, who already know more about civility, forbearance, truth, honesty, and equity than the Commissioner himself will ever know.

Mr. Teesdale: Talk about fair play! You dare not tell him that in the street.

Mr. JONES: I have told it to him in the street. I have told it to him through the columns of that dirty, filthy rag which the Minister is so fond of. That is open enough, is it not? Does the hon. member wish me to go up to the Commissioner in the street and say, "Mr. Connell, you have no knowledge of truth, justice, or equity"? What sort of an ass would I be? That is the sort of foolish action the member for Roebourne would commit. The police force badly needs bringing up to date and badly needs Australianising. So far as I know there are only two bootless police forces in the southern hemisphere. One is in the native police force in Papua and the other is the Western Australian constabulary. Neither of these forces is provided with boots, though every other police force in Australia is. I hope that the Minister will make a note of this matter. I read this in the report of the police conference. I am sure the people of this State do not wish that their police force should be placed on the same level as the native police of Papua. The matter of pensions for the police force could well be considered by the department and by the House. In New South Wales there is a pension scheme which gives a man of 10 or 12 years' service a chance, if suffering from ill-health, to get out of the force. In this State a man has to serve 25 years before he becomes entitled to anything approaching a decent gratuity or retiring allowance. These are only two of a whole string of things which need to be brought up to date. Above all I think the Minister might well consider the matter of the control of the Police Department. I am not finding any fault with the Minister on this score, though I can find a million faults with him in other directions.

The Minister for Mines: There would be something wrong if you could not.

Mr. JONES: No doubt the Minister could find a million faults with me.

The Minister for Mines: No, only one.

Mr. JONES: The fact that I am alive?

The Minister for Mines: No, that you are insane.

Mr. JONES: That is another of the Minister's most polite and dignified interjections. The whole machinery of the law from the Supreme Court down to the magistrates is under the Attorney General, and it is strange that another Minister should be in charge of the police force. It would be more businesslike and better for the force if the whole of the machinery of the law were in the hands of the Attorney General, the Minister best fitted to have control.

The Minister for Mines: I do not think that applies in any other State in Australia.

Mr. JONES: It does in the Commonwealth; Hughes has charge of his police. Anyhow, there is no reason why this State should not introduce the innovation. The Minister has quite enough to do to look after Mines and Railways, not to mention Forests, without being worried with the control of the police.

The Minister for Mines: I am a bit suspicious about your suggestion.

Mr. JONES: Personally I do not mind, because I have very little to do with the police nowadays. As a businesslike arrangement for this business-acumen Government it would be in the interests of the State to have the whole machinery of the law under the control of one Minister.

Mr. ANGELO (Gaseoyne) [10.34]: I just wish to say that, in my humble opinion, the police force of this State, from the Commissioner down to the lowest unit, constitute a body of which we should be proud.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [10.35]: I could have answered the speech of the member for Fremantle before he delivered it—

Mr. Jones: That is what I wanted you to do.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Because I broke a golden rule and read a dirty, filthy rag known as the "Sunday Mirror." The speech of the hon. member is almost identical with an article which appeared in that paper. The article is headed—"A bitter partisan police brass-hat; Koltehak Connell and his report." I am somewhat surprised at the hon. member's remarks, because of his change of front. I have heard him refer to the police as scabbing bludgers.

Mr. Jones: Never in your life.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not with regard to the Commissioner but with regard to the police force, and I wonder at the reason for this change of front. Is it because the Commissioner of Police does not reside in the Fremantle electorate but that some policemen do, and that the hon. member wishes to

protect the policemen against the Commissioner?

Mr. Jones: I have always taken that attitude.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Nothing of the kind. The hon. member waxed indignant at an interjection I made—

Mr. Jones: It was a filthy interjection.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And I was delighted to note the attitude he adopted. I wish the hon. member were always as careful about his utterances as he evidently wishes me to be, and that he always applied to others what he expected from others. In this brilliant article which evidently emanated from the editor of the "Mirror," and of which the member for Fremantle seems to have such a thorough knowledge—there may be some connection—I find this sentence, which is language of a kind to which the hon. member would take no exception—

How many thousand written orders he issues to the force every year containing piffle that would insult the intelligence of a nigger tracker?

The writer was speaking of the Commissioner of Police. The article goes on to say—

What is his estimate—if he is capable of forming one—of the degree of intelligence possessed by the force if they read all the rotgut contained in his orders for their guidance?

This appeared in a paper of which the member for Fremantle has some knowledge.

Mr. Jones: True.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And I take it that since Sunday last, when the article appeared, the hon. member has changed his attitude somewhat and is now becoming quite righteous and concerned about his behaviour. May I suggest that in future we might expect to find an article, not about bitter partisan police brass hats, but a little sermon from the "Sunday Mirror" telling us, not in this phraseology, what we should do every day in the week and particularly on the Sabbath.

Mr. Jones: If it would do you any good, you should have it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not suggest that it would not do me any good, because I hope I am not impervious to anything which contains a little wisdom. I must confess, though, that I am impervious to some of the utterances of the hon. member, because they lack wisdom.

Mr. Jones: Not all of them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They are exactly what the hon. member said about the statements contained in the report of the Commissioner of Police. The hon. member waxed eloquent and indignant at the statement in the report that there were in our midst those who would undermine our present form of government. I do not suppose the hon. member will deny the truth of that statement.

Mr. Jones: Why does not he tackle them openly?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: He cannot arrest the hon. member for utterances made in this Chamber. The hon. member is privileged; he can say what he likes. The hon. member knows that, during this very session, referring to the civil service strike, he said that had the civil servants decided to take over the reins of government and establish a Soviet government, he would have given them the benefit of the little knowledge which he possessed on the subject. What did he mean by that?

Mr. Jones: That I would keep them from going too far.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Keep them from going too far! Whether the hon. member is right or wrong I do not propose to debate the matter at this stage. He may be right. Some of the things which happen to-day would have been regarded as absurd a hundred years ago. Everything on the wheel may be wrong but the hon. member, being the fly on the wheel, may be right. The hon. member has made utterances on the public platform, on the esplanade, and in Parliament, against the present form of government.

Mr. Jones: So also did you once.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Perhaps we need a change, but not from the standpoint of constituted authority. That is where we differ.

Mr. Jones: We want a change.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: We do not want to move in the same old groove. A change of government or of the system of government may not do any harm. Federation was a change in the system of government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And a very bad one, I think.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Perhaps so, but that is a very different proposition from overturning our form of government, doing away with constituted authority and establishing a Soviet government, which means a dictator. I am not complaining because the hon. member has his own views on this subject, but I want him to stand to them and ask the public to stand to him.

Mr. Jones: An ideal Soviet Government would be a good form of government.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member ought to go to Russia and tell Lenin and others what to do, for evidently they know nothing about the business.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Minister is rather off the track.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member introduced the subject. He criticises the Police Department; and centres his attack upon one or two officials. The system operating in the Police Department was not brought into being yesterday. It has been in operation for some time. The hon. member knows that a policeman is never a popular individual in a community from the standpoint of the lawbreaker. I do not suggest that the hon. member would think that the police were popular. They have to do un-

pleasant things, which may land them in difficulties. When the hon. member talks about the Criminal Code having so many sections in it, I want him to appreciate the fact that a member of the police force must not only have a knowledge of every one of these sections, but has to be careful of his every act, otherwise he will have to answer for some breach of the law. Because he has a uniform on he cannot say what he likes, and do what he likes with every individual he meets. He cannot push and bump people about, and cannot arrest people without sufficient grounds for doing so. A policeman has to answer for his every act, just as a private individual has to do. He has to obey the Criminal Code and other instructions as well. It is essential that we should have a Commissioner of Police who is prepared to direct the members of his force in such a way as will prevent them from doing that which we all desire they should not do, that is, abuse the powers conferred upon them by their uniform. We passed through a very strenuous period, and the present Commissioner had a most unpleasant task to perform. It was due to the loyalty of the police force generally that we got through as well as we did. It is also due in no small measure to the guidance of the Commissioner that things resulted in that way. To say that because there has been a rumpus once or twice, that everything has not been just in the direction desired by the hon. member, because a mistake may have been made by the Commissioner, some inspector, or a constable or policeman, everything has to be condemned, is absurd. As the member for Gascogne said, our police force is one of which we might well be proud.

Mr. Jones: Of the force, yes.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I refer to the whole force, from the Commissioner downwards. I know of no particular action of the Commissioner which would warrant me in suggesting that we have reason to regret the appointment that the Labour Government made. We might easily have had greater difficulties and troubles had it not been for the careful handling of the members of the force by the Commissioner and his officers. There were times when the position looked black. Had we one of the Commissioners of the old days who were prone to say "Fire low and lay them out," anything might have happened, but nothing of the sort has been done by the present Commissioner.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That was the military.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: They were used by the police.

Mr. Jones: Just as the police have used these special constables.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: No.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The statement was misconstrued. It was not made in the way that was suggested.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member must find someone to attack, whether rightly or wrongly. It does not concern him a bit whether a person is guilty of a crime or not. He talks about British fair play and justice. We give every man in the community an opportunity of being heard either before a magistrate, a judge, or a jury. He is given a trial. The hon. member, however, will use the columns of a dirty rag to attack a man without hesitation, whether he is guilty or not. The idea of a trial does not enter his mind. Rightly or wrongly he rushes in. That may be his temperament. It is the only thing I accuse him of. He has no control over it. I regret that circumstance, but, as Minister controlling this department, I cannot permit statements of that kind to go out broadcast, for they may be believed by some who do not know the hon. member as we know him. They may imagine that some serious-minded individual in Parliament has made this statement, and that they should take notice of it. I say that no serious-minded man in the community will believe that there is a particle of truth in some of the statements the hon. member has made regarding the Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner has behaved in a manner that should cause us to express our warm appreciation of what he has done through these troublesome times.

General debate concluded; items discussed as follows:—

Item, Inspectors, £4,182:

Mr. LUTEY: Is there any reason for this increase in the number of inspectors and in the expenditure?

The Minister for Mines: It is due to the fact that one inspector is away on leave.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why has a senior detective inspector been transferred to the charge of the Kalgoorlie district? It is strange that a man should be put in charge of a district of lesser importance than the central district in the city, and be transferred from the latter place for that purpose. I understand that Inspector Walsh has been transferred to Kalgoorlie, and that Inspector Condon has been appointed to take his place in the metropolitan area. I do not know whether the transfer was due to any friction having been caused.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Certain friction existed between members of the goldfields staff in Kalgoorlie, and this was recently the subject of an inquiry. The result was that several changes took place and the staff was re-arranged. The report disclosed the fact that there was a lack of administrative ability on the part of the detective sergeant, and it was decided that there should be a complete change. The Commissioner held the view that Inspector Walsh, who knows the conditions on the fields very well and is a good administrative officer, might be offered the

appointment with a view to setting matters in order. Mr. Walsh accepted the offer without any question. The change did not involve any loss whatever to him.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have not asked my question in any way on behalf of Inspector Walsh, whom I do not personally know, nor have I received any complaint from him. It does seem to me, however, that in the matter of officers the service is somewhat overstaffed in Kalgoorlie. There is an inspector of uniform police there, and now the senior detective inspector is there as well. I think the Kalgoorlie detective staff consists of only six gold stealing police and two or three others. If Inspector Walsh's appointment to Kalgoorlie is for the special purpose of re-organising the detective branch of the service there, it may be justified; but I imagine that from any other aspect there is not justification for keeping two inspectors of police in the Kalgoorlie district, which ten or twelve years ago was controlled by only one inspector—and in the meantime the population has decreased by about 25 per cent. The present arrangement is hardly warranted as a permanency. A detective sergeant with the necessary qualifications would be quite capable of controlling the small staff of detectives at Kalgoorlie once re-organisation has been effected. Is Chief Inspector Walsh's appointment in Kalgoorlie to be permanent?

The Minister for Mines: I do not think so.

Item, Constabulary, £112,855:

Mr. SMITH: I was glad to hear the Minister express such a high opinion of the Police Force, because I believe the general public hold that opinion of the entire service, from the Commissioner to the last appointed constable. I trust that the Minister will see that the pay of the constabulary is raised from the present minimum.

Hon. P. Collier: They have had considerable increases lately. They are the best paid force in Australia now.

Mr. SMITH: But a constable should not be kept for any length of time on the minimum of 10s. 6d. per day.

Hon. P. Collier: That minimum applies only for a few months.

Item, Contingencies, £28,000:

Mr. PICKERING: Is there any truth in the statement that our police force is the only force that is not supplied with boots?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have not seen any member of our force walking around barefooted.

Mr. Lutey: Perhaps the point is that the police have to supply their own boots.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In the matter of allowances generally, our police force is not below any other force in Australia.

Vote put and passed.

Department of Attorney General (Hon. T. P. Draper, Minister).

Vote—Attorney General, £83,404:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. P. Draper—West Perth) [10.56]: In introducing these Estimates I desire to mention a few facts showing how the estimates of revenue and expenditure during the last two or three years have been realised or exceeded. For the current financial year the estimated revenue is £122,500. In 1918-19, our revenue was £80,000. For last year we estimated a revenue of £91,000, but actually received some £184,000. I want to draw hon. members' attention to that point, lest they should think there had been any gross miscalculation. The large increase which we received beyond our estimate was due to probate duty on four large estates, amounting in the aggregate to £72,000. Of course we could not possibly forecast that. The work of the department has been increasing considerably, and where there is increased work there must necessarily be increased expenditure. This year, it will be noted, there is an estimated increase in expenditure of some £11,000. The expenditure for last year was £71,760, and the estimated expenditure for this year is £83,404, or an increase of approximately £12,000. That excess is made up of the following items: increases in salaries of staff, £3,675; local option poll, £5,000; general election, £3,212; extra assistance for the general election, £1,985. These items more than account for the increase, but, as against that, there is a reduction of £2,000 in other items. We find ourselves obliged to increase the Titles Office staff, owing to the large increase in work. In stipendiary magistracies there is also an apparent increase of £455. That is accounted for by the fact that during a considerable portion of last year medical men were not available to act in the dual capacity of resident magistrate and resident medical officer. Again, there is an increase of £2,827 as regards clerks of courts. Of that amount, £1,075 is accounted for by increments, and the remainder by the filling up of offices which last year were either vacant or paid from the temporary vote, or else filled by junior officers owing to the absence of senior officers at the war. As regards the item temporary clerical assistance, it is estimated that £2,500 of the amount provided will be required to meet the rush of work in the Titles Office. As regards the actual increase of the work last year, the department dealt with litigious matters greatly in excess of the number for the previous year. An increase of 5,609 was shown under this heading, the figures for last year being 14,266 as against 8,657 for the previous year. There was a large increase in conveyancing matters, a slight increase in criminal cases, and a very large increase in the Titles office work. These few remarks

will indicate, I think, something of the increase which I have mentioned as being foreshadowed in these Estimates.

Item, Magistrates, £7,737:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not asking for an explanation of this amount; I am rather inclined to complain that the increase is not more. I wish to make an appeal to the Attorney General so far as the magistrates are concerned. These officers are some of the very few who, I think, will not have the right of appeal to the board we have recently set up. Last year we voted increases ranging up to £100 a year to officers in highly paid positions.

The Attorney General: But the magistrates will have the right to go before the board.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not sure of the point, but I was under the impression that they could not get there. If that is so, I can understand that probably the Attorney General would take the point that he has no warrant for stepping in and granting these officers an increase. The magistrates, however, have had no advances for many years, apart from one or two instances. The salaries are not high and not at all commensurate with the responsibilities.

Mr. Smith: Is the chief magistrate in Perth included in these figures?

The Attorney General: Yes. I think the highest salary is £636. There is very little difference between his salary and that attached to some of the less important magistracies.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I regard this position as a most important one.

Mr. Smith: Apart from the work altogether, we want to get the best man.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The salary is very little greater than it was in 1912.

The Attorney General: There is practically no change.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the salary was a fair one in 1912, and even in 1914, there is no argument that it can possibly be regarded as sufficient to-day. I hope the Attorney General will look into this matter.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The position has not escaped my notice. The list of salaries shows that there are some increases but, generally speaking, the salaries are not in a proper ratio compared with the importance of the positions. I have mentioned that fact to the Public Service Commissioner and up to the present there has been no reclassification of these higher offices. They are to be reclassified, however, and while I cannot control the amount of salary the Public Service Commissioner shall provide, I am certain the remarks made here will have his consideration. I was surprised to hear the leader of the Opposition express the opinion that the magistrates would have no right of appeal to the board. There is one point, of course, that it may be that these officers come under the administrative division of the service and, as such, may be provided for under the Appropriation Act. They were not subject to clas-

sification by the Public Service Commissioner under the Act of 1904, which Act, of course, we are now amending by the legislation at present before Parliament.

Hon. P. Collier: I know that we fixed the salaries before. The Public Service Commissioner did not. As they will be included in the reclassification, their case will probably be met.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

Mr. PICKERING: I endorse the remarks of the leader of the Opposition and I think the matter can safely be left in the hands of the Attorney General.

Mr. ANGELO: I also desire to endorse the remarks made by the leader of the Opposition and agree that we should pay the magistrates better. It is ridiculous that no increases have been made commensurate with the importance of the positions, more particularly seeing that no increases have been granted for so long a period. Our magistrates are nearly all professional men and it is ridiculous to ask them to carry out their duties on this small rate of pay. What I am afraid of is that unless we pay these gentlemen adequately we shall be losing the services of some of them, who will be attracted to the other States or to the Federal service.

Item, Local Option Poll, £5,000:

Mr. SMITH: This item could very well be substantially reduced. Apparently the idea is to take the poll on a day other than general election day. If it were to be taken on the day of the general election a considerable amount of money would be saved and we should have a more representative vote from the people. As at present proposed, we shall have the local option poll almost within a few days of the day of the general elections. An effort should be made to save this large sum of money. I hope the Country party will support me in this.

Hon. W. C. Angwin. Apparently only one member of the Country party is interested in the Estimates.

Mr. SMITH: It will be most inconvenient for country people to have to turn out and vote at a local option poll in their busiest season. I move an amendment—

That the vote be reduced by £4,500.

I am sure that £500 will be quite sufficient for the purpose if the poll be taken on the day of the general election. To have two separate polls would mean a sheer waste of money.

The Attorney General: We have to frame our Estimates in accordance with existing legislation.

Mr. SMITH: Will the Minister undertake to bring in a Bill providing for the poll being taken on the day of the general election?

The Premier: No, certainly not.

Mr. SMITH: Well, I will persist in moving a reduction of the item.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member can move till the cows come home. We cannot on the Estimates consider whether

or not the poll should be taken on the day of a general election. The Government must frame their Estimates on the basis of the existing statute law. The hon. member takes an entirely erroneous view of the position.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I gather from the Attorney General's remarks that there is some impediment in the way of the hon. member's ideas being carried out. If it means the saving of £4,500, surely some way out of the difficulty can be discovered. It would certainly be absurd to take a local option poll within a few days of the general election. I will support the amendment.

Mr. PICKERING: I oppose the amendment. I hope we shall never be guilty of mixing issues like the local option question and the general elections.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Whether or not the amendment be carried, the Act provides that the local option poll must be taken in April. Nothing is said in the Act about the poll being held on the day of the general election. It would be silly to reduce the item since the law prescribes that the money must be found. The hon. member is not anxious to have the poll taken on election day; he is merely talking to his electors.

Mr. Griffiths: What a rotten thing to say, that members are only talking in view of the elections.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is just about as rotten as is the hon. member. The law prescribes that the general election shall be held after the 31st January, and that a local option poll shall be taken in April.

Mr. Smith: I heard you arguing last night in favour of altering the law.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When a measure to alter the law comes before us, I will tell the hon. member my views. At present we are dealing with the Estimates. The money must be found to give effect to the law.

Mr. Hickmott: Would not it cost less to take the poll on election day?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not discussing that point. The Attorney General will have to find the money irrespective of whether the item is reduced or not.

Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.22 p.m.