

the amount allowed by the Forests Department for the prisoners' labour. The chief benefit looked for, however, from the experiment is the effect it will have in reforming the prisoners and restoring them to honest citizenship. The prison aspect has been left out of the settlement in every way compatible with safety, and the prisoners by their conduct and industry have shown appreciation of the privileges and freedom granted to them. Good progress has been made on the farm at Castlemaine, which gives promise of proving a sound investment, both from an economic and a reformatory standpoint. Here, as at the afforestation camp, the open-air life has had a good effect on the health and physical condition of the inmates, who show a mental alertness and cheerful demeanour which was wanting when confined within the prison walls all day.

The extra cost there is stated at £40 per annum, but, as in the case of the afforestation camp, there seems very little doubt that the work on which the men are employed will show a considerable return; so that the net cost of keeping them will be less than that of keeping them in prison. With regard to technical education the report states—

Equipment for imparting technical instruction to the inmates of the Castlemaine Reformatory has been purchased, and a commencement has recently been made in the practical work under the direction of Mr. F. A. Morton, of the local technical school. All the inmates are given an opportunity in turn of attending the instructional class, and they evince much interest in their work. These are junior offenders, under the age of 25.

They are being instructed in the use of tools and in framing and joining. It is intended later that they shall erect some buildings at the farm. This technical training, added to the farm experience, should be of great assistance to them on release in obtaining work.

There are many other features of this report which are highly interesting; and I think the Government will be on safe lines if they follow as closely as possible the experience of Victoria, which is evidently proving very successful. Mr. Duffell, I consider takes a somewhat pessimistic view of things when he suggests that all these centuries of Christianity have not advanced the world at all. Notwithstanding the war and all these things, I am inclined to think that

... through the ages one increasing purpose runs,

And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.

I think it is due from us, if we cannot lead other countries in reforms of this kind, at all events to keep our eyes open for the reformatory methods that are practised in other parts of the world; and, if we see that they are proving successful, to try to copy them and bring about equally good results in our own State.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 5.57 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 24th October, 1918.

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

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

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1918-19.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 15th October; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

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

Vote—Lands and Surveys, £43,489:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: May I ask before the general discussion is resumed on this vote whether it will be possible afterwards to enter on a general discussion on the vote "Agriculture Generally."

The PREMIER: Certainly. The Lands Department and the Agricultural Department are separate and distinct.

Hon. P. Collier: How does that fit in with our Standing Orders?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I wanted to make sure on this point before going on with the Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: I have already ruled in the direction that a general discussion may take place on each of the departments, and if my memory serves me correctly the member for Kanowna moved to disagree with my ruling.

Hon. T. Walker: No.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the Standing Orders were altered the other day.

The CHAIRMAN: Any way, I rule now that when the Committee reaches the vote "Minister for Agriculture" there may be a general discussion.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.43]: Although the Estimates of the Lands Department may be satisfactory from the point of view of hon. members who may be expected to be interested in the work of that department, I would like to have cleared up a misunderstanding, or rather a doubt, which exists in the minds of a considerable section of the public with regard to the amendment made in our Land Act of last year concerning the pastoral leases. I would like the Minister in charge to give the Committee some information as to what has been done with regard to reappraisement, as to when the board, whose duty it will be to deal with the matter, is likely to be appointed. The point I wish some information on is as to whether the Minister has taken any steps to obtain the necessary declarations provided for in the Land Act and in Section 30 of the amending Act of last year. I mean a declaration from those concerned that they are not beneficially interested in any area greater than one million acres in any one

division. The Minister, by way of interjection the other evening, said that it was not competent under the Act for any person to be interested in any area greater than one million acres, but I am informed that already since the passing of this Act companies have been formed. In reply to a question which I asked yesterday the Premier said that four companies had been formed since assent to the Act was given in March of last year. I have not the figures as to the number of companies which have been formed in previous years, but they would seem to indicate that advantage is already being taken of a weakness in the Act to form companies dealing with pastoral holdings, and thereby evade the provisions in the Act to which I have referred. If these provisions of Section 30 are not strictly enforced the whole intention of the House, when it passed the Act, will have been evaded. I would like to know whether the Minister has called upon any of those who are interested in the four companies, which have been formed during the past four years, or in any other companies which were in existence prior to the passing of the Act, to sign the necessary declaration to the effect that they are not interested in more than one million acres.

Mr. Draper: A shareholder is not a leaseholder.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is just the point. That is where I think the weakness comes into the Act. The Honorary Minister, I understand, holds that a person cannot be interested even to the extent of being a shareholder in a company in more than one million acres in any one division. That is the view I gathered from the interjection he made during my remarks earlier in the week. If that is the interpretation that he places upon it, I fear he is mistaken. I am informed by men, who ought to be competent authorities upon this matter, that it is possible for a man, say, to hold 90 per cent. of the shares in several companies in one division. If that is so, it is clear that something is possible under the Act which Parliament never contemplated. It is as well that I should quote the section of the Act dealing with this matter. It says—

The maximum area held by one person in the same division shall be one million acres, but the Governor may in specified districts or localities, fix the maximum area to be held as aforesaid at less than one million acres. The maximum area to be held in the same division by two or more persons jointly or by any association of persons incorporated or unincorporated, shall not exceed one million acres. If any leaseholder is beneficially interested in an area exceeding the prescribed maximum, or in several areas exceeding in the aggregate the prescribed maximum, or if his leasehold is worked in association with other holdings exceeding in the aggregate the maximum area that may be lawfully held as aforesaid, his lease or leases shall be liable to forfeiture, and the lease or leases in which he is interested shall be liable to forfeiture.

That is to say, if the leaseholder should be beneficially interested in any area of more than one million acres his lease is liable to be forfeited. If I were a shareholder of a pastoral lease as an individual, and held one million acres in any one division, it seems to be clear that I should not be a shareholder in any other company holding shares in a leasehold in the same division. If that is not so, it is quite clear that this would not apply at all to a person who was not a leaseholder in any respect. If I held 90 per cent. of the shares in any company, which held one million acres, I would not as an individual shareholder be a leaseholder. The Act says that a leaseholder cannot be beneficially interested in more than one million acres, but being a shareholder, holding practically the whole of the shares in a company, it is open to me to hold as many shares as I like in as many other companies as I like in the same division. Broadly speaking, it is possible for one man, so far as I read the Act, to own, say, 90 or 95 per cent. of the shares in a company, or in half a dozen companies in the one division. Instead of being interested in only one million acres, as Parliament intended I should be, I would be the virtual owner of about five million acres. The men who are interested in pastoral holdings were not slow to discover this weakness in the Act. Besides the four companies which have been formed during the past 12 months, others are in process of formation, so I am informed. The Act, of which I am speaking, is one of the most important that Parliament has been called upon to deal with for many years, seeing that it affects the disposal of the whole of the pastoral areas in this State for the next 40 years. It is the clear duty of the Government to get a legal interpretation or decision upon the points I have raised. If it is found that the weakness, which appears to me to be there, does actually exist, then it is the bounden duty of the Government to bring down amending legislation at the earliest possible moment. The Premier said, in reply to the question I asked yesterday, that should it be found that attempts are being made to evade the intention of the Act, the Government will consider the question of introducing legislation to prevent this. They cannot introduce legislation to prevent the evasion of the provisions of an Act. Such legislation is not required. It is administration that is required in the case of attempts that are made to evade the provisions of an Act. If, what I have described as being done, can be done without evading the provisions of the Act, then it is the duty of the Government to introduce legislation at once. The matter is of such importance as to warrant the Government in finding out exactly where we stand. It is not sufficient to say that if the Minister discovers later on that the Act is being evaded action will be taken to forfeit the holdings of those concerned. The Minister, as a matter of fact, would not have power to forfeit any of the holdings if, under the Act, it is possible by the formation of companies for any individual to hold an unlimited number of acres in any one division. It was the intention of the last Parliament, which passed this Act, that no one man should be interested beneficially or

financially in more than one million acres. That is what Parliament understood when the Bill was passed. If it is now found that this is not the case, and I am informed it is not, then the steps I have indicated should be taken. A company, after all, has not a body to be kicked or a soul to be damned. The shareholder in a company does not come under the definition of leaseholder. The company is the leaseholder. The lease is registered in the name of the company, and no individual in the company is the leaseholder. That being so, the shareholders can hold as many acres as they please. I hope the Government will take the earliest opportunity of having the position cleared up and defined so that we may know where we are. It is important enough for a pronouncement to be made on the matter as soon as the Government can get the necessary legal advice upon it.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [4.58]: I admit it was the intention of the House that no one should be beneficially interested in any way whatever in more than one million acres in any one division. If the Act provides that the intention of the House can be evaded, the Government are prepared to go into the matter at once and get legal advice, with a view to placing matters in the position desired by the House at the time the Bill was passed.

Hon. P. Collier: It cannot be achieved under this Act.

The PREMIER: There was considerable discussion in regard to the question of the granting of these pastoral leases. It is only right that the wishes of the House, as they were intended to apply at the time, should be carried out by the Government. I am fully seized of the fact that the House was under the impression that the Act provided that no one could be beneficially interested in any way whatever in more than one million acres in any one division.

Hon. P. Collier: It says no leaseholder can be beneficially interested. A shareholder in a company is not a leaseholder.

The PREMIER: I see the position perfectly. It has already been put before me in that way. I will give an undertaking to go into the matter at once with a view to having it cleared up.

Mr. ANGELO: In connection with the important matter brought forward by the leader of the Opposition, I am glad the Premier has given the undertaking. If any legislation is introduced, it would be as well to go into the matter of more than 1,000,000 acres being held where two or more divisions conjoin. At present it is possible, if four divisions conjoin, for one person or company to hold 4,000,000 acres of land. I think amending legislation should prevent action of that kind. A million acres is quite enough for any one man or company to hold in any part of the State.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Land settlement for soldiers, £2,500:

Mr. THOMSON: What has been done in connection with this very important subject?

The Premier: The item "salaries of officers of other departments and incidental ex-

penses" refers to certain officers—for example Mr. McLarty, who comes from the Agricultural Bank—employed in the work of repatriation. The amount of £2,500 is placed on the Estimates to provide for their salaries.

Mr. THOMSON: Is the intention to run this as a separate department?

The Premier: Yes. Where an officer is taken from another department to assist in this department he will not be paid by both departments but only by this one.

Mr. THOMSON: Is there any increase in salaries?

The Premier: No.

Mr. THOMSON: Is it the intention to keep this expenditure as a separate account?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. MUNSIE: From the Premier's explanation it appears that there is no permanent officer employed in connection with the land settlement of returned soldiers. My own view is that it would be much better if one or two officers were permanently appointed to positions in this department. The complaint from the beginning has been that in the matter of repatriation and the settlement of returned soldiers on the land, nobody is responsible. The Premier told us the other night that there is now no going from one place to another, but the Premier should inform the Committee whether it is the intention of the Government to appoint some officer permanently for this work.

The PREMIER: Mr. McLarty has been appointed permanently to the charge of the department until the settlement of returned soldiers has been completed. But until the Discharged Soldiers Bill is passed by Parliament, it will be difficult to say exactly how the department will be arranged. The salaries of other officers taken away from the departments where they are usually employed will be paid out of this vote.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is the unsatisfactory part of it. No one is responsible.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Lands Department.

Agricultural Department (Hon. H. B. Lefroy, Minister).

Vote—Agriculture generally, £69,976:

The PREMIER and MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [5.9]: During the last few years the work of the Department of Agriculture has increased very materially. Its ramifications extend from Eucla to Wyndham. It controls all questions of administration in regard to live stock and the products of the soil, including fruit. It controls abattoirs and sale yards. It deals with the inspection of all stock and the treatment of the diseases of stock, including poultry. In fact, the department deals with everything connected with the land. Although perhaps some considerable quantity of water may have flown under the bridges since the last debate on this department, still, there is not much of material importance on which I need detain the Committee. Most of the matters can be dealt with on the items. I know that the question of the rabbits is one which has been exercis-

ing the minds of hon. members considerably, and no doubt it is a very important one. I wish to inform the Committee of the activities which have taken place in the matter of the rabbit pest. Recently the Government decided to extend the operations of the Rabbit Department by exterminating the rabbits in the worst breeding places, namely, those on Crown lands. Hon. members and the farming community have for some considerable time been urging the Government not only to engage in the destruction of rabbits on private property but also to assist in the destructions of rabbits on Crown lands and abandoned holdings. This has been undertaken: the Government have started the work. Formerly Government operations in this connection were confined to Crown lands near salt lakes. It has also been decided that the Government shall take active steps to eradicate the rabbits on abandoned farms under the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Board. These abandoned properties have been a great menace in the past, and therefore the Government have determined to take up the work of exterminating the rabbits upon them. Hon. members will observe that there is on the Estimates a considerable amount for the work of rabbit destruction. The whole of the addition is for the purpose of extending operations to breeding places on Crown lands and on abandoned farms. In consequence, a conference has been held between the Agricultural Bank, the Industries Assistance Board, and the Agricultural Department, with the object of securing co-operation in the work of rabbit destruction. It was arranged that the work on abandoned farms should be carried out by the Agricultural Bank under the general instruction, as to methods, of the Chief Inspector of Rabbits. Arrangements have been made to prevent over-lapping and unnecessary expenditure, so that where the work of eradicating rabbits on abandoned farms and on Crown lands could be done by the same man, it should be thus done. The Chief Inspector has undertaken a series of trips through the infested districts for the purpose of formulating a scheme of more extensive destruction. He has recently returned from a trip to the Cowcowing, Kununoppin, and Wyalkatchem districts, and his report shows that there are not so many rabbits in the districts visited as there were a year ago. This year the damage to crops is not nearly so great as it was last year, which is satisfactory, as showing at any rate that the Government have been active in dealing with the pest. One of the greatest difficulties throughout has been to induce individual settlers to properly eradicate on their holdings; and this is a feature in which former legislation was deficient. Mr. Crawford's report shows that where settlers are fairly close together and are doing their reasonable share of poisoning, there has been practically no loss of crops. In other places, where only some settlers are poisoning, while the others are doing nothing, the crops have in some cases suffered severely. In the Cow-

cowing country the poison carts have greatly reduced the number of rabbits; but, as they are still numerous in places, arrangements are being made to put on extra carts in the Cowcowing and Hindmarsh districts and along the rabbit proof fence, and at Cunderdin and other places where they are needed. As regards the supply of poison it is anticipated there will be no further trouble. Four tons of phosphorus are due here this week, and it is expected that this supply will be followed by regular shipments. Of Government poison carts there are now 14 in operation by the Rabbit Department. Twelve more are now being fitted out, and 30 more will be in use as soon as the equipment can be procured. Vermin boards have been established at several places. There are now 29 in all. Thus, with the co-operation of the settlers, it is hoped that we shall be able to keep down the pest and diminish it to a large extent, although it is not likely that we shall ever be able completely to exterminate it. Still, if we can keep it down we shall be doing good work. There has been a considerable number of isolated outbreaks of rabbits south of the Swan; at Kalamunda, Mundaring, Canning Mills, Kelmscott, North Dandalup and other places. Strict measures were taken, and regular poisoning was carried out, with the result that, as far as can be discovered, all those isolated colonies have been eradicated. This, again, shows that the Rabbit Department has been very active in the discharge of its duties. Poison carts have been working for a considerable time on the worst breeding grounds in the State, and their operations have been very successful. They are working on many of the lakes, such as Cowcowing, Lake Monger, Lake Moore, Lake Grace, and a number of other lakes. In addition to those Government carts there are about 100 private carts actively engaged in poisoning. Wherever poisoning has been methodically carried out the results have been most encouraging. Three years ago, in the Lake Grace and Lake Pingrup districts rabbits were worse than in, perhaps, any other place in the State. One Government cart is working there, and the Lake Grace vermin board has had two others working for the last two years or so, with the result that the wheat yield in the district last year was particularly good. In the Eastern States combined poisoning, even without the use of wire netting, has kept the pest in check, and this can be done here also if everybody is compelled to do his fair share. The Government having entered so actively on the destruction of rabbits, farmers will have to properly co-operate with the Rabbit Department. The consequence will be that we shall be able to keep the rabbits in check. The reason for the large expenditure on poisoning is that the price of wire netting is at present prohibitive, and until it comes down settlers will have to rely on poisoning. As time goes on I hope the settlers will be once more in a position to obtain the netting, for this is the only effective means of keeping out the rab-

bits. Last year the Government bought a number of fumigators, but shortly afterwards the supply of carbon bi-sulphide ran out and it has not been procurable since. The department bought the whole supply available in Perth. Shortly after this a tabloid named "Bunendo" was brought under Mr. Crawford's notice as a substitute for fumigators. The tabloid is soaked in chemical and put down the burrow as far as possible, and the hole is closed up. The fumes given out suffocate the rabbits. The results have been successful, but the tabloids are expensive. The department is now in communication with a firm in the Eastern States for making a fumigator that uses charcoal. There has been great difficulty in obtaining poison, but the chief inspector has been given practically a free hand for the obtaining of supplies, with the result that, except when the shipping strike was on, every person requiring poison was supplied. Later we were faced with a still greater difficulty through there being no poison obtainable in Australia. We got into touch with the Prime Minister, who approached the Imperial Government, with the result that a firm in this State obtained permission to import a large quantity of phosphorus from England. As a preparation for the future the Government ordered, over eight months ago, a supply of rabbit poison for next year's use, and for some time Western Australia has been practically the only State in the Commonwealth with any poison at all. During the year, between 60,000lbs. and 70,000lbs. of poison was forwarded to the various authorities for free distribution, and over 100,000lbs. is on order for the coming year. It is an important question. Hon. members who visit the eastern districts know what is going on there, and I trust they will be able to confirm the statements I have given to the Committee, and to agree that at any rate the Agricultural Department has not been backward in doing its duty in regard to this important matter. Although there is a strain on the finances of the State, the Government consider that money must be found to cope with this pest, and consequently a considerable amount has been placed on the Estimates for that purpose. It will be the duty of the Agricultural Department to see that this money is expended in the best possible way, and full value obtained for it. That will be my object, and I am quite certain that the Honorary Minister in charge of the department will use all his energies to see that the decision of the Government is carried out. One of the most gratifying features in connection with the agricultural work in Western Australia is the increase in butter making during the last few years. We have been importing an enormous quantity of butter from the Eastern States, yet I am sure we have a country capable of growing not only all that we require for our own use at present, but all that we may require for future use. When I took charge of the Agricultural Department, I found there was a butter factory at Busselton which had belonged to a private company. The late Gov-

ernment, with Mr. Johnson as Minister for Lands and Agriculture, had taken over that butter factory and started it on behalf of the Government. That butter factory has made great strides during the last two years. A new factory has been erected and a pasteuriser has been ordered and will be installed there presently. Let me give hon. members some returns from this factory as an indication of the activities going on there. For the week ending 8th September of last year 2,238 lbs. of butter were made at the Busselton factory; for the corresponding week of this year the output was 3,480lbs. For the week ended 15th September of last year the output was 3,084lbs., and for the corresponding period of this year 3,946lbs. For the week ended 22nd September of last year the factory turned out 3,734lbs. of butter, while for the corresponding period of this year the output was 3,990lbs. For the week ended 29th September of last year the output was 3,574lbs., and for the corresponding period of this year it was 4,961lbs. For the week ended 6th October of last year the output was 3,728lbs., while for the corresponding period of this year it amounted to 4,671lbs. This quantity of butter was made in one week, whereas a few years ago there was little or no butter made in the State. This is entirely satisfactory. But I wish to emphasise the fact that we have, in addition to this butter factory at Busselton, a butter factory at Bunbury, run by a company. The Government have fathered this company to a large extent, and helped in the establishment of the butter factory, which is now on a very sound basis. This factory at Bunbury turned out, for the week ended 5th October last, 10,550lbs. of butter, and I was informed only yesterday that it was expected the output for this month would be something like five tons. It shows that there is a considerable activity in dairying and that it only requires to be kept going throughout the southern districts. It should be noted, too, that it is not only in those districts that butter making is going on. Even the people out in the eastern districts are paying attention to this, and considerable quantities of cream come into Perth from those districts. It is most gratifying to know that we have this increased interest in the butter industry. We have done good work in assisting the manufacture of butter. Every encouragement has been given to the people to engage in this industry.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: "The Primary Producer" does not give you much credit for it. They say that they have done it.

The PREMIER: Of course. After all, it is the primary producer, not the newspaper, but the man behind the plough, who does the work. I am pleased to be able to inform the Committee that we now have definitely got the industry established, and that it is the intention of the Government to endeavour in every way to continue to assist it. Pig raising in Western Australia has increased to an enormous extent. I do not think we need be afraid of producing too many pigs, for what we cannot use ourselves we shall be able to export; perhaps not now, because we have not the ships. However, the fact that we cannot ourselves use all that we can produce is no

reason why we should not keep on producing if we can export the surplus. It is no good trying to grow produce above what the local market requires if we cannot export it, but where we are producing something that can be exported there should be no limit to production. I think every encouragement should be given in this direction. The Wyndham freezing works have given considerable anxiety to the Government, and it will be of considerable interest to members of the House to know that the works are nearly completed. When members know that already the labels for the cans are being printed, it shows that some activity is being pursued at the works. They are a long way from us and the Government considered that there should be someone to advise them on the work, to control them, and give Western Australia the best advice on matters of cold storage, freezing, etc. With that object in view Mr. McGhie, a gentleman highly recommended to the Government, has been engaged and went to Wyndham a month or six weeks ago. He has been there a considerable time inspecting and going over the works. He will be in Perth next week. This is another branch, I may say, of the activities of the Agricultural Department. The Government are desirous of establishing freezing works at Fremantle at the earliest possible moment. At the same time we must not enter on a work such as this unless we are quite sure of our ground and of the way we are moving. Therefore, I have asked representatives of those interested in the production of the stock necessary to freeze for export, and representatives of the Government, and Mr. McGhie, to meet as soon as he arrives in Perth, to go into the question with the object of finalising the whole matter at the earliest possible moment, so that we can begin the works at Fremantle, in order to deal with the surplus stock which we hope to have soon in Western Australia. I do not think things are too bad at the present moment as far as our surplus stock is concerned when we can get for prime shorn wethers the price we are getting in the market now. I was only talking to a gentleman to-day and I said, "Such as I have been in the habit of sending to market myself?" and he said "Yes, 16s. a head for prime shorn wethers." And when we can get that, it is very good, for I remember the time when we got 8s., and considering the price we are now getting for the wool off the shears we are not on so bad a wicket. We do not want to discourage people in the production of stock. We want to encourage them to keep on, and therefore we propose to establish freezing works at Fremantle at the earliest possible moment.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Have you decided on the methods?

THE PREMIER: I have asked the member to arrange for representatives to meet the Government and I hope the hon. member will be one of them, and then we can decide, in consultation with Mr. McGhie, exactly the methods to be adopted. We have not decided definitely what methods shall be adopted. We shall consult together on the matter. It is not the desire of the Government to delay longer than possible. At the same time these works cannot be erected in a moment. It must take a

considerable time before they are established, and the desire of the Government is to have the matter thoroughly thrashed out and obtain the best advice on the subject. I think all the matters connected with the Agricultural Department can be dealt with on the items if members require definite information. As members know, we have several State farms, such as the Narrogin State Farm, the Brunswick farm, the Chapman farm, and the Merredin farm. The Chapman and Merredin farms, and also, I may say, the Narrogin farm, are engaged very largely in growing seed wheat of a type which will be of benefit to the farmers. I believe that is a good and wise thing to do. We all know, I have found it myself in my own personal experience, the cereals that we obtain from the Government State farms—although I have been brought up rather to suspect Government departmental work in the past—are of good quality and true to type. Others have told me that what they have obtained from the State farms have turned out of a good type. The seed is exactly what they have been led to believe it would be. All that is of benefit to the farmers. It is of advantage for the farmer to be able to obtain the seed where it is properly bred. The Narrogin School Farm is doing excellent work. There is a number of boys being trained there. They have come from different parts of Western Australia and they are taught all the practical work in connection with farming, and it would be well if members, if they have not done so already, would visit the Narrogin State School farm, and I am quite sure they would be satisfied with the results they would see there. The boys and young men go there at 14 and they leave at the age of from 16 to 18. Some boys have gone from there to Roseworthy afterwards. There is a scholarship now attached to the school so that those boys who have particular aptitude, and show good talent, can obtain assistance in this way to get further and higher education in other directions. I do not know that I need deal at any length now with the work of this department. Members know as well as I do what is the work of the Agricultural Department. With these few words I desire to introduce the Estimates for the consideration of members.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [5.40]: I have very few words to say, but I wish to take this opportunity of impressing on the Premier the desirability of keeping Mr. Sutton's services for the State and I wish to impress on the Premier the necessity for Mr. Sutton being continuously employed, and taken off other work.

The Premier: He has been taken off most of the work now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: He should be out on the farms.

The Premier: Most of his time now is spent on the farms.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We want advice from Mr. Sutton. Mr. Sutton should be of great help. There is good rust-resisting wheat that can be used by the farmers. To-day we are using wheats which are not rust-resisting—Federation and others—and to-day rust is causing great loss. Mr. Sutton ought to be

among the farmers. He was brought here for that purpose and he is a good wheat man.

The Premier: He is always out now. It is all altered.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: He is a member of the Wheat Board still, I understand. I think, if the Premier will look up the report of the Agricultural Commission, he will see that Mr. Sutton has not been of much use to them because he was not available. The farmers of the State have confidence in Mr. Sutton, if he can only be used. For the last five years he has been engaged on all sorts of work.

Member: What about Professor Lowrie?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is true in Professor Lowrie's time he had something to do with the construction of railways, but that work took Professor Lowrie into the country and he was able to collect information which allowed him to give advice.

The Minister for Works: He told me he left because he had been turned into a land agent.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Everybody knows that Professor Lowrie left the State because he was offered a better job in South Australia at a larger salary. I am glad of the assurance of the Premier that Mr. Sutton will be kept at his work. If he is incapable, of course he should go. The farmers are perfectly satisfied with Mr. Sutton. He ought to be worth a quarter of a million to the farmers of the State. He is a capable administrator. The growing of wheat is a great industry and Mr. Sutton is of use. I do not know where Mr. Sutton is, but a great many farmers throughout the State have mentioned to me that Mr. Sutton is not seen by them. There is no need to discuss the Estimates at great length, but I would like to mention that the chief of the Fruit Department has an increase in salary. I also see that Mr. Wickens has received an increase from £240 to £360, but now I think he is underpaid. The fruit industry is important and Mr. Wickens is capable of doing good work. The entomologist has received a small increase. This is not the time, I admit, when general increases should be made, but we know that we have officials who have been underpaid for a long time and we should do justice to them. Their services are worth more than they are being paid and they have been underpaid for years. I am very pleased to hear that butter making is on the increase. I know, of course, that the Busselton factory is in charge of a capable man, and I am aware that the people are taking up the question seriously. I had some association with these factories some years ago and I became immortalised by being given the sobriquet of—

Mr. Thomson: Moocow Mitchell.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I was in danger of losing the prefix when the member for North-East Fremantle claimed the right to it, but I disputed his right. I would draw attention to the fact that one of the biggest cream stations in Western Australia is to be found at Dowerin. It is gratifying to know that farmers in the eastern wheat districts are giving some attention to the question of dairying. I consider that all our farmers should go in for cows, sheep and pigs, as well as wheat grow-

ing, and be considerably improved. It ought to be the work of the Agricultural Department to encourage in every possible way the keeping of stock by our farmers. I have no wish to criticise the Estimates further, except to say that I hope the Government have selected the right man in Mr. McWhie, and if we can get the freezing works going at Fremantle, it will be better for the State. The Premier was very lucky to get 16s. for his wethers. I know it is practically impossible to sell sheep at all just now. The supply is far in excess of the demand, and while that exists, the butchers will take advantage of the situation, and unless we get the works going, I do not know what will happen to the growers. I warn the Premier that if as the result of the approaching conference we are not to get the freezing works, there will be some trouble in the country. We ought to be in the position to take full advantage of the opportunity of rendering every possible assistance to the Empire, but it is quite impossible to go on breeding sheep if we cannot find a market for them. I hope that within the next fortnight the Premier will be in a position to announce the definite policy of the Government in connection with these works. I know there are people in the State who favour private enterprise, but if these works were constructed by private enterprise, we should be in the hands of one buyer who would consider his own profit and we would be in a worse position than we are to-day. The works ought to be erected by the State and managed by a trust. I hope that will be the policy of the Government. Private ownership would be objected to, and rightly so, by the people generally.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.52]: I do not intend to take up the time of the House, but there are one or two matters that I wish to refer to in connection with this vote. It is gratifying to know that the production of butter is increasing. The member for South Fremantle wanted to know if there was a local market. When we realise that during the 12 months ended June last we imported butter of the value of £409,358, the House will agree that there is a home market for butter.

Mr. Roeke: I had in my mind the matter of quality. Some time ago the butter was not acceptable.

Mr. THOMSON: By establishing butter factories we shall be able to produce the same class of butter as that which we get from the Eastern States. I would draw attention to the fact that without Government assistance a small butter factory has been established at Gnowangerup, and I believe it will turn out a success. I trust that the Government, strenuous as the times are financially, will take into serious consideration the advisability of appointing a butter expert. In the establishment of this industry in Western Australia, we want to avoid making mistakes. The same thing applies to bacon. I can speak somewhat feelingly in regard to bacon factories. I find that we have plenty of men who are prepared to accept the position of manager of a bacon factory, and they assure the directors that they know everything about the manufacture of bacon, until a commencement is made to sell

what it should be. Seeing that we are importing such an enormous quantity of bacon, I trust the Government will give earnest consideration to the advisability of appointing an expert for this industry as well. The appointment of such an officer would mean the saving of thousands of pounds to the farmers of the State.

Hon. P. Collier: We were assured when the Estimates were going through last session that Mr. Sutton was the expert.

Mr. THOMSON: Mr. Sutton does not claim to be a butter or bacon expert.

Hon. P. Collier: I am only saying that the Minister in charge of the Estimates said he was.

Mr. THOMSON: I am pointing out the urgent necessity for appointing butter and bacon experts, and the expenditure involved will be thoroughly justified. So far as Mr. Sutton is concerned, we are getting better value from that officer to-day than we have ever received, because he is going about the country doing his work thoroughly and well. I say unhesitatingly that Mr. Sutton, as a wheat expert, is second to none in Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Keep him in the wheat field and he is all right.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not aware of the conditions under which Mr. Gallahawk was going about the country classifying wool, but I regret that he has resigned and left the State. I would urge the Government to consider the advisability of establishing what might be called a demonstration car, which could be sent around the various districts and from which lectures and demonstrations could be given for the benefit of farmers. True, considerable knowledge was disseminated earlier in the year amongst the farmers at Narrogin, but I believe in carrying instruction as nearly as possible to the door of the farmer.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: To deal with wool?

Mr. THOMSON: And other matters as well. Mr. Sutton is prepared to go around and he does not mind putting up with a certain amount of inconvenience occasionally. We should have a demonstration car such as is in use in America. These cars travel around the country and from them lectures are given, and they are attended in large numbers by the farmers. This method of giving instruction is of considerable benefit and is much more economical than any other. I personally want to express my gratitude to Mr. Baxter, the Honorary Minister, for having promptly dealt with a request I placed before him that he should experiment in the growing of flax. We have heard a great deal about wheat growing, and I believe that the majority of our farmers—I am speaking more particularly of the districts I represent—have come to the conclusion that to depend entirely upon wheat is like depending on a fairly rotten reed. There are places of course where wheat can be grown at a profit, but I would draw attention to the value of flax growing. We have growing in our district—thanks to the good offices of Mr. Baxter, who procured 30 bushels of black seed, which, after all, is only linseed—some 30 acres of flax. I would inform hon. members of the value of flax growing as compared with wheat growing. True, we are deal-

tions and prices, but those conditions and prices also apply to wheat.

Mr. Harrison: Have you the prices of flax in normal times?

Mr. THOMSON: I cannot give the hon. member that information. I know that in the growing of flax we have the fibre and we have the linseed, and I know also that dealing with the linseed it gives a return of something like six bushels to the acre, which is worth even in normal times 12s. to 12s. 6d. a bushel. Then there is the value of the fibre and there is also an enormous demand for linseed, because we have in Australia—and I see no reason why we should not have one also in Western Australia—manufactories of linseed oil. Then we have the by-product, which is turned into oil cake. I want to draw attention to the value of that. I wish also to place on record my appreciation of Mr. Baxter's ready acquiescence in granting the request I made to him. I honestly believe that this industry is one to which the people of Western Australia might well turn their attention. I have here a letter from Mr. Ward, who is secretary to the Commonwealth Flax Industry Committee. Under date 14th October, 1918, Mr. Ward writes—

In reply to your letter of the 17th September I have to advise you as follows:—The flax committee fully recognises the claim of your flax growers to treatment similar to that accorded to the growers in other States. No financial assistance, however, is being granted by the Commonwealth Government. Consequent on the acute shortage of flax fibre in Britain, the Imperial Government agreed to purchase all the fibre from the 1918 flax crop at £170 per ton c.i.f. London, and to encourage flax cultivation—the Commonwealth Government, under War Precautions Regulations (copies of which are enclosed), guaranteed £5 per ton for crop of certain standard. Victorian experience indicates two tons to the acre as being a fair crop, including seed at six bushels, or 3 cwt. to the ton. Your crop from 30 acres might therefore yield from four to five tons of fibre, and from eight to nine tons of seed, besides fine and rough tow. The committee is, of course, in ignorance as to the progress your crop has made and will make in the next ten weeks, and would be glad if you would inform it as to the length and general appearance, and any other indications of its probable development. The committee has had very limited and inconclusive data of the cost of treatment in previous seasons, and the matter of payment to the millers has not yet been finally decided.

I am pleased to say that the Agricultural Department has already got a mill which can treat this product. Our greatest difficulty in Western Australia is the fact that we have not an expert. A Mr. Woolf, who unfortunately is of German extraction, first drew my attention to this industry. He and his brother are now running the only flax mill in Drouin, Victoria. My object in bringing forward this matter is to give publicity to it, so that if we have in this State a man who has had ex-

take the opportunity of getting into touch with the Government. I believe there is a great future for this industry in this State. The letter continues—

I understand there is a mill in your State, and the committee would be glad to learn if there is any person you know of in Western Australia with sufficient knowledge and experience to carry out the work of treatment. The Commonwealth Government does not desire to make any profit out of this transaction, and it is intended that any surplus after payment of the £5, the cost of treatment and the expenses incurred (freight, insurance, etc.) shall be returned to the growers. It is more than probable that the Imperial Government will extend the purchase to next year's crop, and if so the grower will again be guaranteed. Apart from the value of the fibre (about £135 per ton f.o.b.) conservative values of the other products are: seed £20 per ton, fine tow £40 per ton, and rough tow £8 per ton.

An hon. member wanted to know what kind of ground it would grow in. I am given to understand that it will grow in any decent soil. I think there is a splendid opportunity for this industry in our southern districts and in the South-West. They are growing flax in the Katanning district where they have had oats previously growing. Agricultural experts are all of the opinion that it will grow well in swampy ground and in several other classes of soil. It does not require excessive moisture. While we have made but a very small start in planting 30 acres of the flax seed, it is an industry which we should foster; because clearly, wheat growing alone is not going to pay, and even when we get back to peace conditions and prices, we shall have a splendid market for the flax and its products. There is no reason why we should not embark on the industry. We are importing all the by-products, and in respect of twine alone we are sending thousands of pounds out of the State. There is no reason why we should not grow the flax and manufacture the twine here.

Mr. MULLANY: The Chamber of Commerce will object.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not care about the Chamber of Commerce. The policy of the present Government is to establish industries, and for many years past I have urged the establishment of what I might call natural industries.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are you a protectionist?

Mr. THOMSON: I am not discussing protection or free trade. We in this Parliament have no say in regard to that question. It is the duty of the people of the State to do all they can to encourage local production, and I hope we shall be able to find in Western Australia someone who has had experience of the flax industry.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): We have been growing linseed in the South-West for many years past.

Mr. THOMSON: I am pleased to know it, but it has not been grown in sufficient quantity to warrant the instalment of machinery. I may say that Mr. Sutton is giving up his

I have no more to add at present. I felt it to be my duty to make public a knowledge of what has been done and the possibility of establishing a new industry. I was pleased to hear that the Premier is satisfied with the work of the Agricultural Department in dealing with rabbits. It has been and still is a very troublesome question. I agree that the only effective way of coping with the pest is by wire netting, and I trust the Government will take the earliest opportunity of getting as much netting as possible and that they will distribute it to the settler at cost price; because, after all, this keeping down of the rabbits is a national necessity. Speaking for myself, I must say I have always received every courtesy from the Agricultural Department and that they have always complied with any reasonable request I have made.

Mr. H. ROBINSON (Albany) [6.10]: I was pleased to hear the Premier's remarks on the production of butter. But I did not hear from him anything in regard to the Denmark factory. I am sure the Premier has not forgotten the Denmark factory. This, as well as the Busselton factory, was initiated by Mr. Johnson when Minister for Lands, and following Governments have increased it. I am sorry to say the procedure suggested by the Premier has not been followed at Denmark. The Denmark factory's output has increased and it has paid its way, and I am hopeful that the present Government will see their way to increasing the butter and bacon factory at Denmark. Only a sum of £1,500 is required to bring those factories up to date, and I am assured that they can pay interest and sinking fund on the capital. I hope the Premier will favourably consider this. Also I should like to know if the department would consider the advisability of advancing cows on liberal terms to the settlers. Previous Governments have done this with good results. In the Denmark district particularly, it would be of immense advantage to the settlers, who have gone through tremendous hardships, if the Government would help them in this respect. The member for North-East Fremantle referred to the butter factory at Albany. They have the machinery there, but they have not anyone who can handle the cream.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The churn has gone to Denmark.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: Cream has been offered there on many occasions, but the officer in charge is a fruit man and knows nothing about cream. I feel sure that if the Government would but place in charge of the works at Albany a man who, in addition to his knowledge of fruit, knew something about butter, we should have very satisfactory results. A tremendous lot of butter is made in the district, but as it cannot be made at the factory it has to be made privately. On the subject of the fruit industry, I might remind hon. members that shortly we are to have a visit from the French Mission. I have been pleading with the Minister for Industries to see that our visitors are taken to the fruit district of Mt. Barker.

conducting those visitors around the orchards at Mt. Barker.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: Even now, although I understand the itinerary has been made out, completed and accepted, I hope the Government will see their way clear to allow time for the French Commission to visit Mt. Barker. There they will see some of the finest and most up-to-date orchards in Australia, equipped better than are most other orchards in Australia, and they will also see one of the finest and most up-to-date storage plants in Australia. I feel sure benefit would accrue to the whole State by such a visit.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [7.32]: I admire the intense loyalty of the Minister for Agriculture for his department. This sentiment must not be allowed to blind him, or us, with regard to what the department has done, and what it has left undone. It is rightly claimed that we have considerably increased our butter supply in Western Australia, but it seems to be inferentially claimed that this is the work of the department. If we compare the conditions of the Department of Agriculture to-day with what it was two years ago, I fail to see how there can be attributed to it in any way the advancement of the South-West. Whom have we to-day as the responsible Minister for Agriculture, as the portfolio affects the South-West? Is he better qualified than Ministers in the past who were acting on behalf of the South-West?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Yes.

Mr. MONEY: That interjection is conclusive argument that it is not so. The hon. member is not in a position to judge any more than the present Minister for Agriculture is in a position to judge so far as the South-West is concerned. He has had no experience of that part of the country.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Get away.

Mr. MONEY: I admit the hon. member who has just interjected knows something about the North-West, but I do not admit that he is an authority on the South-West, any more than the Minister for Agriculture is. I hope the Minister controlling this important department may, in the future, be one who has had practical experience in that part of the State. Let us take things step by step. With regard to the Commissioner for the South-West—

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): There is no Commissioner.

Mr. MONEY: Is he better qualified, and has he more knowledge of the South-West, than the Commissioner we had two years ago? I grant that the Commissioner for Agriculture, Mr. Sutton, is undoubtedly an authority on affairs appertaining to the wheat belt, but I do not admit that he has the necessary knowledge to develop the dairying industry, the bacon industry, and the potato

these appointments filled by persons who are unqualified to fill them, how can it be claimed that the Department of Agriculture is in any way responsible for the advancement of the South-West?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Minister only sets up the policy. His officials do the work.

Mr. MONEY: I was speaking of the Commissioner for the South-West.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Who is he? We have none.

Mr. MONEY: I have always been under the impression that Mr. Sutton was acting Commissioner for the South-West.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You are wrong.

Mr. MONEY: Apparently then there is no Acting Commissioner even for the South-West at the present time. Neither have we a Commissioner for our fruit industry. When these appointments were actively filled, the department might have claimed that it had something to do with the advancement of the South-West, but, seeing that these posts are vacant, I do not see what credit can be attributed to the department. We have no pathologist to-day, either. The services of Dr. Stoward have been dispensed with, and no one has taken his place. We had a very good expert in potato growing in Mr. Bratby, but unfortunately he died and the appointment is vacant.

The Premier: You do not hold the Government responsible for that?

Mr. MONEY: Where is our dairy expert?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): He has gone too.

Mr. MONEY: We have no dairy expert. It is claimed that the Brunswick State Farm is of assistance to the South-West.

Mr. Smith: Who claims that?

Mr. MONEY: What advancement has been made by the Brunswick State Farm during the last four years?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It is all cleared.

Mr. MONEY: It is not as far on as it was four years ago. The dairy cattle are less in number, and have been neglected or sold. They have been neglected because the Minister in charge is not in sympathy with the South-West. This State farm was to have been used for the breeding of pedigreed dairy cattle to be distributed amongst the settlers for the benefit of the South-West.

Mr. Harrison: They have been distributed.

Mr. MONEY: The farm is capable of carrying three times the present number of cattle on it, and is not being properly used for the benefit of the dairying industry. I am satisfied that no improvement will occur there until the farm is placed under different supervision. Our best plan is to—

Mr. Smith: Close it down.

Mr. MONEY: Have it placed under the supervision of an advisory board composed of men of experience of the South-West, who know the requirements of that part of the

ried out for its benefit. Such a system has been adopted elsewhere with very good results. The position of the Brunswick State Farm is very unsatisfactory, and very marked improvement is needed there. I notice on the Estimates that in certain cases it is proposed to increase salaries up to 50 per cent. Probably the Minister concerned will be able to show us in what way the officers have further qualified themselves to be entitled to this extra remuneration. The few things for the South-West that one might have expected the Department of Agriculture to have carried out have apparently been left entirely alone. I refer to the threadbare necessity for agricultural lime. On the Estimates there is provided an expenditure for the South-West of no less than £56,000. During the last 15 or 16 years we have been told by the department, and by the Commissioners, that we shall never make a complete success of the South-West until agricultural lime is made available. Quite recently the Royal Commission on Agriculture told us the same thing. The Commission go so far as to say that it is not to the credit of any Government that this important question of cheap agricultural lime for the South-West should have been neglected. It is discreditable to our Agricultural Department that it should have allowed this want to be felt for so long a time. Again, what is the most important thing for the development of the South-West? Those of us who are in any way concerned in the development of the South-West know what is wanted. We know that the drainage of the South-West is the most important thing. Yet, although we have in the departmental Estimates £50,000 set down for the South-West, I want to know in what direction the money will be spent? Is it to be spent in drainage?

The Colonial Treasurer: You would not see that on the Estimates.

Mr. MONEY: I am speaking of the estimated expenditure for the South-West, and although we see the sum of £56,000 for the South-West I cannot see that that money is to be utilised in the development of and true assistance to the South-West. We have in the South-West land capable of producing every particle of butter required in Western Australia, capable of producing butter in excess of local needs, and it is not the land that the Attorney General desires to retain for the Forest Department, it is land that will require not much clearing; I refer particularly to the swamp lands of the South-West.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why not go and clear it?

Mr. MONEY: If the hon. member would go there he would not make that interjection.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I was through it before you ever were there.

Mr. MONEY: Then I cannot understand the interjection of the hon. member.

Hon. P. Collier: That is only a variation of the remark to go and get work.

Mr. MONEY: I am referring to that area of land between the coast and the South-West railway. We have acres and acres of swamp

land as good as any in the whole of Australia. All that is wanted is for it to be thoroughly drained, and we should be able to produce there sufficient butter not only for the State of Western Australia, but for export as well. I do not understand the Department of Agriculture being content and satisfied when that is known to the department, and not to urge it year in and year out. Therefore I am trying to see in what direction the present department has the right to claim advancement for the South-West. I cannot see where that claim can come in. We have been told to feed our pigs. Pigs have been bred and fed in the South-West, but the bacon factories that have been alluded to before this evening have had no real help. It is a deplorable fact that pigs have been sold as cheap as 2½d. and 3d. a pound in the metropolitan market, after the farmers have gone to the trouble of producing them. That should not be allowed to occur. It is a discouragement to the producer. It is no good producing unless there is the assurance of a profitable market, and it is the province of the Government and the Agricultural Department to see that there is that market. In referring to the question of a profitable market, let me add that confirmation to what I have also heard of the immediate necessity of freezing works at Fremantle. In spite of the Premier's reference to the price of sheep sold in the metropolitan market, all I can say is that his experience is not mine. I have sold good fat shorn sheep in the metropolitan market during the last fortnight, and they have returned me 10s. a head. That to me is not satisfactory, it is not the price that should be paid. By allowing the value of the sheep in Western Australia to depreciate 50 per cent., we depreciate the national asset by no less a sum than one million pounds. We must in looking at our national position look to all these factors in the development of our State. I would like to remind the Committee that the increase in the production of butter in the South-West is not the result of departmental effort, it is the result of the efforts of the producers and those who milk the cows.

The Colonial Treasurer: We helped your butter factory considerably.

Mr. MONEY: Our butter factory has helped Western Australia to the extent of £50,000 in saving the assets of Western Australia. It is a national concern. If we produce £50,000 worth of butter where none was produced before, we have saved £50,000 to Western Australia. And is that not to the benefit of the people? Am I right or am I wrong? The Bunbury factory has done this: it has paid interest on all the money lent to it, and done solid work for the State.

The Colonial Treasurer: You said you did not get any assistance.

Mr. MONEY: I say those who produce the butter and the cows, are of more use than the Department of Agriculture.

The Colonial Treasurer: You do not expect the department to go and handle the cows?

Mr. MONEY: I want to show that the department can help us more in the future than they have done in the past. I would like to be answered. Is it a fact that the South-West

requires cheaper agricultural lime? Whose duty is it to see that that is fulfilled? Is it that of the department? Again, I ask the question. For years in this House it has been urged that it is necessary to have the South-West thoroughly drained. What steps have the department taken in this respect? I am urging these things and I hope my urging may not be in vain—in the past we cannot perhaps have helped it, but in the future we have a right to see that something is done in these two matters of lime and drainage. They are important factors, and they will increase the products not five-fold but ten-fold. It is the duty of all to do their best to see that our requirements are fulfilled. I am not saying this in any antagonistic spirit, but it is not the first time it has been claimed that lime and drainage are required. We have been told this for years. When the Estimates were before us last year Mr. Johnson's name was mentioned and it was said that something was going to be done. The time has more than arrived when we are going to do something. That is not sufficient. The time has arrived when the actual work should be done. No one in the House more than the Premier acknowledges the fact that lime has been proclaimed for years as a requirement, and the Royal Commission says that the South-West has been neglected. I may say in matters pertaining to the South-West the system we have in vogue is not the right system and we have the knowledge that the system has not been as satisfactory as it might have been. I feel that a conference between the Minister in control of the department and his officers with practical men of the South-West who do know the requirements of the South-West might lead to something more practical, and better results than have been achieved up to the present time. I feel I would be failing in my duty to the House and to Western Australia, knowing the facts as I do, if I were to sit still and let the Estimates simply go through. What I have said I hope will be not only for the benefit of the South-West but for the whole of Western Australia, and I hope it will not have been in vain.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [7.55]: I must certainly express gratitude to the Government for their work in dealing with the rabbits. Whilst my friend the member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) has been most concerned about the drainage of the swamps and the provision of lime, we also are much concerned about the inroads of the rabbits. Undoubtedly the rabbit has made itself felt to an alarming degree, and thanks to the Government we can breathe with a little more freedom.

Hon. T. Walker: What has been done?

Mr. PIESSE: The Government have done this: they have taken up the question of dealing with the rabbits in a proper way. They have provided free poison to a considerable sum, and a large sum of money has been expended in free poison carts, and it only needs a trip through the districts where they have had the most trouble with the pest to convince the hon. member who interjected that good work has been done. A run down from Trayning, the place in which the hon. member is interested, will amply prove that the poison

done. He will find a place called Kodj Kodjin, where they have "kodjed" the rabbit out of it with the poison cart.

Hon. T. Walker: Whose poison cart?

Mr. PIESSE: The settlers' poison cart.

Hon. T. Walker: The settlers are doing it and not the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. PIESSE: The settler is realising that he must do something, and he is doing his share. He is also realising to-day, and I give him credit for it, and notwithstanding that the member for Kanowna may interject till Doomsday, I give credit to the Government—

Hon. T. Walker: I know you will for anything.

Mr. PIESSE: For dealing in the right way with the rabbit pest. We have had a statement from the Premier this evening that quite a number of carts have been at work even in the hon. member's locality at Walambi, north of the hon. member's farm. There the Government carts have been at work for months, and destroyed the rabbits there, which undoubtedly if they had not been dealt with would have damaged the hon. member's property and others. The hon. member, like a good many more, is lacking in ordinary credit. He has had free poison, I venture to assert.

Hon. T. Walker: I venture to assert you know nothing about it, because it is not true.

Mr. PIESSE: If the hon. member has not had Government poison, he is an exception.

Hon. T. Walker: I know you have taken all the Government poison.

Mr. PIESSE: I return the compliment to the hon. member, because I believe he has been poisoned all his life so far as Governments are concerned. However, notwithstanding all the hon. member's interjections, the department have done good work, although somewhat late in the day. The work of the poison carts is undoubtedly of enormous value, not only to the district, but to the State. The Government are at this moment dealing with rabbits upon reserves and Crown lands. What more need we ask? It took some time to convince the Government of their responsibility in this direction, but they have been convinced. I do not wish to stir up the feelings of our friends opposite; but did the Labour Government ever think of poisoning rabbits on Crown lands?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There were no rabbits on Crown lands in our time, as the evidence of Mr. Baxter, the Honorary Minister, shows.

Mr. PIESSE: They were there then, and that was the time to deal with them.

Hon. T. Walker: You were supporting the Labour Government then.

Mr. PIESSE: It is easy to be wise after the event.

Hon. T. Walker: That seems to be your hobby.

Mr. PIESSE: The member for Kanowna, in common with other people, has a lot to be grateful for in respect of the Government's work in rabbit destruction. There is not the occasion for the alarm that there was a little time since. Lately passing through the district we saw positive proof that the poison

cart, properly used, will ultimately free that belt of country between the two fences of the rabbit pest. Not so the country lying west of the No. 2 fence. Here we have the same trouble as previously elsewhere; history repeats itself in a sense. The farmers in the country west of the No. 2 fence are neglecting to destroy rabbits, or to report rabbits when seen, just as did the farmers between the two fences. As the member for Kanowna knows, only four years ago the farmer looked upon the rabbit not as a pest but as a harmless creature, and one he need not worry about.

Mr. LUTEY: How many prosecutions have there been?

Mr. PIESSE: Very few.

Mr. LUTEY: Yet you are congratulating the Government upon doing good work.

Mr. PIESSE: Surely the hon. member does not expect Ministers to run round prosecuting every man who has a rabbit on his land. Moreover, when a prosecution was instituted, there was a general howl of condemnation against the Government for taking proceedings against this poor man or that poor man. The matter of the rabbits will have to be taken very seriously indeed by the settlers between the No. 2 fence and the coast; otherwise we shall have the rabbits not in thousands but in millions. It is the inside country that will now have to receive the attention of the Government, and I sincerely hope another place will speedily put through the Bill dealing with the rabbit pest. The Government are proceeding on the right lines, and I feel sure that within a very short period Ministers will receive congratulations from the member for Kanowna. Any member who now visits those districts and sees the work being done by the poison carts, must realise that it is good, solid work, and that the pest is being got well in hand. I desire also to express the appreciation of the people at Kodj Kodjin for the innovation of providing carts, on long terms of payment, to a body of settlers. There we saw a crop which had been saved from the rabbits, though it had been eaten down a short period since. Once the carts were used, the crop grew again, and now promises a fair yield. When the rabbits got into that crop last year, that was the end of it; but this year the crops on the same holding have recovered completely. Apparently, the crops are quite safe this year. Now, this is the most interesting point about the use of the cart in that particular district. Within half a mile there are abandoned holdings infested with rabbits. It is plain that where the carts are used in a thoroughly systematic way even in districts badly infested with rabbits, crops have been saved completely. I am sure the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) will bear me out that notwithstanding there are rabbits within the district named the crops are standing intact. In dealing with this vote I desire to stress another matter—that of the jam factory. It comes under the control of the Minister for Agriculture, and I do hope that financial assistance will be given to enable the factory to continue its operations.

because there is every prospect of a big crop of soft fruit this year; and unless the factory is in operation we shall have a glut of that product, and a serious glut too. On behalf of the fruit growers I express the hope that the factory will continue to operate. Of course, it should not be continued at a serious loss to the State; but if we can save a repetition of the glut experienced two or three years ago, good service will have been rendered to the fruit growing industry. I wish to emphasise that there is every prospect of a very big crop indeed of stone fruit. Whilst on that subject, let me express my views regarding an expert in the matter of fruit. The Government thought fit to cancel the appointment of the Fruit Industries Commissioner. I do not know that we have lost such a great deal by that cancellation, but I realise that there is a need for expert knowledge in the matter of fruit culture to-day. I have always contended that it was beyond the capabilities of any one man to fill the position of Fruit Industries Commissioner for the whole State, because fruit culture has so many branches. No man could possibly be an expert in every branch. There is one branch which I am sure merits the closest attention of the Minister, and that is that of dried fruit. There we have an opening for the returned soldier, or for any man of limited capital. On a visit to Mildura I learnt that the gross output in Mildura alone for one season was valued at about £300,000. For a small community that is a wonderful value of production. At Mildura, of course, fruit is cultivated under irrigation; but what is done under irrigation in Mildura can very largely or wholly be carried out in this State without irrigation. But we want an expert who thoroughly understands the dried fruit industry to teach it to the people, to go through the districts and show what land is most suitable for that purpose. I understand that Mr. Fox, the district surveyor at Narrogin, has from time to time given advice to the farmers of some of the Great Southern districts regarding the growth of currants, raisins, and sultanas. I sincerely hope that no advice will be given to those farmers other than that of an expert in that particular fruit culture, because it is easy to occasion considerable loss to growers, or intending growers, and it is easy to cause people to lose money in an industry which they really do not understand. Moreover, in many cases the land may not be suitable for the venture. The trouble was that the Government appointed a man who was said to be an expert in all branches of fruit culture. That gentleman might be possessed of all necessary knowledge as regards apple culture, but as regards other fruits he certainly did not possess expert knowledge. Let me again stress the fact that there is a splendid opening and unlimited scope for export of raisins. With a limited capital, men have taken a gross return of £100 per acre from vineyards planted with sultanas and currants. Even in Western Australia we know of instances where that return has been reached. In the Eastern States a gross return of £100 per annum per acre is a common thing. Here is an opening for the returned soldier, and it would be a good thing

if the Government secured an expert in that particular line of fruit culture even for a short period at a fixed remuneration. It would be money well spent. I cannot conclude without referring to an observation made by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson), who said, "Wheat growing is not going to pay." That is rather a serious statement to make. I contend, and there is abundant evidence of the fact, that wheat growing has been made to pay when properly carried on.

The Colonial Treasurer: On good country like yours.

Mr. PIESSE: It can be made to pay in almost any district of this State. What are the essentials? It is well known that the essentials are energy, reasonable capital, the determination to do, and the constitution to carry out. There are hundreds of men who have prospered at wheat growing. Undoubtedly it is better to mix wheat farming with other lines, though not perhaps to the extent that the Minister has in his mind. It is merely a matter of keeping sufficient stock to enable a man to work his farm so that he may be able to provide himself and his family with the usual necessities. He should also have sufficient sheep to provide him with a little meat and some wool. Even without sheep a man can grow wheat successfully. What is most necessary—and all men realise that fact—is that one must apply himself earnestly to the work. It is not the work that kills, it is the anxiety and worry in connection with the operations. The chief trouble with the majority of farmers in Western Australia is that they take more land than they can comfortably work. That is in connection with wheat-growing operations. I feel sure that the time will come when the area will have to be decreased to enable farmers to carry on successfully. If men intend to keep sheep, then of course the more land they can get the better they will do, but it is not sheep raising alone that will help this State out of its financial difficulty, it is closely settled areas successfully worked by men who have a knowledge of farming that will help to pull the country through. I regret to hear statements made that wheat growing does not pay. I can quote instances where two or three men have succeeded in getting as much as 5,000 or 6,000 bags. Those men do not sit down and whine over the failure of a crop. I know of a number of cases in the Eastern areas where 20 bushel averages have been obtained from 500 or 600 acres, but the day is not far distant when the men who to-day declare that Western Australia cannot grow wheat, will realise they are in error. They will yet find the people who have settled on the land in Western Australia growing wheat and profiting by the operation. With the aid of machinery it will be possible to crop cheaply, and Western Australia will yet come to the fore and show that she can hold her own with any wheat-growing country.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.20]: We have heard a great deal from hon. members with regard to the rabbit pest, and the destruction that takes place as soon as the crop makes its appearance above

the ground, but we have not heard one word from members representing the country districts about a pest which is likely to develop in this State, which is increasing in numbers and which is going to be equally serious, if not more so, than the rabbit pest. I refer to the weevil which is called the lesser grain borer, or in technical language the *Rhizopertha dominica*. That weevil was discovered on the wharves at the south side of the Fremantle harbour, and it was supposed to have been brought there from some other country. The entomologist who went there, without being requested to do so, to examine the various sheds for the purpose of seeing to what extent the pest was spreading on the wharves, discovered the lesser grain borer in the sheds. He immediately issued instructions to have those sheds thoroughly cleaned, and poison distributed for the destruction of the pest. Unfortunately this pest flies, and it was not long before it was found on the north wharf. It has also since been discovered in Geraldton, and I was informed on Monday last that it had been discovered in other parts of the State where it had been conveyed in railway trucks. A warning has already been issued that if the pest increases throughout Australia it will not be possible to export wheat to other countries. Some people might say that such an embargo would be beneficial because we could then convert the wheat into flour in Australia. There is no doubt that the by-products of wheat may be useful in Australia, but what keeps the price of wheat up is the fact that Australian wheat is the best in the world, and it is wanted for mixing with the other wheats of the world. If we are to be prevented from exporting the wheat to other countries, it will mean that the price will go down at once and the farmers will lose immediately. If we do not watch this matter carefully it is likely to become very serious so far as Western Australia is concerned. I believe the pest has been discovered in New South Wales as well as in Western Australia, but so far Victoria and South Australia are free from it. When the pest was first discovered in Fremantle, action should have been taken immediately by the Department of Agriculture so as to prevent it from being carried inland.

The Minister for Works: Do they know the country of its origin?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not sure about that. Nothing whatever was done by the department, and I do not think the Premier was made aware of the existence of the pest. We must not forget the fact that the Government official, the man whose duty it is to protect the State as far as possible from these pests, notified those in charge of the wheat scheme of the existence of this weevil. Steps were not taken to prevent the spread of the pest, and it was apparently not considered necessary to send the entomologist to other parts of the State where wheat was stacked to see whether it was there as well. When the Scheme officials were asked why this was not done, we were told definitely and distinctly that if they had done so the Scheme would have been charged with the cost involved. The Minister for Agricul-

ture is also the Minister administering the Wheat Scheme. The Government Entomologist is an officer of the Department of Agriculture, and he takes a great interest in his work. This officer has gathered together many specimens of the various classes of pests which are destructive to wheat and flour. He has done this to a considerable extent in his own time, and he should be congratulated on the interest he has taken in the direction of protecting the State.

Mr. Smith: And he only gets £5 a week.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know that. Until the members of the Royal Commission visited Geraldton no officer had been sent there to inspect the stacks of wheat to see whether the pest was there. The entomologist asked us to take tubes and bring down some specimens of the insect pests which were in the wheat. We were also asked to do that in regard to the stacks of wheat in other parts of the State. We did so and we had not been back more than a week before we found that the Advisory Board and the entomologist had gone to Geraldton, and discovered the lesser grain borer there. Of course they did not get the information as the result of the investigations of the Royal Commission; they found the pest when they got there. All this shows the neglect which has taken place and it is the duty of the Premier and his responsible Ministers to rap someone over the knuckles for permitting this pest to spread throughout the State where it is likely to do great harm.

Mr. Piesse: It is said they are able to cope with it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have not heard of that yet. It is possible that they may be able to cope with the rice weevil, which is found by the millions, but this particular weevil becomes a field pest.

Mr. Harrison: It will actually live in timber.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It will bore into timber. It can easily find its way throughout the whole of Western Australia. It will eat hard wheat as well as moist wheat, whilst the rice weevil will only attack wheat which contains a certain amount of moisture. It will thrive also in any climate. In fact it will spread better in a dry climate than in a damp climate. I want to tell my friends the farmers that they are likely to have a pest amongst them which they will curse in a very short time. I desire to say a few words with regard to the administration of the wheat scheme in other directions. We know that this scheme was forced on the officers of the department very suddenly, but we also know that they have had two or three years' experience with regard to the handling of the wheat in the State. I regret very much the action of the Government in letting a contract for the handling of the 1918-19 harvest, without first submitting a Bill to Parliament. If hon. members will only go back a few months they will remember that a Bill was introduced asking leave to enter into an agreement for the purpose of handling the 1917-18 harvest as well as that of 1918-19. In another place that permission was re-

fused. They said, "We will give you permission to handle the harvest of 1917-18"—which as a matter of fact had been already handled—"but we refuse you permission to enter into an agreement for the 1918-19 until we have a report from a Royal Commission to be appointed to deal with the question." On the 21st June of this year that Royal Commission first sat, and from that time to the present it has given more time to its investigations than has any other Royal Commission we ever had in Western Australia, and that, too, without pay. The Commission has endeavoured as far as possible to present to both Houses of Parliament a fair and just report. It has endeavoured to investigate the handling of the wheat in the past with a view to making recommendations for future handling. It has not been antagonistic to the Government or to the Scheme officials. Members of the Commission have worked unanimously. The Commission embraces all shades of political opinion, yet politics have not been permitted to enter into its work in any shape or form. Its one endeavour has been to make recommendations which would be in the best interests of the farmer and of the State. That is the only object it has had. Members of the Commission realise that the farmer is getting very little more for his wheat now than he got before the war. Indeed, if the increased cost of production, on account of the war, be taken into consideration, it will be found that the farmer is not getting as much for his wheat at present as he got before the war. We thought it our duty to advise the Wheat Scheme of how savings could be made, by which the farmer and the State generally would benefit. I regret to say the Wheat Scheme has not been managed in the best interests of the farmers. There is scarcely any person who has had a finger in the pie in regard to the handling of the wheat who has not wanted to make something out of it. There is not an officer in any position in the Scheme who has not had a trip to Melbourne out of it. Some have been more than once, whilst others have lived over there for months and have brought back reports not worth a snap of the fingers.

Mr. Smith: The Minister in charge has set a good example.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He has had to go to attend conferences, because when important questions affecting the wheat are being discussed in Melbourne, it is necessary that he should be there to protect the interests of the State. But there is no necessity to send to Melbourne, at the cost of the farmer, so many officers of the Wheat Scheme, and I hope the Government will not agree to the latest proposal that two more officers should be sent over there.

The Minister for Works: Who are the officers who have gone?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Mr. Sutton, Mr. Berkeley, Mr. Hall, and Mr. Pearse.

The Minister for Works: He went over there in connection with silos, as an engineer.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If I could not get in three weeks more information about silos

than he got in three months, I would consider any time had been wasted.

The Attorney General: What other officers have been over?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have given you four or five. Mr. Sibbald also had a trip, and arrangements have now been made to send another inspector and another engineer. These trips have all been made within the last two or three years. It shows that the Scheme's money has been used in a wrong direction. Also we find that the Government, and even the Works Department, have been trying to make a little out of the wheat. Hon. members will remember the present Minister for Works holding up a plan in this Chamber and saying with fine scorn, "Only a few lines drawn on it; fancy paying Nevanas three per cent. for doing that!" I ask, is there any hon. member who would not be capable of drawing the plan of a wheat shed?

Hon. P. Collier: Just four walls.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not walls at all, only uprights. Yet we find that for the drawing of plans and supervision of the erection of wheat sheds costing £106,000, the Works Department has been drawing five per cent. commission.

The Minister for Works: Exactly. How much did we make out of it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know, but I know that there is not an architect in the State who would not have jumped at the price.

The Minister for Works: The department did more than draw the plans. It drew the plans and supervised the erection.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Just the same as any private architect would have to do.

The Minister for Works: And the department did more than that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Let me go further. The Government had the Scheme's money to draw upon. I will exempt some of the Ministers from this, because they were not aware of it.

Hon. P. Collier: Or they would have had a cut, too.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Government have charged £26,000 for putting sidings into the wheat sheds. They used for this purpose rails which had cost from £4 10s. to £5 per ton when new. These rails, when put into the sidings, were worn out. The flanges were rusted off and the rails were unfit to remain in lines over which trains were running. They called them third-class rails and they charged the farmers £7 10s. per ton for them.

The Minister for Works: Quite right, too.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: And the Government made a little out of it.

The Minister for Works: So long as you do not say that I personally made anything, I do not mind.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not speaking personally. New rails which cost £11 10s. per ton have been temporarily put into sidings and charged for at the rate of £17 10s. per ton.

The Minister for Works: They are worth £16 10s. to-day.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But the farmer is charged £17 10s. for them.

Mr. Broun: Yet you want the Government

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: You wait till I have finished. Now we come to the Fremantle Harbour Trust. The whole of the interest and sinking fund, depreciation and administrative costs of the Trust for the north wharf represent £10,000 per annum. A little way back of the wharf, where some levelling had been done, £1,780 was expended to provide for the storage of wheat. The Trust handled the farmers' wheat and were paid in advance for it, although the farmer has to wait for his money. The Trust charged for the use of their machinery, such as elevators, etc., notwithstanding which they made the full charge for interest, sinking fund, and depreciation on those elevators and other machinery, in addition to the usual handling charges. As a matter of fact they charged the Wheat Scheme £2,000 a year more than it was costing them for the whole of their interest, sinking fund, depreciation, and administrative charges. When a ship comes to take away the wheat it is the ship that has to pay the wharfage. But the Wheat Scheme has also to pay wharfage, because the wheat was stored a little distance back from the wharf in order not to interfere with the wharf. Indirectly the Premier has taken us to task for letting the farmers know that there is the possibility of a drop in the price of wheat. Some apprehension was felt as to how we were to dispose of our wheat. The Premier said that in some quarters an attempt had been made to dissuade the farmer from growing wheat. Let me say that any questions asked by the Commission were not asked with that object at all. But we felt that if there was any doubt about the matter the farmer ought to know it, that if there was any danger of his being likely to make a loss through growing large quantities of wheat, intimation should be given to him. We have been accused of making public confidential documents. But those confidential documents were seven months old and had been discussed in the Melbourne "Age" before being mentioned here, so there was nothing whatever confidential about them. Now I come to the contractors. We have been told that a certain firm in Western Australia should have sole charge of the handling of the wheat. We were told that faulty agreements would make no difference to this firm, that their one desire was to work in the interests of the farmers. It was said that, unlike ordinary agents and merchants, this firm were not out to bleed the farmer, that this firm would work for the farmer. "It is our wheat," this firm said, "is it likely that we are going to do anything to injure ourselves?" I am now in a position to say that although last year one firm were given full control of the handling of the wheat, that firm were out to bleed the farmer just as much as was any private firm.

Mr. Broun: No, no.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is only human nature.

Mr. Broun: You should be fair.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is fair.

Mr. Broun: It is not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In everything, in

to the Scheme, the company were considerably higher than any other company which had previously handled the wheat. There is one matter which was referred to in our report.

Mr. Broun: Whose fault is that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They were getting all they could just as others have done, and at the same time bluffing the farmer into thinking they were working for his interests.

Mr. Broun: He is not so easily bluffed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some I know of have been bluffed very badly. They have said to the farmer "What does it matter what we get for the wheat handling? You get it all back." It is true the farmer might get it back.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Some of them do.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They say, "We give you a bonus on the work we do for you." Of what does that bonus consist? It consists of the usual pound shares and the company say, "If we make a profit on the handling of the wheat we will give you a bonus share."

Mr. Broun: And add a little more to it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the farmer dies his dependants can sell that share and take the money. It is the duty of the Government to see if they cannot handle the wheat cheaper for the farmer so that the money which they are paying out for this purpose cannot be distributed to the farmer at an earlier date, not after his death. It is the duty of the Government to see that the farmer gets this money.

Mr. Nairn: What happens to the shares while the farmer is alive?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The company might pay five per cent. on each share.

Mr. Broun: They give good interest on the money.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: With regard to the handling of the wheat, we thought we would ascertain whether any saving could be effected in this direction so far as the parties were concerned.

Mr. Broun: What does the company make out of it now?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We thought we would try and ascertain whether the farmer could get the bonus directly at the close of the Pool if the wheat was handled in another way than at present. Some time ago the Government decided to call tenders for the handling of the 1918-19 harvest. The Commission at the time was in the midst of endeavouring to get evidence which would assist them in advising the Government for the benefit of the State. Little things fly around, and it was found that some persons who were coming to give evidence before the Commission would not do so unless they were subpoenaed, because they knew they were likely to be tendering for the wheat. They said "We do not want to do anything that is up against the Scheme, and if you want to know anything you will have to get it out of us." We asked the Government to stay their hands for a while, and they decided to do so. I do not think

has been given out. Between that time and the cancellation the telegraph wires were at work, and between 60 and 70 messages came in objecting to the call for quotations.

Mr. Broun: Is that all?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I will go as far as that. These messages protested against the calling of quotations, and this was cancelled. The Commission thought that the Government still adhered to their policy.

Mr. Broun: That was cancelled, I thought at the request of the Commission.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Commission asked the Government to stay their hands in regard to acceptance, and when the objections came in from the country districts the request for quotations was cancelled.

Mr. Broun: Did you not threaten to close down the Commission when that announcement was made, saying that it was useless for the Commission to sit on?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I did say, and the members of the Commission will agree with me, that unless something was done to stay the hands of the Government we might as well close down, for the reason I have stated. Persons who could have given us important evidence objected to giving it. It is all very well to have a man before one and to ask him this question and that question, but how were we to get out of such witnesses evidence that would be beneficial to the Scheme. So far, with one exception, we have not had a single witness who has not given his evidence voluntarily, and has not assisted the Commission with regard to the future working of the Scheme. We found on inquiry that the Advisory Board had been considering the advisability or otherwise of the Scheme handling the wheat, and that figures had been prepared by the manager of the Scheme in this regard. I do not think anyone can say but that the manager of the Scheme is a highly qualified officer. He has been handling wheat for the past 16 years, and has been in a position to know what is required in regard to it. He has been the manager not only in this State but in the Eastern States for Dreyfus & Co., and thoroughly understands the position. We found that Mr. Keys, the manager of the Scheme, could show the board how approximately £15,000 could be saved if the Scheme handled the wheat. Is that not beneficial to the department?

Mr. Broun: God help the farmer if the Government handle it.

The Attorney General: Absolutely.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am pleased to hear the interjections, for they show that the Government are not capable of handling it.

The Attorney General: No Government could handle an enterprise like that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They would not be required to handle it any more than they did last year. The only difference would be in regard to the payments. The system of handling wheat is to do so by means of sub.

of assisting co-operative activities, and with this policy I am in accord. These societies could have been employed directly by the Government to handle this wheat, in exactly the same manner as they are employed by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.

Mr. Munsie: Which is not a co-operative society.

The Minister for Works: It is a very good imitation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They claim to be.

Mr. Munsie: It is a limited liability company, and out for profits every time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Government would not be handling the wheat. It would be handled by the co-operative societies as their sub agents. The Westralian Farmers Ltd. did not handle the wheat last year, except where they sold wheat which Dalgety's should have sold, contrary to their arrangement with the Scheme. Last year, wherever there was a co-operative society in any district or near any siding, the wheat was handled by the officials of that society, that is the local society. In many instances the local society handled the wheat at various sidings, and not only in the towns where the society was established. They took the wheat from the farmer, weighed it, sampled it, trucked it, and sent it to the depot. When it reached the depot it was received by the Government officials. The Government officials sampled it, weighed it again, and stored it.

The Attorney General: You mean the Scheme officials.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, the Government officials employed by the Scheme. If the Government had handled the wheat this year the co-operative societies would only have been called upon to do what they did last year, that is to say, take the wheat from the farmer.

Mr. Broun: Are you sure of that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They could do so unless they wanted to strike, but that would be their fault.

The Minister for Works: It is fashionable to strike against the Government.

Mr. Broun: They could have done so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I admit there is evidence in this report showing that some of the societies said they would not handle wheat for anyone else but the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.

[Mr. Piesse took the Chair.]

Mr. Teesdale: That is a nice thing.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the farmers, that is, the local societies, wanted to handle the wheat they could have done so. The Westralian Farmers, Ltd., are not farmers. The local societies could have taken the wheat from the farmers, weighed it and sampled it, and sent it to the depot, and the Government could have taken it over as was done last year, under the Scheme management. The only difference would be that the Scheme officials would issue a certificate

farmer. That is all the extra work the Scheme would be called upon to carry out. Already the Scheme officials have to check these figures, and all they would have to do would be to issue certificates to the farmers for wheat received so that they could draw their money from the bank. In the agreement last year one farthing a bushel was set down to meet the cost of issuing certificates. There would not be any difference from last year in the actual handling of the wheat itself. In the agreement for last year's harvest, an eighth of a penny was set down for the sampling by acquiring agents, and the weighing of wheat at depots. It was found necessary that the Government should do that work for their own protection. The Minister for Works will agree with me that when the Government have to pay for the wheat they should see that it is in good order, that it is sampled, that it is of fair average quality, and that the weights are there. They did the work themselves, as at Spencer's Brook, for example. There the acquiring agent—let me give him this benefit—had one man doing the work, while the Scheme had 13 doing the same work. I will give the evidence of the manager, Mr. Keys, quoting from question 7222 onwards—

The acquiring agents are paid one-eighth of a penny for that work?—For checking weights and sampling at depots.

But the work is done by your officers?—They have a man at each of the depots looking at the samples that are withdrawn.

They had one man at each depot?—Yes.

Could one man supervise at each depot?—He could not.

Therefore, you were paying for a service that was not given?—As far as the Scheme is concerned, that is the position; we knew they were not doing it.

It made no difference so far as the Scheme is concerned?—Yes.

In making a new contract, do you think you should provide an amount for that work which is not necessary?—I do not.

It made a difference of several thousand pounds to the acquiring agent—three or four thousand pounds?—About £4,000.

The Minister for Works: And Mr. Keys paid that money.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That was in accordance with the agreement; and he had to see that the work was carried out. A certain arrangement was made by Mr. Keys for the agents to take the checks of the Scheme officials instead of doing this work themselves. For next year a crop of 12 million bushels or over is anticipated. It is anticipated that the quantity of wheat to be acquired by the agents will be about 10 million bushels; shed accommodation is being provided for that quantity. That one-eighth of a penny next year will mean £5,000. Let me again give the words of Mr. Keys, the manager of the Scheme, the man of practical experience—

4504. By Mr. Harrison: But they claim that the taking over would be for the good of the Scheme?—The other day I made up an estimate at which I reckoned the Scheme

a 10 million bushel crop. The estimate was approximately £10,000. On a similar basis to last year's, we would have to pay the Westralian Farmers Ltd. £25,000 for that work.

That is the manager's statement, not mine. If it is wrong, the mistake is the manager's. I have just mentioned the one-eighth of a penny which is paid for checking and sampling at depots, and which represents £5,000. Then there is a farthing per bushel commission, after all expenses have been paid, to the Westralian Farmers. They are paid for every services rendered. They are paid so much for taking the wheat off the farmer's wagon and putting it on the truck. The rate varies according to quantity received at the depot. They are paid one-eighth of a penny for taking the wheat off the farmers' wagon and putting it into stack. They get one farthing per bushel for issuing certificates. They get one-eighth of a penny for sampling at depots. That is all the work that has to be done. But after that they get one farthing per bushel commission. That farthing per bushel commission on the 10 million bushels anticipated to be handled by the agents next year, means £10,000. With the other £5,000 represented by the one-eighth penny per bushel, that makes a total of £15,000. So it will be seen that it is not work that is going to be saved, that it is not the price for handling that is going to be saved, that money is not going to be saved for the purpose of knocking out the co-operative societies. Money is to be saved by wiping out the middleman. Let the manager of the Scheme engage his own sub-agents, instead of asking others to obtain sub-agents for him. That is all that need be done in the matter. The farmers could then handle the wheat in exactly the same way as they handled it last year. Instead of having the middleman, let everything be carried out in the same manner as last year. I regret that the Government did not give this matter fair consideration. According to a statement made by Mr. Baxter to the conference of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association in Perth—and I also had the pleasure of seeing the figures myself—every bushel of wheat to be handled next year must realise 5s. 2d. per bushel.

Hon. P. Collier: Which it will not do.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: And every bushel of wheat that has been sold previously has not realised 4s. 9d.

Hon. P. Collier: Calculate the loss.

Mr. Broun: Who is going to make the loss?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the Government made anything extra, the farmer would get it through the Pool. But this year there is a risk of the Government not clearing themselves. This year's guarantee is equal to 4s. per bushel at the siding. The highest price paid the farmer for last year's wheat was 3s. 3d. According to the "West Australian" the acting Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, Mr. Watt, has been advising the Australian Wheat Board to get rid of wheat at a price even lower than 4s. 9d. I hope the Government will clear themselves next year, and I hope the farmers will realise every penny to which they are entitled. But the Westralian

Farmers, Ltd., are not entitled to the £15,000; and when they say to the farmer, "We give that money back to you," the statement is not correct, seeing that they give the farmer shares and not cash. If the Scheme handled the wheat and there was any margin, the farmer would get it at once in cash.

The Attorney General: What was the total amount of wheat handled by the agents last year?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Nearly eight million bushels. The member for Beverley (Mr. Broun) just now questioned my statement that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. would try to get out of the Scheme all they could, just the same as other traders. The hon. member said that that statement was not true. But let us take the case of the temporary roofing of wheat stacks throughout the State last year. The manager of the Wheat Scheme said that one farthing per bushel for roofing, when the Scheme supplied the material for roofing, was ample. That one farthing per bushel applied only to wheat stacked in roofed sheds. The Westralian Farmers Ltd., who look after the farmers' interests, said, "We want a halfpenny for that work." Like the millers, the Westralian Farmers held a pistol at the head of the Government. The Westralian Farmers were the only people handling wheat. Eventually the Government had to give the Westralian Farmers this halfpenny. With what result? Immediately the Westralian Farmers got the contract for roofing the stacks at one halfpenny per bushel, what did they do to those poor little co-operative societies for which they feel so much concern? The few men banded together as a co-operative society in the district in which there was a stack to be roofed, had to do the work of roofing for one farthing per bushel. The Westralian Farmers swindled those men by paying them one farthing, the other farthing going into the funds of the Westralian Farmers.

Mr. Broun: I suppose you think they should get nothing for the responsibility?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They had no responsibility.

Hon. P. Collier: None whatever.

Mr. Broun: They were responsible for the care of the wheat.

Mr. Munsie: Anyway, the co-operative societies did the work for a farthing.

Mr. Broun: They were quite satisfied.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The point is that if the Westralian Farmers took only a farthing they would not be able to give a bonus share, while the Scheme could give the farmers the cash when the Pool was cleared. That is the difference.

Mr. Broun: You are wrong. Those men were paid for the work they did. There was no question of bonus shares at all.

Mr. Munsie: What about the extra farthing?

Mr. Broun: The man who grows the wheat gets the bonus share; not the man who roofs the shed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is the man who grows the wheat that I am talking about. Money was paid unnecessarily for that work of roofing. The Government were compelled

to pay an unnecessarily high price for that work because there was only one tenderer for it. If that farthing were not paid, the men to whom the wheat belongs would get it in cash. There was only one man handling wheat last time, and the Scheme could save a lot of money by handling it themselves. On the 31st December last the whole of the old wheat was taken over by the Government. They are receiving from the British Government something like 3d. a bushel for the care-taking of it. There is a large quantity of this wheat in the country, about 500,000 bags. It will have to be shifted. We find that there was trouble in one or two places and that some men went on strike because the price offered for shifting the wheat was not considered a fair proposition. In one instance a complaint was made that the inspectors were biased. A case at Dumbleyung was quoted. The Westralian Farmers were paid there for shifting old stacks 12s. 6d. per hundred bags plus 10 per cent. commission for supervision of the work. They sent a letter to the Dumbleyung Co-operative Society in which they stated, "We will give you 12s. 6d." The Dumbleyung Society took it at 12s. 6d. but there was no plus 10 per cent. commission for them, not even 5 per cent. Then the Dumbleyung Society found that they too had to make something out of it, and they got men to actually do the work for 10s. 6d. So that the Scheme was paying 13s. 9d. for having the work done while the actual cost of getting it done was 10s. 6d. The Westralian Farmers, Ltd., were pocketing the 10 per cent. commission and the Dumbleyung Co-operative Society kept the difference between 10s. 6d. and 12s. 6d. All that the Westralian Farmers did was to write a letter to the Dumbleyung Society. It would have been better, and it would have made no difference to the Scheme, if they had paid the co-operative society at Dumbleyung the 12s. 6d. plus the 10 per cent. and they would have made something out of it. Instead of that we find that the parent body is making thousands of pounds out of the handling of the wheat while those whom the Government profess to protect are losing money. If the matter were given fair consideration the Government would say that if they did have any extra money to pay they should give it, not to the Westralian Farmers but to the co-operative societies. It is the small societies who require assistance. I think I have convinced even the member for Beverley that there has been no desire to prevent the farmer from handling his own wheat; the desire is to block the middleman. It has not been suggested that the Government should handle the harvest but that there should be a board formed with executive powers, that two of its members should be elected by the farmers who put wheat into the pool, and that two should be appointed by the Government with the Minister as chairman. If that were done the farmers' representatives would be handling the wheat and not the Government. Another matter I would like to touch upon is the question of the erection of sheds. The evidence which has been placed before the Commission on this matter

has been overwhelmingly in favour of the erection of sheds at the large centres. I may say that only one man has given evidence against this proposal while seven have given evidence in favour of it, and the latter have been men who have handled wheat all their lives. If the suggestion of erecting sheds at country sidings be carried out it will be necessary to have the same sized sheds at depots next year, as we had last year, to carry the wheat. One man who has been engaged in the wheat trade all his life said that the wheat should be stored as near as possible to where it was grown. It would be possible to save 2½d. per bag in railing, and there would be saved the cost of temporary roofs. The cost of double handling would be immediately saved, for the wheat would go direct from the farmer's waggon into the shed and be put under cover. Hon. members will thus see the benefit that would accrue from storing wheat close to where it was grown. Most of the damage to wheat is caused by it becoming wet before it is covered, and then it is removed by rail and it gets wet again in transit. Hence we get weevil galore. This could be avoided. Hon. members will also agree that the bags remain in a better condition when the wheat does not get so much handling. Thousands of bags are torn through frequent handling. There would be a direct saving of about 2½d. a bushel in railage alone.

The Minister for Works: How do you make that out?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There are 12 bags to the ton and there is 2s. 6d. difference in the railing rate. If it goes to the mill from the depots instead of to the port of shipment, the Railway Department may charge two rates.

The Minister for Works: Did not Mr. Keys tell you that the railage would be through haulage, plus 2s. 6d.?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Mr. Keys said that there was no arrangement made for taking wheat to the mill and a letter on the Commissioner's file points that out. The 2s. 6d. railage is for shipment to port. If hon. members will refer to the evidence they will see that the wheat which was brought in from Nyabing was taken past Katanning to Tambellup and then taken back to Katanning. There is no allowance for that; double rates have to be paid. Mr. Piesse, of Katanning, told the Commission definitely that prior to the war he had decided to erect sheds at the various centres for the purpose of storing wheat if he could make arrangements with the Government for leasing the land, and that in three years he thought he could pay his expenses. If the Government would put up those sheds now and we went back to the old system after the war, Mr. Piesse declared he would buy those sheds from the Government. It will be seen, therefore, that the railways might incur a slight loss in the first year, but the wheat would have to be shifted. In regard to the dual control in handling, the railway officials, Mr. Lord and Mr. Shillington, have both impressed upon the Commission that the man

responsible for loading the trucks should be responsible also for their unloading. At one time last year there were 2,000 railway trucks filled with wheat. The man who wants to get his wheat away from the siding does not care when it is to be unloaded at the depot, and so the congestion results in demurrage. Mr. Lord in particular insisted that the man responsible for loading the trucks should also be responsible for their unloading, and explained that this would make for the better utilisation of the trucks.

Mr. Broun: But how is the man to know? It is impossible.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, it is not, for he would be able to keep a tally of his trucks.

Mr. Broun: But there might be a large number of trucks in transit and a strike take place.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is too extreme a case to consider. I am quoting the experience of last year, as given to the Commission by expert officers who have to control the traffic. They declared that last year's system, under which the acquiring agents loaded the trucks, and the Scheme's officials unloaded them, was detrimental to the full utilisation of the trucks.

Mr. Broun: That is an argument in favour of doing away with dual control.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Commission recommended that there should be no dual control from the time the wheat is taken from the farmer until it is stored in the shed. If this were effected the difficulty in regard to the rolling stock would not occur. I regret that the Minister, when introducing the Estimates of the Agricultural Department, did not allude to this very large sub-department which is handling, not thousands, but millions of money, and which is holding an asset in respect of which it would be an easy matter to incur a serious loss. While some of the Scheme's officials are endeavouring to faithfully carry out their duties, there is no doubt that others have shown negligence in regard to the handling of the wheat. In my opinion the trouble has been due to there being too many civil servants on the board. One cannot be servant and master at the same time. We have learnt of many instances of local expert advice in regard to the storage of the wheat being given and ignored. Thoroughly experienced men have given the benefit of their experience to officers of the Scheme, but those officers have concluded that they knew better than their informants. This has led to a good deal of bickering.

Hon. P. Collier: And to some loss.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, to considerable loss. At Bunbury, wheat has been stacked close against a railway siding used exclusively for washing out cattle trucks. The Commission found the wheat in that stack in a filthy condition. When we saw it, liquid manure was running along the base of the stack, and the bags for some distance up from the ground were filthy and black from the scourgings of the cattle trucks.

The Minister for Works: Who washed out the cattle trucks there?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The railway officials. Between the stack and the trucks in process of being washed was only room enough for a man to pass along.

The Minister for Works: Who stacked the wheat there?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Scheme's officials. The men washing out the cattle trucks could not possibly avoid fouling the wheat stack. Mr. Piesse, of Katanning, thought of erecting a mill at Albany. He went down to investigate, but he found that, owing to the swampy nature of the land close to the railway, it would be impossible to stack wheat there. As a result of his investigations he advised the officials of the Wheat Scheme that they should not stack certain wheats at Albany, that it would result in great loss. No notice whatever was taken of his warning.

The Attorney General: Was not that in the days of another manager?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, there was then no manager at all. According to Mr. Piesse, it was a member of the board whom he advised. In regard to the question of manager, let me say that the best thing that has happened up to date was the appointment of a manager of the Scheme. We cannot do without a manager of the Scheme, and I hope the Government will never attempt to run the Scheme without a manager. The present manager is endeavouring to run the Scheme to the best of his ability, and to the best advantage of the Scheme.

The Minister for Works: Is he blocked in what he tries to do?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, he is not blocked, but he gets a good deal of criticism. In regard to Albany, the wheat stored there is alive with weevil.

Mr. H. Robinson: It was brought there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In point of weevil it is the worst lot of wheat to be found in any part of the State. This is due to the place in which it is stored. There are other sites in Albany far more suitable for wheat storage. A shed down there, owned by Wills & Co., was removed, and the stack of wheat has been put alongside on swampy ground. The weevils have gone right through the lot, water being so close to the surface on this site. The site will have to be pumped out before foundations for the new shed can be put in. And this is the place where the wheat is stored!

Mr. H. Robinson: Two years ago Albany was the only place in Western Australia where there was no weevil in the wheat.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There was very little weevil anywhere in Western Australia two years ago. Albany is now in a very bad condition in respect of weevil, simply because the advice tendered by a man who has made a life study of wheat was not accepted. It has been said that because of moisture it is necessary to shift all wheat away from the ports. Experts such as Professor Lefroy and others have given that advice. Yet what do we find? The largest depot in the State, that at Spencer's Brook, is built upon a site adjoining the river; in fact the only thing between the site and the river is a big swamp.

The Minister for Works: But is it not well drained?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. You could swim or get drowned in the swamp. One could throw a stone into the river from the wheat shed.

The Minister for Works: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The river is as near to the wheat shed as this Chamber is to Hay-street, and between the river and the shed is nothing but a big swamp.

The Attorney General: Do you mean the new site?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, the old one. The new site is not much better. Yet we are told that it is necessary to protect the wheat from moisture.

Mr. Broun: The shed should never have been built on that side of the line.

Hon. P. Collier: Are the officers still in the Scheme who have been responsible for all these blunders?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: My belief is that the wheat is held to be second to the railways, that the sites chosen for the wheat stacks have been chosen with an eye to the convenience of the railways, instead of to the protection of the wheat. And, in consequence, the wheat, the farmer, and the State have to suffer. I hope the Government will peruse the recommendations made by the Commission. I wish to assure the Premier that the only object of the Commission has been to endeavour to put forward some scheme which would protect the State and the farmer by the better handling of the wheat.

Mr. BROUN (Beverley) [9.44]: I was rather disappointed with the statement made by the Premier, when introducing the Estimates on the Agricultural Department, in respect to the freezing works to be constructed at Fremantle. Last June a number of persons interested in stock raising held a meeting, and made a request to the Government for works to be constructed at Fremantle to deal with the surplus stock they anticipated having in the future. On the Estimates no provision is made for the erection of freezing works at Fremantle. The Premier, in reply to the request, announced that he was in sympathy with the decision arrived at by that meeting, and hoped soon to be able to give his reply as to what the intentions of the Government were. From time to time the Government have been approached, but on every occasion we have received a similar reply from the Premier. To-day we are no further forward. In August last a number of graziers assembled together, and a letter was forwarded to the Government urging upon them the necessity of an immediate decision being arrived at in the matter, and asking the Government if it would not be possible to proceed with the work.

Hon. P. Collier: Why be so impatient?

Mr. BROUN: We have to be impatient as time goes on. We cannot wait for ever and live on hopes alone. In reply to that request the Premier again announced that he was sympathetic, and said the Government were as anxious as the graziers were to have these works constructed. Mr. d'Ebro was chosen by the Government to draw up plans, and go into the question of sites for the consideration of the Government. A suggestion was made to the Premier some time ago that in order that these works might be established immediately,

it would be advisable for the Government to prepare a full statement and submit it to different contractors and these officers who were concerned in the erection of freezing works, and for them to prepare plans and specifications and designs to hand to the Government for consideration, and for the Government to choose such plans, specifications and designs as were most suitable for the carrying out of the work. Had this been taken in hand and had the suggestion been accepted by the Government, canning works would have been completed and in working order within four months. A little while ago the British War Office announced that they were willing to take all surplus meat.

The Premier: Mr. d'Ebro did not say that.

Mr. BROUN: I do not know what he said. There is a man who has carried out the construction of freezing works in the Commonwealth, and he has assured me that the canning portion of the freezing works could have been built and completed and made ready for canning meat within four months from the time of starting, or within six months at the outside.

Hon. P. Collier: The earlier the works are started the earlier they will be finished.

Mr. BROUN: If the leader of the Opposition does not take the matter seriously, I do. I am interested in the breeding of stock, and know what it is to have to sacrifice a quantity of stock.

Hon. P. Collier: I mean that quite seriously, as a reflection upon the Government for delaying the starting of the works.

Mr. BROUN: Had the canning portion of these works been completed the surplus stock we now have to dispose of could have been coped with. The total cost of completing works sufficient to deal with the surplus stock on hand could have been completed at a very nominal expenditure, and would have been capable of dealing with at least 15,000lbs. of canned meat per day. The expenditure involved would only amount to some £9,000. If it had been necessary to remove the canning portion of the works, say to Midland Junction, the cost, including such removal, would have only been £14,000. This is a very good proposition, and I regret that the Government have not taken it in hand in order to assist the grazier out of the difficulty he is now in. The large amount of surplus stock now on the market has considerably reduced the price of meat. To-day mutton can be bought on the hoof at 2½d. per pound. I had that assurance yesterday from an agent. That is a ridiculously low price, and it is most unfortunate that we are in the position to be obliged to accept it in order to dispose of our surplus stock. It will be impossible for us to continue to grow sheep if we have to sell them at this sacrifice. In introducing the Agricultural Estimates, the Premier said that in the past we had received from 6s. to 8s. for good wethers.

The Premier: I said 8s.

Mr. BROUN: He also said we had been receiving high prices for stock of late years, with the result that we had become dissatisfied upon

having to accept a lower figure. That is a poor argument to put up and is not much satisfaction to us. It makes us think that the Premier is not sympathetic in regard to these freezing works, and that it is not the intention of the Government to hurry on with their construction.

The Premier: I have had to sell more sheep than you have in a year.

Mr. BROUN: In all probability the Premier has not had to sell them at the low price he would have to sell them at to-day. We have a large number of sheep to dispose of, and I hope the Government will do all they can to hurry along with the works. I notice that the Premier has arranged for a committee to meet the Government and discuss this matter with them, and come to some finality. This, of course, means another delay, and it will be some time now before the matter is taken in hand. The stock we have at present can be held by most farmers for a few months, but I would impress upon the Premier the necessity for doing something in regard to the canning portion of the works, in order to relieve the position. If we had canning works in operation I am told by those who have a knowledge of what has taken place elsewhere that it would mean a difference of at least a penny a pound to us in the price of meat. That in itself is a point worthy of consideration by the Government. We have had a large mortality amongst our sheep during the last few months. At present there is no one in the State who is able to discover the cause of this. Apparently the Government have now cut out from the Estimates the sum which usually appears there for a botanist and assistant botanist.

The Premier: We have a botanist.

Mr. BROUN: There is no sum down on the Estimates for one, and I thought the Government had disposed of his services. I regret that we have no pathologist. In Dr. Stoward we had a good man, and one who will be much missed in the State. His services would have been invaluable at the present time, and of great assistance to us in sheeting home the trouble which is now in our midst in respect to the mortality amongst our stock. I hope the Government will do something in this direction, because it is of vital importance. This mortality is going on throughout the State, and is growing as time goes on. I will not touch upon the Wheat Scheme to any extent, because, later on, when dealing with the agreement, it will be possible to go further into it. The member for North-East Fremantle made certain statements as to the handling of the wheat, particularly in relation to the Westralian Farmers Ltd. I have not had time to-night to consider his statements as I should have liked to have done, but will have an opportunity of dealing with them at a later date. There has been a good deal of controversy over the handling of our wheat during past years. Much of this has emanated from the merchants. Naturally, they are somewhat hurt because the wheat is being handled by only one agent. The Westralian Farmers Ltd. have a perfect

the direct representatives of the farmers, and the farmers are quite satisfied to trust them with the handling of their products. Mention has been made of the profits of the Westralian Farmers Ltd. An agreement was made between the Government and that company, no doubt upon the recommendation of the Advisory Board, the Wheat Scheme manager, and the Minister for Agriculture. As this price had been agreed upon, I think the Government should have been satisfied without raising a controversy over the matter, always providing that the wheat was handled to their satisfaction. Mistakes have been made in the past by the different agents, and naturally the Westralian Farmers Ltd. will also make mistakes, particularly in view of the fact that this is the first occasion when they have handled a large quantity of wheat, and the first occasion in the history of the State when one agent only has handled the entire harvest. The quotes given in regard to the handling of the wheat have been mentioned by the member for North-East Fremantle, who said that the Westralian Farmers have made, according to the evidence given, from £15,000 to £20,000 in the handling of last year's harvest. Even if they have made that profit in the handling of the harvest, had the Government called for tenders in open competition for the handling of the harvest last year, they in all probability would have had it handled as the Westralian Farmers handled it for last year. Even the price at which the Westralian Farmers handled it at last year compares favourably with the prices in the Eastern States. The quote given by the Westralian Farmers is one-eighth penny, in Victoria it is 2½d., South Australia 2½d., New South Wales 2½d., so that the Westralian Farmers in handling this grain have done so at a cheaper rate than it is done in the Eastern States. According to the evidence, and from what I have heard, it has been done more efficiently and the stacks were in better order than any other stacks handled by agents in the Eastern States. In regard to the profit made by the Westralian Farmers, even if it is £15,000 or £20,000, the farmers themselves who are growing the wheat derive the benefit. They get it by way of bonus, and even if I admit what the member for North-East Fremantle said that the bonus is given in shares, that is equal to cash because interest is allowed on the amount of money represented by those shares from year to year. The farmers themselves are most desirous of building up these companies so that they may be able to face difficulties that may come in the future and so that they may be able in the future to have a company with sufficient money behind it to handle their products after the war is over. Probably the wheat will be able to be disposed of and we shall be able to handle the products from the grower to the consumer. That is what we are aiming at and we hope in the near future to gain that end. I do not admit we are paying for it because I have stated the wheat is handled at a cheaper

rate than it would have been handled by agents. I want to say if tenders had been called for the handling of the wheat by the Government in open competition the rate quoted by the agents would have been ridiculously low, so low that it would have been impossible for the Westralian Farmers to have handled the wheat at the same rate. The agents would have put in a price to handle the wheat although they would know that their handling would have shown a great loss. It would have paid them to quote a low price for the one year because to a great extent that would have helped to cripple the Westralian Farmers and put them out of joint, as the saying is, so that they would not have had a good opportunity of competing in future years. The agents would have had the facilities for handling the grain in the future and been able to have done the work at a cheaper rate than the Westralian Farmers would. In calling for tenders I do not think the Westralian Farmers or the Farmers' Co-operative Companies would have cared had the Government fixed the price for the handling of the wheat and said, "we are going to give so much per bushel for the handling of the wheat and call in open competition for anyone to come in and handle the wheat at that price." The Westralian Farmers would have been quite satisfied, in my opinion, to have accepted an offer of that description. The reason would have been this: they would have known when the price was fixed by the Government that no one would be able to quote cut-throat prices which would show a loss. The Westralian Farmers would have known that they would have been able to secure at least 90 per cent. of the whole wheat grown in Western Australia. It would have given to the co-operative companies an opportunity to accept that price because the year before they got two-thirds of the handling of the grain prior to the Westralian Farmers getting the work. Had this been done, they would have been quite satisfied, but the co-operative companies did not consider it fair to call for open tenders for handling the wheat because there are firms with money who would have been able to crush the movement which we have been fighting for. We have co-operative companies to build up our agricultural concerns and it would have been suicidal had the Government endeavoured to call for tenders without fixing a price. The member for North-East Fremantle mentioned that the Westralian Farmers had handled a small quantity of wheat that they had no right to handle. I do not know what the hon. member's intention in that direction was; whether he wished to insinuate that the Westralian Farmers were handling wheat they had no right to; that they acted dishonestly or in some other way. But I should like to point out, to protect the Westralian Farmers in this direction, that we know that dual control has been the cause of a great deal of trouble so far as the handling of the wheat is concerned. There is a quantity of old

wheat that has to be disposed of, and on one occasion, and that no doubt was in the mind of the member for North-East Fremantle, three samples of wheat were sent to Dalgety & Co., who have the sole right to handle all inferior wheat, and these three samples of inferior wheat were sent to them to fix a price for, so that the agent at the centre could dispose of it. They were authorised to dispose of the wheat at the price. The wheat was sold by the agent and he received a cheque for it. It was only six bags and was sold at 4s. a bag, and when it was sold and the cheque taken for it the inspector came on the scene and would not allow the Westralian Farmers to take delivery, saying that the agent had no right to dispose of the inferior wheat. That is one of the instances no doubt in the mind of the member for North-East Fremantle when he pointed out that the Westralian Farmers were handling wheat they had no right to handle. They were not handling it dishonestly, because samples were sent down so that the price could be fixed by Dalgetys. This is where the curse comes in throughout the system where there is dual control. There is bound to be friction in such cases. The member for North-East Fremantle said that the Government should handle this wheat, take on the handling right through to the depôts. I much regret that he has suggested this, because as sure as ever the Government take over the handling of the wheat for the farmers, they will incur costs unduly large, because on nearly all work the Government undertake the cost is excessive. Although the Westralian Farmers have reaped a profit of £15,000 I feel certain that if the Government had handled the wheat, the whole of that amount would have been absorbed in wages paid for the handling of the grain. I want to say the small co-operative companies would not work for small prices for the Government as they would for the Westralian Farmers, not because they refuse to do it, because the handling was not due to the Westralian Farmers, but because of the interest the Westralian Farmers have and in the companies. That is an inducement to them to handle the grain at bedrock prices. A number of co-operative companies that handled grain last year handled it at a loss.

Hon. P. Collier: Those bedrock prices were no lower than the work was done for in previous years by the agents.

Mr. BROWN: Absolutely.

Hon. P. Collier: Not to the Scheme.

Mr. BROWN: There are losses made by a number of small companies in handling wheat, and I want to say that the Westralian Farmers have been absolutely fair to these co-operative companies. They have made inquiries and wherever they found the co-operative companies had made a loss the Westralian Farmers have subsidised these companies to the extent of the losses made. Those that made a profit had their profit, and there are others who have not made a profit who have been subsidised by the Westralian Farmers. The total subsidy to the whole of them amounted to £4,000. That has been

handed to the co-operative societies who have made a loss. In regard to the roofing of sheds, there has been a great deal of difficulty in this respect owing to dual control—dual mismanagement. The material has not been there to roof the stacks when it could have been obtained easily by the co-operative companies. An offer was made and refused by the Wheat Scheme, and the Westralian Farmers had to wait until the material was procured by the Scheme. It was pointed out by the member for North-East Fremantle that they were paid bedrock prices for the roofing of the wheat stacks—that is the co-operative agents. In every instance, I want the member for North-East Fremantle to recollect, the Westralian Farmers are solely responsible for the protection as well as the covering of the stacks. Although the work is sub-let to co-operative companies, if the wheat is not covered as it should be the Westralian Farmers have to take the entire responsibility. It must be remembered also that they have to pay their agents or inspectors to go round the various stacks and see that they are properly roofed. The Westralian Farmers, therefore, cannot be expected to pay for the roofing the whole of the sum allowed by the Wheat Scheme.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There was no charge for the protection last year. The Government took the entire responsibility of that, and bore all the losses.

Mr. BROWN: I understood the Government took no responsibility whatever for losses, except losses on the old stacks. The Westralian Farmers were responsible for the roofing and the protection of the wheat stacked until it was placed on trucks. The member for North-East Fremantle pointed out that one-eighth of a penny was paid for checking into the depôts.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is in accordance with the agreement.

Mr. BROWN: Undoubtedly; and this is another argument in favour of doing away with dual control. But for dual control, the whole of that handling would be done by whoever took over the handling of the wheat. The Westralian Farmers have to put a man there to check, and so have the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Westralian Farmers had one man, and the Government had 13.

Mr. BROWN: The Government were checking the wheat, and I take it that wherever any fault was found with the wheat the inspector appointed by the Westralian Farmers was notified and went there and the argument was settled.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Take the evidence of Mr. Keys. The one man could not do it. The 13 Government men were checking all the time.

Mr. BROWN: I am satisfied that the agents appointed by the Westralian Farmers were efficient and careful, and that there was very little sending forward of inferior wheat. As to the loading of trucks, I stated that the trucks should be unloaded at the depôts by those who loaded them at the other end. I also stated that this was impossible unless dual control was done away with. It is all right if

one handles into the depôt; then one may be able to overcome the difficulty to a great extent. But even then other difficulties would arise, because there are numerous sidings operating in wheat that goes into the Spencer's Brook depôt. How is the man loading at one of those sidings to know, at the time he loads, what facilities there are for prompt unloading at Spencer's Brook, so as to save demurrage? I admit, however, that if we had not dual control, and if the Westralian Farmers, or any other agents handling the wheat, were handling it right into the depôt, that difficulty would be largely overcome. I do hope that in the future consideration will be given to the handling of the wheat right into the depôt by the Westralian Farmers or other agents handling the wheat. In my opinion, it could be done much more cheaply in that way than by the Scheme, and also more efficiently. Moreover, that system would do away with the troublesome difficulties incidental to dual control, and would eliminate much of the friction between the Wheat Scheme and the Westralian Farmers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [10.21]: The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) made a little capital out of the fact that the Works Department, for the work they did in connection with erecting the wheat sheds, charged five per cent. But the work was not merely the production of plans, as the hon. member stated. The hon. member was quite correct in saying that the preparation of the plans should be done quickly. It was done quickly. But the work done by the Public Works Department was something more than that. The officers of the department had to travel about seeking and inspecting sites, and they had to be at the beck and call of the wheat Scheme. Indeed, one of our officers was on the Wheat Scheme Board for a considerable time. Eventually I found that his sitting on that board interfered with his duties as an officer of mine, and, viewing the position of the Public Works Department as a contractor, I considered it better that the officer should be entirely under my control. Accordingly I withdrew him from the Wheat Scheme. The Public Works Department had to carry the job of erection of the sheds right through, and they carried it through well. From the Scheme we received five per cent., or one per cent. less than we are paid by the Commonwealth Government. Hon. members may not be aware of the trouble there was in getting the necessary material together in practically a scratch time. We had very little time indeed to do it, but we did it. In fact, we beat schedule time. What profit can we have made out of our charge of five per cent.? The actual cost to the department in salaries and expenses for the whole job allowed a margin of about £200; and then I am not charging for any of the work I did myself. I had to pull the strings of the whole concern; and I suppose if I had been carrying the job on as an ordinary contractor, that amount would not have been considered an exorbitant charge for such services extending over three or four months. The hon. member tried to make capital out of the

matter of the rails. I want him to understand distinctly that all the members of the Government are fully aware of the sincere and unselfish way, and, let me add, the thorough way, in which the hon. member has gone into the matter. But the fact is that these old rails were bought a few years ago at a low price. Every business man knows that he has to pay present day prices for his material. I would not have been carrying out my duty as Minister for Works had I sold material and stock at prices lower than those obtainable in the open market. The hon. member referred to some old rails sold to the Scheme at £7 10s. per ton. Those rails cost £6 11s. 7d. per ton when new; and I could have sold every one of those rails outside at from £8 to £9 per ton. I could have obtained that price for them, and the Treasurer would have been very glad to get the money. I would not have been justified in supplying the material for less than the price at which I could replace it. However, this is the present position regarding rails: I must have payment or a voucher to clear my books. The Scheme are now proposing that we should lend them the rails, charging 6½ per cent. per annum interest for the time the Scheme use them. However, we could not do that. We must deal with the matter in a businesslike fashion. At the end of four or five years, or whatever the time may be, the Scheme would have done with the rails, and then we would take them back at their then value, the Scheme bearing any loss involved. That is business, and no one can dispute it for a single moment. I do not want to talk about the Nevanas business, or I could show that has nothing at all to do with this matter. As regards the five per cent., however, we have charged the Scheme about £2,700, for which we have carried out about £60,000 of work. The member for North-East Fremantle drew attention to the extra cost of railway freight, and I interjected while he was speaking, that he was evidently not aware that it was only a through haulage that could be charged. Though in the first instance, when they take the wheat from the siding to the depot, the Railway Department charge the local rate, the rate from the depot to Fremantle will be simply the through rate, as from the place where the wheat was taken on trucks, the same as if the wheat had gone through at one time. The 2s. 6d. per ton is charged for the shunting into the depot, and for the other shunt which is done when the wheat is taken away.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is very reasonable.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Very well. I want to show that there has been no attempt to spoonfeed this particular Scheme so far as I am concerned, but an attempt to put it on a thorough business basis. I defy any business man to say that the arrangement regarding the sheds is otherwise than on a strictly business basis. The hon. member spoke of this difference of 2½d. per bag. But he spared the Committee the reading of the answer to question 7146, which answer by the way occupies fully a column. Mr.

Keys, after dealing with various aspects of the cost of caretaking at country sidings and so forth, states—

The total saving would be 1½d. (¾d. plus 1½d.). Taking the total saving from the extra cost, it leaves 3d. per bag, or say 1d. per bushel against the depot.

Now comes what he says further in this connection—

On account of the small sheds at the country sidings, the number of screens as compared with the depots would certainly be double. The cost of erection of smaller sheds at country sidings would be much greater than the large sheds at the depots. The extra railage on material (iron, timber, etc.) would be greater than the railage to the depot. At country sidings mouse-proof fencing would need to be erected immediately (mice are fairly bad at some country sidings now), whereas at the depots this work need only be done if required.

[Hon. P. Collier called attention to the state of the House; bells rung and a quorum formed.]

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The answer goes on—

The cost of inspection, etc., would be greater if the wheat was being put into sheds at the sidings.

Then again in Question 7149, Mr. Harrison asked—

With regard to the amount of £1,173 for drainage, do you think there would be a more permanent value for that expenditure in connection with the sheds as suggested at country sidings for over 2,000 bags? and the answer was—

I should think it would cost four times the amount to drain the sheds at the country sidings.

In such a short space of time that one has to look into these things, one cannot reckon up what the costs are likely to be, but I think I have said sufficient to show to the hon. member that an isolated part of the evidence should not be taken; there should be taken into full consideration all the various charges which add to the cost. Then if we turn to Question 754, we notice that Mr. Allen asked—

I notice that comments have been made at the Australian Wheat Board Committee in regard to the cost of handling, and it seems that Western Australia is the cheapest of all the States?—

and the answer is—

That is so.

Even allowing for mistakes which have been made—and what scheme has been carried out without making mistakes?—we in Western Australia come out on top because we are the cheapest of the lot. I can tell the hon. member that the information was given to me that so far as the cost of our sheds is concerned, the other parts of Australia were out of it altogether. The hon. member will admit that a big report of this nature requires to be carefully considered. I have not the slightest doubt that when the members of the Commis-

sion finally complete their work, and weigh the whole matter carefully, they will say that, although there have been mistakes, which have been the result of inexperience, the whole scheme has been dealt with in Western Australia honestly and efficiently. With regard to the wheat stack at Bunbury, it was built before the present Minister, or the present Ministry, had anything to do with it. I saw it there a long time ago and it was acknowledged that of the five firms who had dealt with it, the Westralian Farmers Ltd. not only had the best stack but had better dunnage, and their screens were 50 per cent. of greater value as preservatives than those put up by other agents.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have not handled the wheat any better than the others.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have been informed that at other places the position is similar. I am not personally aware of that but I do know something of the state of affairs at Bunbury where the Westralian Farmers kept the wheat clean, and where the protection was good, and it was what I saw at Bunbury that influenced me in giving my vote in favour of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. The manager of that company, Mr. Stirling Taylor, is a business man. He impressed me as being a man who knew what had to be done, and who knew how to handle men and who would see that they did what he told them. There is nothing more that I need say because the gravamen of the remarks of the hon. member require to be dealt with by the Minister who has had to do with the working of the Scheme. I have not had anything to do with it except in connection with the building of the sheds, and I maintain that everything which has been done in connection with the sheds would be approved of by business men. The hon. member himself would have done what I did.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am not blaming you or the sheds. You did what you were asked to do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: With regard to Mr. Pearse, that officer was sent to the other side for this reason: at that time there were the questions of building silos and elevators, and the Metcalf agreement, under consideration. Mr. Pearse went over as an engineer who had studied these subjects, and because of his business knowledge and professional attainments he was entrusted with the task of attending to what was necessary and looking after the interests of the State. It will be remembered that there was a delay in the discussion in this House in connection with the proposed agreement with Metcalf's, and it was necessary that Mr. Pearse should remain in Melbourne to complete arrangements. He was kept idle there for some weeks, but it was far cheaper to have him there than to bring him back again and then send him over once more. In connection with the proposal to build silos and elevators, we had to set arrangements afoot for the whole of the material. While over there Mr. Pearse was calling for tenders for the cement for the reinforcements, and also for the machinery.

Hon. P. Collier: And all before you had Parliamentary authority.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Exactly. What sort of fools would we have been called if we had waited until Parliament had given its approval? The hon. member must know well that people who undertake big works prepare their plans beforehand, and they take the chance as to whether they get the job or not. In the event of their getting it, then they are ready to go on with it straight away. As I have already said, the Minister who is concerned can deal with the other remarks of the hon. member.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [10.40]: I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	9
Noes	19

Majority against	..	10
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AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Luley
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Rocke
Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loghlin
Mr. Holman	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Brown	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Duff	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Money	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. ANGELO (Gaseoyne) [10.43]: I desire to briefly touch upon the pig-raising industry, which has been alluded to by several speakers. One phase which I have not heard mentioned is the possible utilisation of the damaged wheat, which has already reached large proportions. In my opinion hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of wheat will be wasted before the main bulk of the grain is sent away. Another point is this: the shipping space required to carry £1 worth of bacon or ham would have to be multiplied nine times to accommodate wheat of the same value. If we could turn the wheat into hams and bacon one ship could take away as much as nine ships would be required to carry if we were sending wheat of a similar value. In other words, wheat is worth a penny a pound, whereas ham and bacon will realise 9d. a pound. Last year we imported £145,000 worth of bacon and ham. An effort ought to be made to stop that importation, and to incline us towards exportation. It has been contended that the difficulty confronting the growers of pigs is the absence of a satisfactory market. But recently we have had visiting Western Australia an enterprising gentleman from the Eastern States. I refer to Mr. Jones, of Messrs. Foggitt, Jones & Co. This gentleman has let a contract for the erection

at Midland Junction of works capable of dealing with a large number of pigs per week, and he has assured me personally that, if necessary, he will be prepared to double and even treble his plant. It has been pointed out by other members, including the member for North-East Fremantle, that our wheat is being destroyed in increasing quantities every day by the ravages of weevil. Rather than allow that wheat to be wasted, it is advisable that the Government should take steps to encourage the pig-raising industry. I should advise the Government to pass a Bill to prevent, as a temporary measure, the slaughtering of female pigs, and so provide farmers and others living close to the wheat stacks with the means of increasing their herds. Unfortunately, we have not very many good stud pigs in the State. (Of the few that we have, some were sold at ridiculous prices at the Royal Agricultural Show the other day. Every effort should be made to encourage this industry, for the twofold purpose of utilising what is likely to become wasted wheat, and of making the best possible use of the available shipping space.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [10.48]: I do not intend to go over the ground traversed by the member for North-East Fremantle, but there are certain phases of the wheat question which I desire to bring forward. After the asset has been created by the farmers the main thing to be done is to preserve it. To do this, it is the opinion of the Commission that where local conditions are suitable and where a certain quantity of wheat is expected to be delivered, storage sheds should be erected at country sidings, thus affording the least possible chance of moisture getting into the wheat either in transit or at the depôt. If such sheds were erected, it would be a move in the right direction. It might mean an increased cost in the construction of the sheds, and it would be an increased cost in the caretaking and in the checking, but after these costs are done with I do not think there is any argument which can be used in favour of the depôt as against the sheds in country districts, and on top of this there will be the advantage of getting the asset at its maximum value and retaining it at its maximum value with a minimum of expenditure. There are certain growers who will not be able to take advantage of the construction of a railway without excessive carting of from 17 to 20 miles. Many of these wheat growers are situated in my electorate. They are now found between the Eastern Goldfields railway and the Dawkins-Merredin loop. In fairness to these farmers who have now grown a large amount of wheat, which is not likely to be shipped for at least three years, and possibly more, I think the Government should grant them the privilege of storing their wheat upon ground that is free from weevil, which the member for North-East Fremantle has referred to as being such a menace in the State. There is one special class of weevil, the "*Rhizopertha dominica*," or lesser grain borer, which if disseminated through our country districts, will be very difficult to eradicate. We are told by scien-

tists that this particular weevil can live even in timber, and is likely to attack our crops as they stand in the field. It is possible to retain this wheat on new ground away from any of the contamination of railway trucks. It could be stored and dumped on this particular area ready for carriage over the railway. If railway facilities are not granted it could still be carted in better condition and at less cost than could be done by the individual farmer at a period when he should be preparing his seed beds for his future crops. If this could be done, and I believe it is possible, we should then have our asset cared for and stacked by the farmer at a cost at which it could not be done in any other portion of the State. It is possible that the destruction of wheat throughout the State may be increased by weevil. If this wheat was stored in the way I have suggested, far removed from contaminating influences, it may prove a greater asset to the State as clean wheat for seed purposes. I should like to mention a few districts in particular in this connection. It is anticipated that there will be at least 60,000 bags of wheat from Yorkraine, and 40,000 bags from North Baandee; this being a conservative estimate. From Kodj Kodjin it is estimated there will be from 15,000 to 20,000 bags. I cannot say what the estimate is from Hindmarsh, but in any case a railway must be built in that area if it is to retain its capacity for wheat development and agriculture. In this particular area we have some of the finest wheat crops in the State. One crop of Currawa wheat was grown at North Baandee last year which averaged 48 bushels to the acre. It seems that this year it will yield something like 30 bushels, if not more. This year's crop is much larger than last year's, and looks remarkably well. There are also other good crops in the vicinity. At contract prices in this area the carting has cost many of the farmers as much as 10d. per bushel. If there is no contract carting this year, and the work of moving this large quantity of wheat has to be performed by the farmers, it will take them from six weeks to three months to complete it. If they have to do this how are they to get their seed beds ready for next year's crop? It is not fair that this area should be allowed to go on year in and year out without the farmers being given facilities to get their produce to market. There is a good stretch of land in the district that is second to none in the State from the wheat growing point of view.

The Attorney General: What remedy do you suggest?

Mr. HARRISON: As rails are not available at present for new lines I would suggest the course I have already named. The best thing to do would be to have a survey made through that country for the purpose of choosing the most suitable sites. Even without that the farmers should be allowed to create stacks in those localities where the wheat is grown in order to preserve it in

a place where there is a minimum chance of deterioration through any pest, and so as to render it unnecessary for it to be carted during the period of the rainy season. I believe that the farmers would help in a scheme of this sort, and would undertake to care for the wheat, of course under the supervision of the Scheme which would see that the work was properly carried out.

The Attorney General: How would you arrange for the carting subsequently?

Mr. HARRISON: It is possible that three years hence there might be motor tractors, by which the wheat could be conveyed to the railway at considerably less cost than would be the case to-day. By that time, also, the areas under cultivation should have greatly increased and there should be at least three times the volume of business that there is at present; and this would make up for any deficiency there might be in the yield per acre that might be anticipated. This would be a good thing for the State and for the farmers, and an increased area in cultivation would mean a bigger asset for Western Australia. It is a good business proposition from the point of view of the Government. I trust that the Minister in control of this department will consider it favourably, go into the full details of it, and see if I am not right in the view I have taken. I am convinced that it is the proper course to take with respect to the particular area I have mentioned. The member for Toodyay mentioned the question of rabbits. After the weevil, or possibly parallel with it, the rabbits are one of our worst plagues. The Attorney General, as Minister for Industries, made a tour through this portion of the country and saw for himself what could be done by consistent work with poison carts, even during the growing crop season, when it is not expected to get anything like the results which are usually obtained during the summer season. Where the farmers have consistently used the poison carts, they have been able to preserve their crops, although in the immediate vicinity of the crops I have alluded to there are abandoned holdings upon which a great number of rabbits are found. It has been stated by the Minister that the Government intend during next year to increase their efforts upon abandoned holdings, Government reserves, and Crown lands adjoining those holdings now being cultivated by the farmers. The farmers on the outside edges of our cultivation are acting as buffers to all those westward, and if the Government assist those outside farmers' efforts the results will be such as we little imagine to-day. But it means concerted action by all the farmers and by the Government as well, especially during the dry period, when the green feed is not available and the rabbits will therefore take the poison much more readily than during the growing season. The member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) says we shall never get rid of the rabbits. I agree that we shall never get rid of them entirely, but we can keep them down to such an extent that they will not be the menace we now anticipate. But here is our chance to cope with the pest, and it is our duty to do our utmost towards that end, and to stimulate all those now

on the land to similar efforts. The policy of the Government has been to encourage the carrying of sheep in the wheat areas; but there is no chance of developing the wool and mutton industry to anything like the degree desirable unless we begin at once to construct freezing works with cool chambers and also canning facilities. If we have cool chambers only, without canning, then as soon as ever the capacity of the works is filled we shall be unable to absorb any increased flow of mutton. Once the capacity is filled, everything will depend on shipments; and if there is not a constant stream of export through the shipping outlet it will be impossible to take in anything further. Therefore, it is essential that we should also go in for the canning business, and I trust the Government will hasten this as much as possible. In view of the lateness of the hour, I reserve my further remarks for another opportunity. Let me, however, again express the hope that the Minister controlling the Agricultural Department will consider at once whether something cannot be done towards rabbit destruction on that area between the two fences, and that he will state his definite conclusions, so that the people affected may know what is in store for them and prepare for it.

General debate concluded; votes and items discussed as follow:—

Item—Under Secretary, £838.

Mr. SMITH: I fear I cannot compliment the Government on the manner in which the Estimates have been placed before the Committee. There seems to be a general desire to lump amounts together, so as to suppress information, of which practice this item is rather a glaring instance. The Under Secretary is put down here for £838. I understand that amount includes a sum for payment of long service leave and also annual leave to the retiring Under Secretary. The Committee should be informed how much of this is for the retiring Under Secretary, and what salary is being paid to the present Under Secretary, and also whether the latter's appointment is permanent or merely acting. I understand the gentleman at present holding the position was formerly Under Secretary of another department. Has he been permanently appointed to the Agricultural Department, and what are his qualifications for the position? A good deal has been said to-night regarding the shortcomings of the Agricultural Department. If we expect that department to improve, the gentleman at its head should be thoroughly competent to administer it.

The PREMIER: I understand from the Minister in charge of the Agricultural Department that this officer is doing very good work. He has some considerable knowledge of agricultural work, I understand, and his administrative ability is satisfactory to the Minister in charge. The Government intend, therefore, to retain the officer in his present position, which just now is merely an acting one, he not having been permanently appointed. He was appointed Acting Under Secretary until he had been tried, and the time will come shortly when his appointment will be made permanent. The salary he

receives is £600 a year, the same amount as was paid to the former occupant of the office. However, a mistake has crept into this item, the amount should be £50 less than shown; instead of £838 it should be £788. I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £50.

The balance of the item represents the amount due to the late Under Secretary for 12 months' leave of absence which was granted on his retirement last year. He was paid up to the end of the last financial year, and the balance of this item represents the difference between the salary which he received last year and the amount he is to receive for the full 12 months.

Mr. SMITH: The Premier's explanation illustrates the need for placing these items before the Committee more clearly. Then such mistakes as that made here would not pass un-noticed. Why is this particular gentleman to be appointed Under Secretary of the Agricultural Department? Why has the position not been made available to other Civil Servants who are undoubtedly just as competent to fill it as the present acting Under Secretary? It is most unfair that individuals should be picked out for important positions of this nature, without an opportunity being afforded to other members of the Civil Service, who may be more competent, to apply for the vacancy. I protest very strongly against appointments being made in this way. The plums in the service should be open to all who are willing and competent to undertake the work. The Premier has not yet told us that the acting Under Secretary has special qualifications for the position. He was under secretary in some other department and for some reason or other he was transferred to the Agricultural Department.

The PREMIER: The officer in question was Under Secretary for Water Supply and Sewerage. That department was amalgamated with the Works Department and the office of secretary became vacant. The secretary then became what is known as an excess officer. The Public Service Commissioner went into the matter, made exhaustive inquiries, and recommended that Mr. Trethowan should be given the acting appointment of Under Secretary of Agriculture. The officer's qualifications were equal to those of any other officer, and consequently the Government considered it would be only a matter of justice to give him the opportunity of making good in the Agricultural Department. The Minister was quite satisfied with the work the officer was performing.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have already drawn attention to the state of the House. The way in which we are doing business is nothing less than a scandal and the country should know about it. With regard to the question under discussion, my complaint is that the position has too long been filled in an acting capacity. I do not know what experience Mr. Trethowan has had in regard to agricultural matters, but I hold the opinion that this gentleman is a very capable officer

and that he is able to discharge the duties of any position he may be called upon to fill. I had some dealings with him during the time he was Under Secretary for Water Supply, and although he did not get on too well in some directions with other officers, if there was friction, it was not entirely his fault. If this officer does possess a fault it is that of excessive zeal in the discharge of his duties. I think he is one of the most capable officers the State possesses. I consider that a permanent appointment should have been made earlier in the Agricultural Department. I do not quite know how long it is since the late Under Secretary left the service, but it should be nearly twelve months. Anyhow it is not desirable that important offices should be filled by civil servants who are only acting in the positions. I protest also against the manner in which the Estimates have been presented to Parliament. In former years the items were numbered; this year members are not able to name or indicate the items they wish to discuss. In the very first item, according to the Premier himself, a mistake of £50 has been made. Besides, it is not usual to include an allowance that may have been granted to a retiring officer under the heading of salary for under secretary. Such allowance should be provided for in another part of the Estimates. I should like to know how much Mr. McNulty, the former Under Secretary received or is going to receive before he finally severs his connection with the service.

The PREMIER: He has been granted 12 months leave of absence on full pay.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It would appear from the remarks of the Premier that Mr. McNulty has received twelve months leave of absence on full pay.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Six months.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think we ought to report progress so that we may be able to get definite information. This matter should have been cleared up in last year's Estimates seeing that they were not passed until April or May of the present year. We ought to know how much the late Under Secretary really did get. Apparently he got £300. The Committee did not vote any of that last year.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): The Committee voted £600 to the Under Secretary last year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That was for the present Under Secretary.

The PREMIER: No, he got his salary from the Water Supply Department right up to the end of the financial year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then the Agricultural Department will have to recoup the amount to the Water Supply Department. In any case the expenditure last year was £817, although the Committee voted only £600.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Because one man was retired and got six months leave, together with accrued annual leave.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then according to the Estimates Mr. McNulty received £217 last

year. Now we are asked to vote an additional £188. So in all he is to get £405.

The Premier: I am not sure of the amount.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): He was granted six months leave on full pay, and his accrued annual leave.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What did the accrued annual leave represent? It is extraordinary how some officers manage to pile up accrued leave.

The Premier: It was all on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner. The officer was entitled to it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know that he was entitled to half a year's leave.

The Premier: He did not get any more than he was entitled to.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When he went it was understood that he was not coming back. It is a way the Public Service Commissioner has: when an officer is leaving he is well paid for leaving. It is different in private employment. In this case Mr. McNulty went out, drawing something like nine months salary. No officer can claim accrued annual leave unless his Minister has approved of this being done. When we were in office we decided not to agree to the accumulation of annual leave, because this practice had been abused so much in the past.

The Colonial Treasurer: I think every officer should be made to take his annual leave as a general practice.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It has become the general practice amongst the higher paid civil servants not to take their annual leave until it has accumulated. The particular officer under consideration has undoubtedly left the service with an honorarium of about £400. I hope a permanent appointment to the office will soon be made.

Amendment put and passed.

Item, Commissioner for Wheat Belt, £756.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We have been told that the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt, Mr. Sutton, is now devoting a great deal more of his time than he did in the past to the duties which really belong to him. I do not, however, think this officer ought to be a member of the Wheat Marketing Advisory Board, for this necessitates his being in the city practically the whole of the year. It is about time we insisted on officers being employed on duties for which they are specially fitted. For years past Mr. Sutton has been engaged in Perth upon work for which he is entirely unfitted, and this has been responsible for some of the troubles which have involved the State in a considerable expenditure of money. He should be continually moving about amongst the wheat growers in the country, assisting them by his advice and counsel. He has been here something like 10 years, but has devoted very little of his time to experiments with different kinds of wheat in order to ascertain which variety is most suitable for any particular district. By this time there should be in the Agricultural Department complete information as to the varieties of wheat best suited to the several districts. I venture to say, however, that investigation would bring to light the fact that there was very little information of this kind available as a result

of Mr. Sutton's services. Last year we were told when the dairy expert was retired that the work could be performed satisfactorily by Mr. Sutton.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Temporarily.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know about that. It was urged on his behalf that he was capable of advising in matters relating to dairying. I should like to know whether Mr. Sutton is still the expert adviser of the Department on this question. Soon after Mr. Connor was retired Mr. Sutton was sent down to the Deemark district to report on the factory there. I do not agree that the interests of the State will be properly safeguarded having Mr. Sutton as the Government's expert adviser in this connection. If Mr. Sutton not still acting in that capacity, so far as the Estimates reveal any information, there is nobody acting. There is no provision on the Estimates for any head of this department or expert. There is greater need for somebody at the present time and during the few months than on any former occasion. The Government announced some time ago that they were going to launch out in the establishment of butter and bacon factories, and since that was announced they got rid of their adviser. He may not have been the best man to have in that position, but someone should have been appointed to fill the position. If there is a time when the dairying industry should not be left to office officials it is now.

The Premier: We have an adviser who spends most of his time in the country.

Hon. P. COLLIER: On the Estimates there is an item "Chief Inspector for the South-West," but it does not say whether he is chief inspector of rabbits, dairying, or what.

The Premier: The Commissioner for the South-West was not told off to deal with rabbits or butter or bacon; we call this officer chief inspector.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He must be a highly qualified official because he is paid the magnificent salary of £360. The whole of the work that an officer was paid £750 to perform previously, is now done by this officer. The officer might be doing the work which was trusted to Mr. Sutton after the retirement of Mr. Connor. Is Mr. Sutton doing any work at all in regard to dairying, or is the whole of that work being done by the chief inspector? First of all, is Mr. Sutton devoting the whole of his time to his proper duties in the country in the wheat-growing areas and he doing any work in connection with dairying formerly carried out by Mr. Connor, who is retired?

The PREMIER: Mr. Sutton is employed entirely on his wheat work, except in connection with his position on the Wheat Board. He is not on any other board and it is the intention of the Government to relieve him of that work as soon as possible. Mr. Sutton has been engaged in breeding wheat for years at Chumman and Merredin.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He has not experimented much with the different varieties.

The PREMIER: When at the Chumman farm some months ago I saw 50 rows of

ferent classes of wheat which had been experimented with, and the Commissioner advises farmers what is the best wheat to grow in the different districts. I agree that Mr. Sutton's work should consist of assisting the farmers, and it is the desire of the Government to relieve him of his duties on the Wheat Board as soon as possible.

Hon. P. Collier: Is it intended to relieve him of his Wheat Board work?

The PREMIER: As soon as possible. At the present time I am advised it can be conveniently done, and it will be done and the work in the South-West attended to by another officer. Mr. Sutton's duties are removed from the South-West. Mr. Percy Wicken has the highest credentials, but if it is found that his officer is unable to cope with the work and to all that is required by the Government, it will be necessary to try someone else.

[Mr. Holman called attention to the state of the House; bells rung and a quorum formed.]

Hon. P. Collier: Is he the dairy expert?

The PREMIER: Yes. Mr. Sutton advises farmers not only as to wheat growing and cereals generally, but also as regards pig raising, stock raising, and sheep raising. It is the Government's intention to relieve him of his duties on the Wheat Board as soon as that can be conveniently done.

Mr. LAMBERT: What will be the exact work carried out by Mr. Sutton when he is relieved from the many duties placed upon him apart from the specific duty for which he was brought to this country? Mr. Sutton is a high-salaried officer, and one whose experimental work in the development of species of wheat for various districts should be noted and noted. Can the Minister give some definite information as to whether Mr. Sutton's research work is catalogued, or whether it is simply carried on in a promiscuous manner? Does the Government intend to continue to employ him indefinitely at this particular work? If so, a record should be kept so that anyone following Mr. Sutton in his most interesting and also very expensive work could be made aware of any conclusions reached by Mr. Sutton.

The Premier: I have given the leader of the opposition all the information for which you are asking.

Mr. LAMBERT: No. Can the Premier state whether Mr. Sutton keeps any detailed records of his experimental work, whether that work is known to anyone else, and, if so, whether it could be followed up by someone else? In my opinion the Committee would not be justified in passing the item until definite information on these points is furnished. Apparently Mr. Sutton, ever since his engagement here, has been employed on work altogether foreign to his special capabilities. He has been asked to advise the Government on commercial and financial matters, with the result, it is asserted, that considerable sums have been lost to the State.

The PREMIER: The fullest information regarding the work performed by Mr. Sutton is published and is available to everyone. This information relates to the experiments which

have been carried out by Mr. Sutton, not only with regard to wheat, but oats and in other directions as well, and anyone who desires it can have it supplied. I appreciate the great interest the member for Coolgardie is taking in this matter, and I imagine that he proposes to take up a large area of land in the wheat belt or perhaps in the Coolgardie district.

Mr. Holman: Do not be so sarcastic.

Mr. Lambert: I am going to Moora.

The PREMIER: I shall be only too happy to welcome the hon. member in the Moora district and to give him all the information I can, and also to place at his disposal all my own experience with regard to the best wheats to grow in that district.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 12.5 a.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 29th October, 1918.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE, STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. W. KINGSMILL, the time for bringing up the report was extended to the 7th November.

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

MOTION—HONORARY MINISTERS AND DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.35]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the present system of entrusting the administration and control of important departments of State to Honorary Ministers is undesirable.

This motion opens up a wide field both in constitutional development and in politics, but if I am fortunate enough to secure the attention of members for 40 or 50 minutes I think I shall be able to cover the ground without wearying them. I am most anxious to secure the approval of hon. members to this motion. Now, I am going to brush aside almost in a sentence the reference or charge or suggestion which has been made outside this Chamber