

they depend upon railway facilities. Thus it is that every attention should be paid to navigation matters, for the North depends entirely upon our sea-borne trade. Having perhaps more knowledge of the North than any other member of Parliament, apart from those who directly represent northern electorates, and the views and requirements of the people there, I can assure Mr. Miles that I am very sympathetically inclined towards the North. Even apart from my official duties, I entertain those feelings and I have been able to keep in touch with the people concerned. Naturally one is sympathetically disposed towards them when the disabilities they experience in being so far away from the seat of Government are realised. Perhaps that is why members representing that part of the State have to be a little more watchful and active than those whose interests are closer to the metropolis. I know that the people of the North are not, to use a colloquialism, "squealers" in any sense of the word. They appreciate the difficulties confronting the Government generally, but they also appreciate anything that is done for their benefit. That is why I say we are anxious to do what we can for the North, particularly in regard to the lighting of the coast from Wyndham to Fremantle. Although something has been done in the past, much remains to be undertaken yet. If we can secure the co-operation of the Federal authorities, I am sure we shall be able to make the conditions far better than they have been up to the present.

Hon. G. W. Miles The department was starved in past years before you took charge.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I know that and no better illustration of the fact could be advanced than the condition of the buoys at Wyndham. They are a standing disgrace to those responsible, but we can let that go. We have been able to do something since the present Government has been in power, and we may be able to do more in the future.

On motion by Hon. W. H. Kitson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.58 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 20th October, 1927.*

Bill: Traffic Act Amendment, Report	...	...	PAGE 1298
Annual Estimates: General debate concluded—Votes and items discussed—	...	...	
Legislative Council, Legislative Assembly, Joint House Committee, Joint Printing Committee, Joint Library Committee	...	...	1298

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

### BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1927-28.

*In Committee of Supply.*

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

*Vote—Legislative Council, £1,667 :*

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [4.34]: It is not my intention to delay the Committee very long. Three or four months ago during the debate on the Address-in-reply, we discussed most of the important questions confronting the State, but developments since then call for some comment. It is gratifying to find that the State is on the up grade and that the Treasurer is budgeting for a surplus of £34,199. If the Financial Agreement is ratified the Treasurer anticipates saving another £350,000, making a total surplus for the year of £384,199. I do not wish to discuss the Financial Agreement at this stage. It will be brought before Parliament later on and doubtless will receive serious consideration. It is admitted that the flourishing condition of the State is due to the prosperity of the agricultural industry. This season we expect a harvest of 35,000,000 bushels, and so far there is every indication that the estimate will be realised. In some districts the returns will not be so high as were expected, but taking the State as a whole I think we shall get the 35,000,000 bushels. If that proves to be so, the

State will continue to flourish and doubtless the Treasurer will fully realise his £34,000 surplus. We have been informed by the newspapers—and the information may be accepted as reliable—that very dry conditions have been experienced in the Eastern States. That being so, it will be Western Australia's opportunity to advertise its resources in those States. Land and estate agents are receiving numerous inquiries from the Eastern States and the Minister for Lands has told us he is inundated with inquiries from people wishing to acquire land here. Consequently the loss of the Eastern States will be our gain, and we should take full advantage of the opportunity to show Eastern State farmers what we have to offer in the way of land for wheat production. While Western Australia is enjoying such prosperity, a great deal of money will be lodged in the banks. I am informed that all the banking institutions now operating in this State are administered from the Eastern States. Until recently we had the Western Australian Bank, but that has been amalgamated with the Bank of New South Wales. South Australia has its Bank of Adelaide, and Victoria has its Bank of Victoria but Western Australia no longer has any purely local bank. If application is made to a Perth bank for accommodation, it has to be referred to Melbourne and some time elapses before the applicant knows whether it will be granted. With a good season in Western Australia and light harvests in the Eastern States, the banks may call up all the money possible in Western Australia to finance Eastern States requirements.

Mr. Griffiths: They are doing it already.

Mr. BROWN: Possibly they are.

Mr. Angelo: Do not forget that up to the present they have been lending money to us.

Mr. BROWN: Still, that is the position.

Mr. Angelo: The aggregate advances made by the banks are considerably higher than they were.

Mr. BROWN: Owing to the banks being controlled from Melbourne, it is necessary to obtain approval from Melbourne before money is advanced for the development of our lands.

Mr. Angelo: In the past they had to find the money in the East.

Mr. BROWN: And it is possible that, owing to a good season here, we shall now have to find the money to help the Eastern States.

Mr. Angelo: That is true federation.

Hon. W. J. George: Our goldfields saved Victoria in the nineties and kept it going.

Mr. BROWN: If we have to assist the Eastern States it will not be altogether advantageous to us. Many of our resources are not yet fully developed, and all the money available is required to assist them. I listened attentively to the remarks of the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) regarding taxation. Something must be radically wrong if the Commissioner of Taxation can put his own interpretation on the Act and illegally levy taxation on the primary producers. The courts have held that the Commissioner's interpretation was wrong and have upset his decision. That being so, it appears that he has been illegally collecting large sums of money for many years. If the people who have paid that money seek refunds, the Treasury receipts from taxation next year may be seriously affected. If the Act is not what it should be, the Government ought to introduce an amendment to make clear what is intended. We have been told that if a man is conducting a large business, or even a farm, it pays him to employ a qualified accountant to prepare his taxation returns. I understand that a business man who employs such assistance saves ten times as much as the fee charged him. The average individual does not know how to make up taxation returns and take advantage of the various deductions allowed. On one occasion I made up my own returns, but did not claim deductions, and I paid much more than I should have paid and received no refund. Many a taxpayer feels that he is being overcharged, but he pays rather than take the trouble to claim a refund. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the Commissioner of Taxation is not getting his full dues in every instance. It would be difficult except at considerable expense, to investigate everybody's affairs to ensure that he had included all his income. The statement of the member for Toodyay that the Commissioner of Taxation has not allowed sufficient deduction for depreciation is serious, because if it affects him, it must affect hundreds of other farmers. I am pleased that the resources of the State are being steadily developed. Wheat undoubtedly will play a most important part in the future prosperity of the State. According to newspaper reports, Western Australia will reap a larger harvest than any other State this season, and I have no doubt that

in the course of a few years that supremacy will be permanently maintained. I take it that South Australia is cultivating every acre of wheat land within its assured line of rainfall. Victoria is so closely settled that it has no more virgin land available for wheat growing. New South Wales possibly may have land yet awaiting development, but nothing like the area still available here. Therefore wheat will play an important part in Western Australia's prosperity. As regards wool the State is advancing by leaps and bounds. We have several millions of sheep, and as our agricultural lands become settled and fenced and the wild dogs are kept down every farmer from Perth to Esperancee will run sheep. In fact, a farmer must have sheep, otherwise he is unable to farm in a husband-like manner. At present there are in the State hundreds of farms in the making, and these in a few years' time will carry sheep. Sheep those farmers must have; otherwise it will be impossible for them to keep weeds down. As to mining I am pleased there is every indication of a large field at Wiluna. If our hopes in that respect materialise, it will be a great thing for Western Australia. I may point out that if buildings and public works are required at a mining town, the Government must be careful in spending money. History repeats itself, and mining must in time go down everywhere. Expensive buildings and works constructed in a mining centre may in course of time involve the State in large losses. Timber cannot last for ever, though our South-West is extremely fortunate in possessing such huge forests. The demand for timber is world-wide, and eventually there must be a great scarcity of that commodity. Unlike wheat, a crop of timber will not grow in a year: young trees take a long time to mature. Our railways, it is most pleasing to know, are paying, and that fact reflects great credit on the administration. Western Australia has more miles of railway per head of population than any other Australian State, or indeed any other country in the world. Many of our lines open up new country; and if the Commissioner of Railways is able to make them pay after they have been working for only a short time, it is highly creditable to him and his staff. For the sake of the development of our agricultural lands, railways should be constructed as quickly as possible. The amount set down on the Estimates for additions to opened railways is only £500. Many

new works, I understand, are provided out of Loan funds; but a certain amount of money must be expended on existing lines to meet the convenience and the needs of the public. Several railway stations should be built, and various sheep yards should be erected, and a number of sidings should be fenced; but the Commissioner says he has no money for those purposes. If all the demands in question are to be met out of the £500 of the Estimates, there is no prospect of much needed conveniences being provided in the near future. Pingelly is one station that requires attention. The railway revenue there is increasing, and yet the accommodation provided for the public is cruel. To stand on the Pingelly platform and wait an hour or two for a train in the early morning is an experience which would convince any Minister that Pingelly needs a new station promptly. I hope the Loan Estimates will make provision for such a work. Moreover, stations are needed in various other parts of the State. Much has been said about our Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Stileman. When I read his report on the Fremantle harbour extension and the new railway bridge, I could not but regard it as a masterly production. I only regret that Western Australia did not possess an Engineer-in-Chief of Mr. Stileman's calibre years ago. Had that been the case, many thousands of pounds would have been saved to the country. We are told that Mr. Stileman, during the short time he has been here, has submitted recommendations which have resulted in the saving of thousands of pounds. That being so, I must congratulate the Premier on having engaged Mr. Stileman. The Engineer-in-Chief has already submitted various comprehensive schemes. It has been asked why Mr. Stileman interferes with our railways, and what they have to do with him.

Mr. Angelo: He is in favour of the Brookton-Armadale line.

Mr. BROWN: Apart from that point Mr. Stileman has laid down a thoroughly comprehensive scheme of railway construction. Not long ago I introduced a deputation to the Minister for Railways, then acting as Premier, and the Minister said on that occasion that it was a pity Western Australia had not had a comprehensive railway scheme laid down years ago, as it would have meant the saving of hundreds of miles of line with no diminution of transport facilities. The railways to the north of Perth, to my thinking, run in the

right direction; but some of the lines south of Perth, and particularly those in the Great Southern district, run in the wrong direction. The goods carried over them either must be run to the goldfields, or must connect with the Great Southern line and be run back many miles. A comprehensive railway scheme entered upon years ago would have obviated great losses. It is certain that our railways now carry our products over many unnecessary miles. The Education vote, I am glad to observe, shows an increase of £15,128. In my electorate there has recently been some trouble regarding the closing of schools. In an agricultural centre one man may have a large family, which almost keeps the school going. He leaves the district, and then only five or six children are left at the school. Thereupon it is closed, and the remaining children are without educational facilities. I understand the department consider they can carry on the work of teaching in such cases by correspondence. It is stated that over a thousand children now receive instruction in that way. I do not think, however, that the correspondence system can be satisfactory, generally speaking. It may be satisfactory if the parents are in a position to assist in the teaching, but if they lack either the ability or the time for that the system can hardly prove entirely satisfactory. In some cases it may be satisfactory without parental assistance, but not in the majority of cases. Little schools built in the country should be of a portable nature, and not of expensive construction. They ought to be such structures as can be shifted. Sometimes a removal of five miles would meet a difficulty by enabling a sufficient number of children to attend the school. Members will bear me out in saying that many a country school that to-day is closed cost £500 or more to build. The structures are too substantial, and for that reason their removal is impracticable. Large, expensive brick schools are not desirable in country districts. The Agricultural Bank, we know, has played an important part in Western Australia's development, as also, I admit, have the Associated Banks. The Agricultural Bank is a splendid institution to start a man on the land, but when he has reached a certain stage of progress that bank is not the institution to carry him along. It is then the Associated Banks step in, and to great advantage. Much hardship has been

caused to Agricultural Bank and Industries Assistance Board clients by a certain line of conduct. The Agricultural Bank is frequently blamed for foreclosing, but really it has been too lenient and has lent too much money. If a settler has a bad season he must be carried on by the bank, and yet another bad season means that he gets deeper in the mire. In the end the Agricultural Bank has to give him so many days' or months' notice to reduce his liability, failing which his farm will be sold up. What I object to is that frequently the original selector, the man who for possibly many years did the hard work of pioneering, has to leave the property, which is put up for sale by tender, large sums having been written off by the bank for the benefit of the next comer. If it can be proved that a settler got into difficulties through no fault of his own, but through, say, a bad season, then he should have the opportunity to carry on after the writing-down of indebtedness has been done. The whole fault sometimes lies in the poverty of the land. Another cause of disaster is inexperience on the part of the settler. However, even an experienced farmer may fail through not getting his super at the right time of the year, or through the lack of horses to enable him to put in his crop at the proper season. Thus he goes from bad to worse. In many instances the bank says to such a man, "We can give you no more help; reduce your liability or get out." Tenders are then called for the farm, and sometimes as much as £1,800 or £2,000 is offered by some person, who then goes on the farm while the original settler walks out without a penny. The system favours the man with a little cash in his pocket, and therefore able to take over the liability. On the original settler the system bears harshly. At the same time we have on the land men who will never make a success of farming, and the sooner they get off the land the better. I am glad to know that the Agricultural Department have a live and energetic staff, who are doing splendid work for the industry. The wool inspector and several other inspectors are giving excellent advice to new settlers. I regret extremely that the sheep disease is still with us, a disease which we have not been able to combat, not knowing its real nature.

Mr. Latham: Where is it?

Mr. BROWN: It is called the Beverley disease, and is gradually spreading through

the agricultural districts. A farmer sometimes loses 30 per cent. of his lambs, or 70 or 80 big sheep; and obviously the resulting economic loss is tremendous. I remember our present Minister for Lands once saying that if a pathologist able to investigate the mysterious disease and discover a remedy for it could be secured, it would not matter if the State paid him £5,000 a year—the money would be well spent. If the pathologist has not the necessary appliances in his laboratory, I hope the Minister will render him assistance to overcome that difficulty. I can assure him that the economic loss to the State is very great indeed. It may be that he requires further assistants or experience in other States or in other parts of the world. Should that be so, the Minister should look ahead and enable the officer to make the necessary inquiries. It will be money well spent. There is another matter to which I desire to refer. I do not wish to cast any reflection upon the Minister for Lands, because I feel sure that he is doing the best he can, according to his own ideas and principles. I agree with him in his contention that we should give our own British people the work that is obtainable. The position, however, arises, that we have a migration policy. I do not know whether we are in control of it or whether the Federal authorities are in control. The fact remains that many Italians are coming to Western Australia. Some of them are splendid men with the axe. They go into the back country and take clearing contracts. The man who gives the work to them can rest assured that it will be done. Now, however, the Minister has issued a decree that, in order that our own people may obtain this class of work, Agricultural Bank clients are forbidden to engage any of these foreigners. As a result, much work has been held up. Often farmers have to send down to the State Labour Bureau or other employment agencies and have to take men who are without experience. Some of them have never lived in tents, nor do they possess any tools. The farmer has to provide them with the necessary tools and food supplies as well, and then put the men on the job. Irrespective of what the men are paid, none of the men of the type I describe can make the job pay. As a result they leave the work after a little while and the clearing is not done. The effect of this is to put a stop to much development that should be going on. If we do not want foreigners in this State, we should not allow them to land.

On the other hand, if we allow them to land, should we deny them the right to live? If the Minister carries out his policy, 90 per cent. of the clearing work that should be done by Agricultural Bank clients will not be done. The farmers will not be in a position to get the work done. The clearers will not be available. I have never engaged one of these foreigners in my life. I have always obtained the best results from local men. Every time I have had to get men from a distance, the experience has been unsatisfactory and work has been left undone. That is the position that arises now. I have been told on the best of authority that these foreigners are not undercutting the white workers. I have information that the men ask for the full rate of wages.

The Premier: I have direct evidence that some of them have worked for their tucker or 10s. a week.

Mr. BROWN: Was that from the farmers direct?

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. W. J. George: That practice is decidedly wrong.

Mr. BROWN: I was speaking of matters as they relate to my own constituency and I can say that the Premier's statement is wrong to that extent.

The Premier: There is no doubt about my information. I caused investigations to be carried out by an officer of the Criminal Investigation Department.

Mr. Thomson: How many cases were investigated?

The Premier: There were 15. It was ascertained that every one of the men had started work for tucker, and afterwards had received 10s. a week. Every case that was investigated resulted in clear proof being obtained.

Mr. BROWN: That may have been from the contractor. I know farmers who have had to pay full wages for the clearing.

The Premier: The men I refer to were working as farm labourers, not as clearers.

Mr. BROWN: I was talking about clearers.

The Minister for Mines: And the same thing occurs in connection with clearing. One Italian takes the contract at full rates, but he employs five cousins or friends for practically nothing.

Mr. BROWN: I do not believe in that sort of thing. It has been stated that farmers are getting contract clearing done for nothing and are making money out of the advances allowed by the Agricultural Bank.

I do not think that statement is correct, nor would it be right for farmers to act in that way. Any person who has had experience knows what the position is. If we put new chums on to clearing work with the axe, we know that they cannot carry out the job. If capable Italians are willing to take the work, there is no bother about it. If farmers are to be debarred from employing them, many will be in difficulties. I know one man who could not get his clearing done this year. Many of these foreigners are good workers, but some of them are not of that type. They cannot go into the back country and put up with the hardships. They have not any tools with which to carry on the job.

Mr. Chesson: You do not suggest that they want many tools for that work.

Mr. BROWN: But the farmer has to provide food, valued at from £10 to £20, to enable these men to work on the job. Yet, after he goes out there in the course of a week or two, he finds the men have cleared out and none of the work has been done. I am sorry to mention it, but that has occurred with white workers as well. I have no time for foreigners and we should undoubtedly give work that is available to our own British subjects. At the same time we must recognise that we have admitted the foreigners to our shores. Is there no law by which we can prevent them from coming to Western Australia?

The Minister for Mines: We cannot do so under any State law.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is a Federal matter.

Hon. W. J. George: Some of these people cannot speak a word of English.

The Minister for Mines: The Federal authorities can submit them to the education test.

Hon. G. Taylor: Any language will do.

Mr. BROWN: We know what the position is in America. In the early days they imported negroes from Africa but later on many lives were lost before the nigger slaves were freed. To-day those negroes have multiplied until there are millions of them in America. Yet the American people do not deny them the right to work. They are natives of the United States.

The Minister for Lands: They are natural born citizens of the United States.

Mr. BROWN: The trouble in America is that the population has increased to about 110,000,000, and the authorities there can see that, at the rate of natural increase, America will soon be overpopulated, so that

there will not be room for the white races. As a result America has restricted migration, and people from Central Europe are not allowed admittance. We have open spaces in Australia that have to be settled and Australia is practically the only country to which these migrants can come. They are not black; they are white. It is possible that they will make just as good settlers as the British. They are steady people and splendid workers.

The Premier: Splendid workers and very cheap. That is the advantage.

Mr. BROWN: I do not know about that. Many of them have been employed on the mines. Have they not done good work there?

Mr. Latham: I have never heard it said that the Central Europeans secured work on the mines because theirs was cheap labour.

Mr. Panton: No. There is an active union on the goldfields to control employment.

The Premier: There is a lot the hon. member does not know regarding the method of employment on the mines.

Mr. Latham: That may be so.

Mr. BROWN: The position is peculiar, because many of the Italians are of a splendid type. I know that there are some undesirable foreigners who come here. We must remember that the desirable type of Italian fought against our common foe in the Great War. They fought for our liberty.

The Premier: The hon. member should remember that they are not all Italians that come here. There are all kinds of people, Greeks and a fine mixture too.

Mr. Heron: And not all the Italians are good men, either.

The Premier: There are some Greeks who open fish shops and we could do well without them.

Mr. BROWN: I know the people who are referred to will not do the hard work, but there are others who go into the bush and put up with all the hardships that confront them there. The Hindoos, I believe, will not do anything but hawking. The Greeks start fish shops, but the Italians I refer to go into the bush and help to develop our State. My belief is that if they are not desirable, we should enter an emphatic protest against any of these foreigners coming here in the future.

The Premier: I have written half a dozen letters to the Federal Government along those lines.

Mr. BROWN: With no result?

The Premier: No.

Hon. W. J. George: Who stops the Chinese from coming here?

The Premier: I do not.

Hon. W. J. George: Someone does.

The Premier: The language test that is applied by the Federal authorities was aimed at Asiatics only, not at Europeans.

Mr. BROWN: As a matter of fact, there are Chinamen coming in, so that they are not being stopped. I am in favour of a White Australia. I would be sorry to see our lands occupied by Asiatics. We should see that our own white people are catered for. In conclusion I am pleased to note that our finances are in such a flourishing condition and I hope that will continue. If we have such bountiful seasons as we have had during the last four or five years, there is bound to be a great future before Western Australia. I will deal with other matters to which I desire to refer when we come to the items. When the Loan Estimates are before us I will discuss the question of new railways that have been proposed because I am particularly keen on a line being constructed to Kalbarin as soon as possible. I also wish to pay a tribute to the comprehensive scheme that was compiled by our Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. Stileman), for I believe it will be of benefit to the whole of Western Australia.

**HON. W. J. GEORGE** (Murray-Wellington) [5.12]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat has delivered a lecture to us regarding Italians. I merely wish to say that during my long connection with the South-West, and with the timber trade as well, I came across some very fine Italian workers. I have never employed any myself. On the other hand I found that many of them could not speak a word of English. That has been the cause of any amount of trouble in the past. I certainly think that while quite a number of the nations in Southern Europe provide good workers, men who can be relied upon to work hard and who may be regarded as desirable. Still we should see that those who come to Australia, and more particularly to Western Australia, are able to make themselves understood and to understand the English language. The Premier is to be congratulated upon the ingenious way in which he dealt with the finances during his Budget speech. That question has been dealt with by my Leader in part, and I believe other members of the Opposition will deal with the matter still further. I shall not do more than speak generally in connection with the Estimates.

I wish to draw the attention of the Government and of the House to the fact that the great South-West is now slowly coming to be appreciated, not only by the people of this State, but by those living on the eastern side of the continent. We have some of the finest land that is to be found in Australia. I do not know of any that is better. I can give instances of fine land in Victoria and New South Wales—I do not know much about Queensland—but we can produce evidence here to show that we have land that is equal to the best to be found in any other State of Australia. The trouble we have in the South-West is that there is too much water. If we could get rid of some of it, it would release an immense area of land that could be settled and would allow for closer settlement. At present it is not available, because of the need of drainage. I was glad to learn some time ago that the survey of the South-West as far as Bunbury, which I as Minister for Works started, is now practically completed and, I believe, under the consideration of the Government. I can assure them that if there is any assistance that, from my experience of the South-West I can render them or their engineers, I shall be only too glad to give it. If the Government would provide even less than half the money that has been spent on group settlement, and take in hand the drainage in the area I have referred to, they could settle over 10,000 families, each with more than a fair chance of making good by growing potatoes, oats and other commodities that we require. Various Governments have put in hand small drainage schemes in accordance with the funds available. Those schemes, it might be said, have been put in in penny numbers, and I have known instances of water being taken off one man's land and deposited on another man's land lower down. That was because there was not sufficient cash available for a big scheme. However, we have reached the time when it is up to the Government to see what they can do about a scheme on a much larger scale. Coming to the question of main roads, it is easy to criticise the methods of those carrying on the work. However, it is early yet, and their task is so big that I think it much better to do what we can to encourage them. But I wish to draw the attention of the Minister to one or two phases of the work. A few months ago there was a controversy because

the Minister started some Federal aid roads on the day labour system, and gave reasons why that was preferable. I think he rather emphasised the point that he was justified in putting this work in hand by day labour instead of by contract. Sub-section 4 of Section 9 of the schedule of the Federal Aid Roads Acts reads as follows:—

The method of execution shall be by contract, except that where the Minister of the State considers that tenders received for the execution of the work are unsatisfactory or that execution by day labour would be more economical and/or expeditious and so informs the Minister the Minister may if he is satisfied that action has been taken by the State to ensure that the work will be carried out according to approved methods of construction in which modern plant is utilised to the fullest extent approve of the execution of the work in whole or in part by day labour.

That lays down unmistakably that the Federal Government require the work to be done by contract, but that if in exceptional circumstances the State Minister is of opinion that the contract system would not be suitable, he can put his case to the Federal Minister and, if the Federal Minister agrees, the work shall be carried out by day labour. But the State Minister cannot do that until he has first got the permission of the Federal Minister. It is just as well that that should be known. There are one or two other things respecting main roads that I wish to bring under the Minister's notice. I can show him where injustice is being done. The Main Roads Board claim the right to go upon any man's land and, without compensation, take therefrom any material suitable for road making. They can fell trees and cut through his fences in order to reach the material they want. They may have to go through cultivated land, and may not only cause damage to his farming operations, but may leave his fences open and so permit his stock to escape. In some instances in the South-West they have taken a certain portion of the land from the owner, and they claim that they have power to do that without compensation. If the land were in the native bush and uncleared, there would not be much damage done; but many of the roads they are making, go through farms that have been settled for many years and on which money has been expended for clearing and cultivating and fencing. That land, through years of work, has become greatly enriched and of improved value.

It does not seem fair to take away from a man part of his frontage on a road without paying him compensation for the labour he has put into the improving of his property. There should be some means by which he could be compensated, not largely, but at least fairly, for what has been taken from him. It may be argued that the making of a good road is of advantage to him; but it must be remembered that the benefit he gets from the road is comparatively small. The benefit of the road as a whole is to the general population, and it should be for the general population to make good any damage done to a man's property by the operations of the board. As to the taking of material, I know of one case that is now under consideration. The board went through a man's land and took from him his gravel. It was not merely for the road in front of his place, but to be used on miles of road along the frontages of other men's places. When a man buys land he has to take the good and the bad, and if there be any value in the timber or the gravel on that land, surely it should be to the advantage of the man himself, to enable him to recoup some of the inevitable losses he made in the early pioneering stage. That is a point the Minister might well consider with a view to seeing whether something cannot be done to rectify the injustice. Here is another aspect, one in which the local road boards suffer. If the State is doing the work by day labour, and the men have to go over the side roads to get their gravel or stone from the hills, the State holds itself responsible for leaving those roads in good condition. But if the work is let out by contract, the State contends that it is not responsible in any shape or form for the damage done to the side roads. Along the Bunbury road are side roads that have been very severely damaged by motor lorries bringing down material for the main road. To my mind, whoever causes the damage should be made pay for it.

Hon. G. Taylor: Should put the road in order again.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: That is so. If the Main Roads Board when doing the work by day labour can put the side road right again, I cannot see any logic in the contention that if they let out the work by contract, the responsibility for damage is not theirs. It has been said that if one of the conditions of the contract pre-



scribed that the side roads must be put right by the people damaging them, the contract price would be higher. However, in my view the responsibility is on the Main Roads Board to see that the damaged roads are restored, whoever may have to do it. As for the local road boards, their funds are scarcely adequate for them to attend to the by-roads they have to look after, indeed, are not sufficient to do more than effect temporary repairs. It will be admitted that to throw this extra burden on the road boards of putting the side roads in order is altogether too much. Whether the work is done by day labour or by contract, the responsibility in my opinion still rests on the Government. I have not seen the form of tender or the conditions under which tenders are called for the work, but I was in the South-West yesterday when I met a number of small contractors, men who farm and are accustomed to road work, having quite effective road plants. Had they not done that work in the early days they could not have carried on. From the conversations I had with several practical men down there, it seems to me the conditions will have the effect of putting up the price for the work much higher than it should be; for the contractors are hedged about with this and that responsibility, and so they have to make provision against it. If those conditions are so stringent, I think it will be found that, instead of the work being done by contract, it will be done under the method the Minister seems to favour, namely, day labour.

The Premier: The conditions are laid down by the Commonwealth people.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: Yes, I am not complaining either of the State Government or of the Main Roads Board. I am pleased to understand that the Goldfields water supply scheme is entering into a wider phase of activity, and is being used for the supply of water to people in the country. I rejoice to find that as the consumption from the goldfields is diminishing, as it is bound to do until new mines are found, which I hope will be the case, the agricultural areas are taking the water, and the Government are doing their best to give it to them at a price they can afford to pay. So far as funds permitted, the Mitchell Government did their best in that direction. At times we may have been considered to be pretty hard, but I dare say this Government may have similar charges laid against them from time to time. I congratulate them upon the fact

that they have taken the view that, where it is possible to supply water to agriculturists, they have done so at as reasonable a price as possible. I was sorry to have been away the other evening when the matter of the metropolitan water supply was discussed in the House. I do not propose to say much about it now. It would be useless to do so unless I had the papers and the files here to refer to, and from whence to quote instances. In August, 1920, the Mitchell Government were prepared to put their hands to the big scheme that is now being carried out. The plans were thoroughly examined by the Engineer-in-Chief and the other engineers. Some people make out that the Engineer-in-Chief did not see the plans. That is wrong. The only plans he did not see were those of the unfortunate filter beds. I sent the other plans to him myself. My notes on the file will show that. He sent the plans back and gave estimates, but his reply did not satisfy me. There is a minute on the file much to this effect. "This is no good to me." We wanted to know whether the estimates and plans were right, so that we might proceed with the scheme. I had understood that the filter bed plans were seen by the then Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Thompson, but he says he did not have them, and I take it that that is so. In those days we had no money. I applied to the Treasurer for the cash, but he could not give me any. I was, therefore, unable to get on with the work, and as a result have been abused for not carrying it out. God knows, I had enough of it.

Hon. G. Taylor: You had plenty of it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You gave the people better water than they are getting now.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: I wish we could have got to the bottom of the newspaper criticism, but that was impossible, because we do not know who was pulling the wires. In some respects Providence has been good to me, and when I know that I am doing my job I am able to stand up to it. I have done so in other parts of the world. I have always endeavoured to do my job. If the then Premier had given me the money we would have carried out this important work, but he was unable to do so. The Leader of the Opposition, when Premier, made this clear at North Perth. Trouble was made by someone because he had ambitions which he thought might be fulfilled. Then we gave the people water from the bores. Had it not been for the Osborne Park bore, Perth would have been short of water. The people

would have been unable to get any more than a greatly reduced supply. In the archives of the department will be found not one but a dozen analyses made by reputable men concerning the water from the bores. A certain amount of discolouration came through with the water. There always will be discolouration in water whether it comes from bores or from a hills supply, until proper devices are provided for purifying purposes. In the big cities of England huge filter beds have been built. Every drop of water that goes to the people passes through these beds. The beds are used in rotation, and the water is filtered through so that it is cleared of all matter. In Birmingham, where I had my business training and served my apprenticeship, an immense area was covered by filter beds. There were three compartments each covering so many acres. One was used in one week, another was left idle, and the third was being cleaned. When I was there water was brought from the Welsh hills. This was supposed to be the purest supply in Great Britain. The water now comes from Lake Windermere. Birmingham was then not a very large city. When I lived in it some 50 years ago it had a population of only one million. To-day it contains two or three million people, so that a tremendous population has to be served with water. The authorities there know their business. I tell the Government, and others who care to listen, that until it is possible for us to put down filter beds to filter our water, it will never be free from the deposits that come from the pipes. While I was Minister for Works we had occasion to pull up 12in. pipes in Barrack-street. These were laid when I was building the first scheme in 1890-91. The pipes were coated with Dr. Angus Smith's composition and after all those years they were found to be as clean as my hand. In a country like Western Australia, with all its changes of climate, and its great heat in the summer, the surface of the ground from which the water is drawn becomes very friable. Material then comes through the pipes in solution. One has only to visit the big Mundaring reservoir and take a boat to find this stuff in suspension in the water in big volumes. The same thing applies to the Victoria reservoir. The first time we cleaned out the reservoir in King's Park, we spread the sediment on the grass in the park. When it dried it took the form of hard clay and was from ½in. to ¾in. thick. A certain amount of rust may occur in pipes, but it is well known amongst

engineers that the cast iron pipe is the very best sort of pipe to resist rust. With steel pipes it is found that the metal comes off in flakes. If the pipes are treated with Dr. Smith's preparation it makes them practically rust proof. The solution that I have referred to is drawn into the mains, and so long as the water is flowing it is carried through the pipes. If the water is stopped at any time, through a breakage in the pipes, or some other cause, the sediment is deposited. In the old days there were in our reticulation service in Perth quite a number of dead ends. It was part of my business as Minister for Works to connect up those ends, and I gave instructions to that effect. The result of linking up those ends was an immediate improvement in the condition of the water. In the department to-day there are still in use I believe the scrapers that I designed to be passed through the big mains, so that with the pressure from the Victoria reservoir the pipes should be kept clean. We used to call these appliances torpedoes. I made this apparatus regularly at the Swan Foundry for the use of the Perth waterworks, and I believe it is being used to-day. Engineering science has progressed during the last 60 years, but the main principles have not changed, and never will change, because they are immutable. I was sorry that the Minister for Works, in his remarks the other day, did not stand up to the bigness of his position. He is a good man and possesses many good points. I know he is prejudiced in some directions, but he is a very good administrator in most respects. He complained about the water supply of the house in which he lived. He did not own the house—I believe it was the property of his mother-in-law—and that is one reason perhaps why he did not have a vote for the Legislative Council. I am sorry the Minister does not rise to the occasion. He holds a big position. When I held it I did my best to fill it, and I hope he will fill it better than I did. I will tell members what arose in connection with the Minister's house. I understand that the water was supplied to the establishment by means of a connection with a 3in. main off the street. When this was originally tapped a ¾in. pipe was connected with it. A ½in. pipe was then put in to join up with this ¾in. pipe. Then came another genius who connected a ¾in. pipe to the ½in. pipe. He connected this with the cottage in which the Minister lived. The job was very well done. Eight ¾in.

taps were then put on to the  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. pipe. Was it any wonder that the water service was not a good one? The files will show what we did. We put a 6 in. main along the other street and tapped the supply from there. The strange thing was that we still had complaints. I sent a special officer down to see the lady in charge of the house. She said she knew nothing about any bother, and that everyone was satisfied with the supply. It was all very well for the Minister to say that he could not get a bath. It is also very well for him to say he cannot get a vote for the Legislative Council. Any man with determination can get anything he wants. If it had been anyone else but the Minister, I would have thought he was joking, but he cannot joke. If I had thought he was joking, I would have accepted it as a joke. I hope that will be the last word I shall have to say on the matter. So far as the big scheme is concerned, I have no doubt Perth will be perfectly satisfied with it. It has been well thought out, and the department has been considering it for many years. I will not weary the House by telling members the various engineers who have been associated with it. The scheme was thoroughly investigated and in Mr. Ritchie, of Melbourne, we had one of the best engineers we could get from the other States. He was here for three weeks and went thoroughly into the matter. He was a well paid man and knew his job. He suggested various alterations, some of which were adopted while some were not. When they were adopted the plans and the reasons for adopting them were sent to him. At that time the Engineer-in-Chief, (Mr. Thomson) was in the other States, and he had instructions to consult Mr. Ritchie about the matter. If people suggest that the Mitchell Government did not do their best in regard to the scheme, they do not know what they are talking about. Even if they differ from a man in politics they should respect him for his work, and for the sincerity with which he is trying to do what should be done. The question of group settlement is a very big one. I have no doubt the Minister for Lands will grapple it and do his best, if there is any blame to be apportioned, to apportion it fairly. I have done a great deal of work in trying to assist in putting things straight. I am proud to say I have been able to put quite a lot of things straight, merely by seeing the officers of the group settlement department and presenting

to them views that they could not get through the men they have in the field. Out of something like 200 cases, only in one instance did the department stick to its views, and in that case it was right. I had the pleasure of telling the man concerned that he had lied to me, and that he deserved all he got. I had a heart to heart talk with the Minister, and told him that any help I could give would be freely given. Any man who refuses to help in a case of that kind, merely because there is a different party in office, is not worthy of being in Parliament or in the State. The group settlement scheme represented a big idea. In carrying out this big idea, and this new idea as it was, pushed as we were by the British Government, we had to indulge in some haste. We had to pick up men, and to get hold of men who were capable of tackling the work and dealing with it. It is not possible at a moment's notice to find perhaps 80 or 100 men fit to take up a position as foreman and to lead and guide others. I remember in 1888 when the big railway construction policy was started in Victoria. Contracts were let here, there and everywhere, and it became necessary to find experts to handle the work. Those men could not be found, and naturally there was a lot of trouble with the contractors. I could tell the House a good deal about it. They had the same trouble over there that we have since experienced over here. I do not say that all group settlers are not a good class of men, but there are many good men amongst them. At the same time, those men require guiding, watching and schooling. Some received assistance of that nature, but they did not get enough, and there have been cases where some of the higher officials, because of the pressure of work, satisfied themselves by attending to the most important matters and allowing smaller grievances to grow up. I told the Minister what I thought was one of the faults of the group settlement business, and that was that the scheme had got to the file stage, and that the man who should be out in the field was confined to an office dealing with files which I am sure the Premier and other Ministers hate as much as I hated them when I was a Minister. However, I believe the Minister is doing his best, and is wielding a strong hand. More power to him, especially if he succeeds in putting things right! I believe they will come right. We have to move; we must get population, and even if we do lose half a million or a million it will

matter not tuppence; we shall have settled a number of people and made them good West Australians. That is what we are trying to do, and what we must succeed in doing. The Minister has appointed a board of competent men. Mr. Hewby we know to be a first-class business man. No better man than Mr. R. H. Rose could have been chosen. He knows his job, and he works. The third man I do not know, but I understand he is nearly as good, if not as good a man as Mr. Rose.

The Minister for Lands: He is a worker.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: That is all we want. There must not be recrimination about the mistakes of the past. Ministers of to-day have to deal with the problem, and it is more important to the State that we should put the whole affair on a proper footing than to attempt to gain some glory by exposing someone as a fool, or something of that sort. I am sure the Minister is trying to do his best, and if I can help him I shall certainly do so without seeking publicity. I never rush to a newspaper when a matter has to be put right; I go to the Minister in the hope of getting the subject adjusted. Many references have been made to railway construction. I am pleased to find that the Government are satisfied that Western Australia must have more railways in order to open up the country and make it available for settlement. The only railway the construction of which I desire to urge is that in which the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) is interested—it will go to Yorkrakine. The Mitchell Government were responsible for the survey of that line, and I should have been pleased to authorise its construction. At this stage, however, I would prefer to see the Trans-Australian railway come right down to Merredin, branch off there and proceed through Yorkrakine to the Helena Valley and join up with our system at Midland Junction. If at any time the Trans railway should take the place of the goldfields line, what I suggest would be of great advantage to the State, and would mean a great deal in the saving of transshipment. I remember the trouble that existed many years ago in the Old Country, when railways were first built. There were two gauges, one of 7ft. belonging to the Great Western Railway, and the other of 4ft. 8½in., which was the gauge of the other companies. When the traffic began to develop the Great Western Company found that they could not carry on their business without frequent changes from the broad to the narrower gauge, unless they

put down a third rail. This they did, but afterwards they abandoned the 7ft. gauge and scrapped their plant and resorted to the 4ft. 8½in. gauge. To-day the engineers are wondering whether it would not have been wiser to have kept the 7ft. gauge and allowed the other companies to join in. If we could get the Trans. railway to follow the route I have indicated, and the present 3ft. 6in. goldfields line to remain, a mere glance at the map will show the advantage, as there are so many junctions, and the same trucks could go down straight to the port. If, however, the present main line is discarded, and the 4ft. 8½in. line is built, then at each junction transshipment must take place and it will be a very costly work. A number of schemes have been suggested for overcoming the difficulty of the changes, but not a single one has proved practical. There were many ingenious ideas put forward, but because of the knocking about the rolling stock would be subjected to in running, it was considered that it would render unsafe the contraptions that would have to be used. I should like to see the Yorkrakine line built. It is six or seven years since I was there—I was never there before that period—and I rejoiced to see the way the settlers were working. They were experiencing great difficulty in getting their material from the railway, and carting their produce back to the line. But those people were working with stout hearts. The district is one of the most fertile I have ever seen in any part of the world, and the people there are deserving of railway communication. I repeat, however, that I would prefer to see the Trans. line go through that country. If that is not possible, I hope the Government will authorise the building of a line on the narrow gauge. One can hardly criticise the working railways to-day because they have such a lot of difficulties to contend with. There is, however, a matter on which I wish to say a few words, and that is the position of the Perth railway station. There has been some controversy in the newspapers about removing the station, and suggestions have been forthcoming as to what should be done. There is no doubt the time has arrived when the problem should be grappled and dealt with. I consider that the present station has served its purpose, and served it well, but we cannot close our eyes to the fact that it is retarding the progress of the city. The goods yards should certainly be removed from their present position. A number of schemes

have been suggested and there is one which the late Sir Winthrop Hackett favoured strongly and which, of course, his newspaper supported. That was to take away the goods yards and to build a viaduct beginning just beyond the West Perth station and carrying it through the city to the other side of East Perth. Having that in view, I was responsible for the building of the two existing bridges over William-street and Beaufort-street on a design that could be worked into the viaduct scheme. The second storey of the existing railway station would then have provided the station offices required to deal with the traffic.

Mr. Thomson: You would still carry the passenger traffic underneath those bridges.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: No, it would be carried over the viaduct, which would begin and end at places that were indicated on plans that were then prepared. Objections were raised to the shifting of the goods yards and the principal ground was that such removal would add so much to the distance that merchants had to haul their goods and produce. Whatever basis that objection had at that time, it does not exist to-day. The distances still remain, but the means of overcoming them are much better. With the motor lorries that we have now we know it is possible to convey goods from Fremantle to Perth without difficulty, and an extra half mile or so that might be involved as the result of the removal of the goods yards will not now count and need not be considered. I hope that the Government, during their term of office, will find opportunities to go thoroughly into the scheme and at any rate make a start with it and so enable their successors to carry it on. We started a number of things in our time, and the present Government have carried them on. I am sorry the Minister for Works is not here because I desired to draw his attention to the matter of the regulations affecting the taxi cars and charabancs along the Perth-Fremantle route. I do not know that he is particularly responsible for the regulations, but as he is the Minister in control, he must take all the abuse and knocks, just as I did when I was Minister for Works. There is no doubt that the cars have taken traffic from the railways. At the same time they have afforded a great convenience to the people. The cars take people almost from their doors and land them at their business premises in Perth or Fremantle, and unless they were supplying a need, it is patent they could not have been successful. What I wish to in-

press on the Minister is the fact that he is dealing not merely with the taxi people, but he is dealing with tens of thousands of ratepayers who live outside the boundaries of the city and whose convenience has been served by the cars. Therefore, every obstacle or restriction that he puts in the way of the smooth operation of those vehicles, is not so much injuring the owners as he is inconveniencing the people whom we represent, and who have a right to be considered. I am not going into details about the routes, but I merely wish to say that, my car having broken down the other day, I came to the city by taxi and was not able to pick up one at the corner of the road in which I live; I had to proceed 50 yards along the road where the taxi waited for me. That seems to me to be absurd and it is not serving any good purpose. We know that this has been done in the interests of the tram that runs along that road, but surely the people have the right to please themselves as to whether they use the tram or the taxis. The regulation which provides that a taxi shall not pick up passengers at a certain spot is not calculated to improve a man's temper if he has to travel that distance before he can board a taxi. We have to remember that the railways are in the same stage to-day that they have always been in. If the taxis and charabancs are conveniencing and helping the people surely to goodness the question of their affecting the railways does not come into the picture at all! I commend that suggestion to the Minister in all friendliness. Let me tell members a little story. Very soon after the taxis began to run I was riding in one of them, and a lady got in at Cottesloe bound for Perth. She said, "These taxis are fine things. I live only two minutes' walk from the road but a mile from the railway station. I take a taxi and am landed in Perth only a minute's walk from Foy and Gibson's, and then I am set down again at Cottesloe within two minutes' walk of my home." Why should not the routes be designed to give convenience to the greatest number of people? I do not know whether or not the taxi men are unionists, but certainly the great bulk of their customers are unionists. We must remember that those people are being inconvenienced and that we have no right to inconvenience them. Whatever we can do to make the thing convenient for the people at large, it is our duty to do. I trust the Government will take that view of it. I sincerely hope that hardy annual, redistri-

bution of seats, will be considered this session. I almost implore the Government to get on with it, for I should like to have a hand in dealing with the scheme when it comes along. Although I have made up my mind to last as many more years as possible, and have even bought a new lot of hats, each calculated to last me for six years. Still I should like to be sure of having a hand in framing the redistribution of seats. I do not think it necessary that I, nor anybody else in fact, should repeat all the arguments in favour of redistribution. Everybody knows that it is required. The only question is as to the best way of doing it. If the Government would put their back into this thing and give us some sort of a scheme, we on this side would do our best to help them.

The Minister for Mines: Let us first have a little modification of the franchise for another place.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: Those in another place would regard themselves as fortunate if they could have somebody of the hon. member's experience to advise them.

The Minister for Mines: Let us give the vote to 200,000 or more who have no say in the Council at present.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: I do not want to repeat the arguments on that proposition, they are so stale. There have been in the newspapers quite a number of little lectures emanating from a gentleman of responsibility who has been travelling through different parts of the world. He tells us all about our loan policy and says he regards us as borrowing too much money. I neither know nor care what the other States are doing in that regard, but if their borrowings have been conducted on the same careful system as has marked our borrowings, and if the money they have borrowed has been expended after the same careful investigation that we give to such transactions, I have not the slightest opposition to their borrowing still further. I have such faith in this, our own, State that I am sure it can carry any obligation our statesmen may undertake. What we cannot carry and do not want to carry, but would prefer to see put out of the country, are those confirmed pessimists that are always crying "stinking fish"! We have in Western Australia one of the finest parts of the world. If any man coming here keeps straight, he cannot fail to succeed. Where many of the newcomers drop down is that in seeking social acquaintances they frequent hotel bars, with the re-

sult that presently they think more of drinking than of working. But the man who has his heart in the right place, who will work and who believes in the country and the people in the country, the man broad enough to regard leniently mistakes that may have been made in the past—to a man of that stamp Western Australia is a country good enough to live in, good enough to fight for and good enough to die for if necessary.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [6.6]: Like other members, I wish to congratulate the State upon having arrived at so healthy a condition of affairs. On going through the Estimates submitted by the Treasurer, one cannot but be impressed by the increased revenue the Treasurer expects to receive. What with land tax, income tax, dividend tax, totalisator tax, entertainments tax, stamp duty, probate duty, licenses, land and timber, mining and the rest, he expects an increased revenue of £174,733. And the interest we are to receive on the transferred properties—which is really part and parcel of the Financial Agreement—shows an increase of £10,234. That means that from taxation and from the interest we shall receive from the Federal Government there is to be an increase of £184,967. Then the Treasurer expects to receive an increase from the Metropolitan Water Supply and from Railways and from Tramways. Looking at those various items, one cannot but be impressed with the healthy condition of our finances, and certainly with the healthy condition of the country. On the Address-in-reply debate I said the Premier could well be dubbed "Collier the Lucky." I wish to congratulate him, but more particularly the State, upon having turned the corner, and upon having arrived at the happy position of being able to budget for a surplus of £34,199. If the Financial Agreement goes through, with the amount he is placing to the suspense account, we should finish up the year with a surplus of £384,199. To my knowledge that is the best position any Treasurer of Western Australia has been in since I first came to the House in 1914. It shows the progress the State is making, and it demonstrates that the wise policy of land settlement and development that was inaugurated years ago is now beginning to bear substantial fruit. I do not agree with the member for Murray-Wellington (Hon. W. J. George) on the question of group settlement. We have spent over £6,000,000 upon group settlement. I am in

accord with him when he says we should not deery whoever may have been responsible for the unfortunate position in respect of group settlement. I think the Minister and the Government are to be congratulated upon having faced the position. They have appointed a board that should give satisfaction to the State, if allowed a free hand. I do not know the conditions imposed upon the members of that board; probably the Minister for Lands, when expounding his Estimates, may feel disposed to tell us exactly what scope the board has. I do not think the board's hands should be tied.

The Minister for Lands: Well, I have to take the whole responsibility, and so I must know what is going on.

Mr. THOMSON: Quite right. In my view no other three men have had so great a responsibility placed upon their shoulders. We recognise, of course, that the Minister must have a veto on their actions, because millions of pounds are involved. The member for Murray-Wellington said it did not matter if there were only half a million involved. I am sure the Minister for Lands will be more than satisfied if the loss is not more than double that.

The Minister for Lands: You are quite right.

Mr. THOMSON: I understand from statements that have appeared in the Press that in various parts of the group settlement areas as many as four blocks have been given to one settler. I estimate that anything up to £1,500 or £2,000 has been expended on each of those blocks. The problem the Minister has to solve is in determining the indebtedness to be placed on the shoulders of those men.

The Minister for Lands: Take the Peel Estate; £2,000,000 has been spent upon a little over 200 settlers. You can see what that means!

Mr. THOMSON: It is not humanly possible for those 200 settlers on the Peel Estate to carry the burden. In that instance alone we are faced with a very considerable loss indeed. The chief point to be kept in view is to give the settlers on the groups an opportunity to make good. It will be far better to have one-fourth of the settlers there and have them successful than to maintain the number that is there to-day, not one of them having contributed one penny by way of return for the money expended on the groups.

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

Mr. THOMSON: The duty that has been entrusted to the board is a very important one. The Minister should see that the group settlers are placed on blocks capable of sustaining them, and side by side with that provision should be made for an immediate valuation of the assets. The sooner group settlers are brought under the Agricultural Bank the better it will be for them and for the State. Our work of land settlement generally has been highly successful, which is evidenced by the buoyancy of the State revenue. That is due to the fact that most of the settlers have been made responsible to the Agricultural Bank. The unfortunate position of the groups to-day arises from two facts, firstly, that some of the settlers have been placed on land that has been proved to be unsuitable, and secondly, that attempts have been made to deal with the group settlers as with an army. The individuality of the settlers has not been taken into consideration. I am glad that even at this late stage the policy we advocated at the inception of the scheme has been put into effect, and I hope that satisfactory results will follow. We have a duty to perform to the settlers. The increasing demand for land is certainly gratifying. Never before in the history of the State have eyes been turned to our vacant lands as at present. In the heyday of the goldfields people flocked here in thousands quite unsolicited, because they knew Western Australia offered an opportunity for them to make good. Now we have reached a similar stage in our land development, because we are the only State that has large areas of unalienated Crown land still available. I am anxiously awaiting the presentation by the committee of a comprehensive railway scheme to serve land settlement of the future. If we push out railways into new areas under the migration scheme the State as a whole must benefit. I am not enamoured of the railway scheme suggested by the Engineer-in-Chief. The port of Fremantle must be enlarged, and it would be in the interests of the State to adopt a definite policy of improvement. Judging from the plans and other information submitted to us, the Engineer-in-chief has outlined a scheme that should be beneficial and economical for the working of the chief seaport. If that is adopted, people will know what the Government definitely intend to do regarding the Fremantle bridge. Portions of my district are situated up to 100 miles from the excel-

lent port of Albany, and I am apprehensive regarding the future of that port if some of the statements made can be accepted. Albany is a port which, on the statement of Engineer Buchanan, has possibilities second to those of no other port in the world. It may be possible to get our produce to a seaport at slightly reduced railrage cost, but if by so doing our produce is loaded up with the heavier handling charges of an expensive port, it will be a serious matter. Whatever scheme is adopted, the aim should be to convey our produce to the world's markets in the shortest time and at the cheapest rate, because it must never be forgotten that our produce has to compete in the markets of the world. The railway returns show a credit balance of £34,556. At first glance that appears to be a satisfactory performance on the part of the department and the Government. When we analyse the figures closely, however, it seems that we have gained that position by charging more to loan account and expending less money from revenue. In the Estimates may be found "Charged to loan account" on quite a number of pages. According to one of the returns, in 1923-24 we spent from revenue for construction and equipment of lines open £827,333, and in 1926-27 £643,158. That means £184,175 more was charged to loan account last year than in 1923-24. If we deduct from the £184,175 the credit of £34,556, it is obvious that the position of our railways is worse by £149,619. When the Minister for Railways was speaking in Geraldton recently he referred to the increase of the basic wage and the granting of the 44-hour week to railway men, and said all that had been accomplished without in any way increasing the administrative costs of the railways. I have shown clearly from the Treasury return that the result was obtained by charging more to loan and paying less out of revenue.

The Premier: That is not so.

Mr. THOMSON: The return shows it to be so.

The Premier: It might easily have happened that much more was charged to loan in one year than in another year, because more loan work was done in that year. The principle of charging a particular class of work to loan or revenue has not been changed in any way. In one year we spent £100,000 of loan money on locomotives, and nothing in the previous year. That is one item only.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not arguing on those premises. I am dealing with return No. 15, which distinctly shows that in 1921-22 the expenditure from revenue was £862,515, in 1922-23 it was £862,962, and in 1923-24 it was £827,333. Thus in three years previous to the Labour Party taking office we spent on our railways from revenue an average of roughly £850,000 a year. In 1924-25 the amount dropped to £798,050, in 1925-26 it dropped to £658,134, and last year it went down still further to £643,158. The previous administration provided larger sums out of revenue while the railways were showing a loss, whereas the present Government have been advantaged in having provided a much smaller sum each year out of revenue.

The Premier: That may be so, but I repeat that the principle of charging works to loan or revenue has not been changed. No works are being charged to loan to-day that were charged to revenue three or four years ago.

Mr. THOMSON: No particulars are given, and I can only deal with the figures as I find them. They certainly show that there has been a decided drop in the expenditure from revenue. What the reason may be I do not know, but the fact remains that the expenditure from revenue for the construction and equipment of lines open has been substantially reduced. When I started to quote these figures, I compared the revenue expenditure last year with that of 1923-24. I did not take the two years previous to that, namely, 1922-23, £862,962, and 1921-22 £862,515, which would have afforded a still more striking contrast. I have taken the year that the Treasurer came into office. Even in that year he dropped approximately £40,000. The amount from revenue that was being expended has been decreasing each year until, compared with the year when he took office and to-day, the sum of £184,175 less has been charged to revenue. One can assume therefore that this has been charged up to loan account. If so, that explains why our railways have been administered so beneficially and capably. I am pleased that the Premier is in the happy position of being able to anticipate a 35 million bushel yield during the coming season. Some people believe he was not sufficiently optimistic, and that he should anticipate anything up to 37½ million bushels. We know the excellent harvest we had last year. On many occasions it has been stated that wheat is carried at a loss. It is a remarkable thing that for this year



the months which previously had shown a deficit have shown a surplus. This is due to the larger quantities of wheat carried. The figures dealing with the freight on wheat alone show an increase for last year of £101,086. This was due to the bountiful harvest.

Mr. Griffiths: Up to the 30th June.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes. We all hope that the yield will be between 35 million and 40 million bushels. The Minister for Railways has supplied us with an interesting table. He could not have given us a more startling demonstration of the administrative costs than is afforded by this return. He shows that 197 days of railway running go to pay the wages and salaries, 28 days provide for the locomotives, 30 days for materials and supplies, 10 days for sundry expenses, seven are set apart for relaying tracks and replacements, 90 to meet the interest charges on capital, and there are left 3 days to be retained by the Treasurer for profit. This shows the margin on which we are running our railways. I commend the Government for endeavouring to keep railway charges as low as possible. The railways are the life blood of the State. Some of the claims that have recently been put forward by an hon. member on behalf of the railway employees give us cause for alarm as to what is likely to eventuate if the Arbitration Court grants the claims.

Mr. Kenneally: Are you trying to influence the Arbitration Court?

Mr. THOMSON: If the claims are acceded to we shall be faced with a very serious position. The Government will certainly be obliged to raise railway freights.

Mr. Kenneally: Or abolish the cheap freights on fertiliser.

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member very glibly talks about superphosphates. If it were not for superphosphates, neither the Railway Commissioner nor the Government would be able to pay one-tenth part of the claim he desires to impose upon the Commissioner through the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Kenneally: Is that any reason why established farmers should not pay reasonable freights?

Mr. THOMSON: We hear a great deal about established farmers. I advise the hon. member to be a little more patient and forbearing. Let him remember that the farming community provide ways and means for the carrying on of the State. They are creating and providing the wealth,

and are responsible for the successful financing of the railways. It is easy to talk about established farmers. Many of them are apparently established, but they have big overdrafts. No section of traffic that the railways carry provides a greater return than does super, which is carried at such a cheap rate. Every ton of super that is carried on the railways returns to them over eight tons of back freight. The cheap rate is a very satisfactory investment not only from the point of view of the Commissioner, but from that of the State.

Mr. Kenneally: And the farmer.

Mr. THOMSON: Of course. Many hundreds of men in whom the hon. member claims to be so keenly interested would not have the opportunity of employment that they enjoy to-day, but for the superphosphate that is put into our soil. No doubt the hon. member has a thorough knowledge of everything appertaining to trade unionism and industry in the metropolitan area, but there are other industries and other people in the State that are entitled to consideration. I ask him what would be the position of the railway employees and hundreds of other people if we were suffering from a bad season such as is being experienced by New South Wales and Victoria. Instead of there being only a small number of unemployed, we should be facing a serious financial crisis. The farming community and those who are building up the State have to remain here to see the job through. Quite a large number of those in whom the hon. member is so keenly interested, to see that they get a fair deal, are able to put their hats on, pack a few things in a portmanteau, and be gone in a few hours. They have no responsibility. There is a point up to which it is possible to make claims and requests, but there is such a thing as the last straw. I recognise that the hon. member is putting forward the best case he can for those he represents. We shall be faced with a serious position if these claims are successful. The Commissioner of Railways himself says that it takes 197 days to provide the pay of the railway employees. I think large numbers of the employees are quite satisfied with what they are getting, and that some of them consider the claims put forward are somewhat extravagant.

Mr. Kenneally: Who put you up to speak to the Arbitration Court from the floor of this House?

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member may speak for whom he thinks fit. I am dealing with the railways, an important part of the life blood of the State. No doubt the hon. member has only one desire, namely the claims of one particular section of the community. What will it profit him and many of his fellows if they get the best of awards from the Arbitration Court and have the shortest possible working hours, if the men cannot get any work, and there is none available? Much good will they accomplish if things are brought to such a pass that the industries of the State are not able to function properly. I ask the hon. member to read and carefully weigh the report that was put up by the Tariff Board.

Mr. Heron: We heard that long ago when miners were working for 10s. a day.

Mr. THOMSON: What is the position of the mining industry to-day?

Mr. Heron: It does not arise through the wages paid.

Mr. Chesson: The overhead charges are responsible.

Mr. Davy: Where is the ten-bobber now?

Mr. THOMSON: Most working men will admit that the 10s. they received in those days was just as valuable to the average person as 14s. or 15s. received to-day. In those days a man could get a very decent and comfortable house for 10s. a week. The idea is to get a house for the cost of one day's pay. To-day costs have so increased that a man is not able to get anything like a decent house in the metropolitan area for less than 20s. or 25s. a week. It is all very well to keep on forcing up these charges. The breaking strain must be reached. I sincerely hope that members opposite will exercise a certain amount of discretion. The Premier budgeted for an increase in the railway revenue of £247,772. Of that I venture to say 75 to 80 per cent. will come from agricultural products. I pay him and his Government a tribute for carrying on a vigorous policy of land settlement and development. No Government ever had the opportunities that have been offered to the present Administration, and I am pleased to know they are accepting those opportunities. The Migration and Development Commission have reported favourably on the construction of railways. While the lines are being built employment will be provided for numbers of men, and new lands will be opened up for settlement.

I hope the policy will be successfully carried out, to the benefit of the State. I see that the Arbitration Court is costing £8,575. I am not criticising the bench, but I sometimes wonder whether we are getting value for the money spent, and whether Arbitration Courts as a whole have not been a failure in Australia. According to my analysis of the results, the functioning of the Arbitration Court has materially increased the cost of commodities, and indeed of everything, without benefiting the people as a whole. Honestly, I do not believe the workers generally are much better off, on account of the conditions applying to-day: immediately something is granted to them, the cost of living rises, as it must do. I long for some solution of the problem. In my opinion wages boards should be adopted rather than industrial arbitration. To wages boards impossible demands are not likely to be put up, because such boards consist of men who know the particular industry affected. I regret that the arbitration position as a whole has not been as satisfactory as it might be. Another matter I desire to touch upon is the London Agency. I dealt with the subject on previous occasions, but once again I have to voice a protest, tinged with disgust, against the miserable amount of money expended in providing exhibits for Savoy House in the Strand. Savoy House is Western Australia's shop window in the heart of the Empire, and naturally one would expect that while this State was providing the building it would also make provision for attractively exhibiting some of our products. I greatly regret to learn that last year Western Australia spent £50 on the provision of exhibits, and the magnificent sum of £19 in advertising the possibilities of the State. That is a penny-wise and pound-foolish policy. As, according to the Estimates, we are spending £11,691 in a year on the London Agency—and that is a slight decrease on last year's expenditure—the Committee are entitled to have a report from the Agent-General. Members should know what functions the Agent-General's office performs. On the Table are bundles of departmental reports—Aborigines, Fisheries, Lands, State Children, Lunacy and so forth. Members derive much advantage from perusing such reports at their leisure. Thereby they familiarise themselves with the activities of the various departments. Members are sometimes staggered at the enormous amount of work done by departments without much publicity. As I have said, £11,691

was spent on the upkeep of Savoy House in one year, and yet the Committee do not know what Savoy House is doing. I hope the Premier will see that the Agent-General's office furnishes members with a report of its activities at the close of each year. I am not in any way reflecting upon the present occupant of the office of Agent-General, who is doing the job to the best of his power. In asking for reports I cast no reflection whatever upon that honourable gentleman. I have repeatedly asked for the production of such reports. When I was at Home in 1922, I received a report from the then Agent-General, Sir James Connolly. It made interesting reading.

The Premier: I venture to say that it was more interesting because of the things not to be found in it.

Mr. THOMSON: That interjection shows the necessity for furnishing the Committee with such reports. If a published report should turn out to be more interesting for the things it did not contain, that bears out my argument for the supplying of such reports. We pass the Estimates, and we are entitled to know what is being done in that office towards the functions of government. Now I desire to touch upon Return No. 14 accompanying the Estimates. I have repeatedly stated here that the policy of the Country Party is to place metropolitan utilities in the hands of a metropolitan board of works. I was indeed glad to observe that at a meeting of metropolitan councillors it was decided to bring this matter to a head. According to the same return, the capital cost of the tramways was £983,140, electricity £895,629, water supply £4,103,759, or a total of £5,982,528—approximately six millions sterling. Further I find that these utilities, after providing working expenses, interest charges and sinking fund, show the following profits; tramways £11,791, electricity £4,494, metropolitan water supply £2,310, or a total of £19,595. If our metropolitan utilities were placed under a board of works, results would be much more favourable, and when the enterprises reached the stage of showing a substantial profit the people of the metropolitan area would be entitled to look forward to a reduction of the charges now being levied. But under present conditions, so far as I can judge, the people of the metropolitan area need not look forward to a reduction of those charges. At present the profits made go into Consolidated Revenue, as they must. Thus while the State as a whole may benefit a little from the pro-

vision, there would not be much benefit to the people of the metropolitan area.

Mr. Angelo: Do you call £19,000 a big profit on a capital of six millions sterling?

Mr. THOMSON: No, I do not. My candid opinion is that if a metropolitan board of works could not run those utilities more economically and profitably than is being done or can be done by the Government, the change would be a pity.

Mr. Clydesdale: On what do you base your opinion?

Mr. THOMSON: On what has happened in other places, such as Glasgow, where very good results have been obtained. There is no time more opportune than the present to have the utilities taken over by the people of the metropolitan area. I want to do this Government justice. They are not out to make profits, but to make all charges as low as possible.

Mr. Clydesdale: Do not you think the Government are fortunate in showing a profit at all?

[Mr. Lambert took the Chair.]

Mr. THOMSON: I do not know; other cities show profits. This year's estimated profit, after allowing for all charges, amounts to about £16,000. It is quite possible that the administrative charges might be considerably reduced. In saying this I cast no reflection on Ministers in charge of departments, more especially as it is impossible for any Minister to control practically in person all the departments placed under him. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George), good man as he is, good man as he claims to be, found it impossible to administer personally all the departments under his control.

Hon. W. J. George: The work is fit for two men and a boy.

Mr. THOMSON: It is plain that the actual administration of departments is in the hands of Government officials. So far as I can judge there has been no increase in Ministerial salaries, which remain at £6,200 for six Cabinet Ministers. Sometimes I wonder why the amount has not been increased. It is a glaring anomaly that men carrying the responsibilities of the State should occasionally receive less by way of salary than their under secretaries. I am strongly in favour of the handing over, as proposed, of the utilities in the metropolitan area. For the Fisheries Department a sum of £5,603 is being provided. We have spent a deal of money in the past to obtain harvests on land, but a bountiful harvest awaits us in

the sea. In the past we have been somewhat negligent of this important phase of industry, which admits of development. Certainly the Fisheries Department have done their best with the funds available to them. I would like to draw the Premier's attention to the fact that at a recent interstate conference there was a discussion of plans for the establishment and development of the fishing industry in Australia on an economical and sound basis. At that conference every State was represented except Western Australia. Why was not this State represented? We hold a longer coast line than any other two or three Australian States put together. Certainly we have as much coast line as Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria put together; and yet it was not considered worth while to send over a responsible officer to take part in the deliberations of so important a conference. Much good frequently results from conferences of that kind. I have argued for many years that under our migration scheme we should have made an effort to encourage fisher folk from the Old Country to come to Western Australia. We know the important part they played during the war. They are invaluable to Great Britain. Their services were utilised for mine sweeping and they helped materially to save the Empire from the submarine menace. Unfortunately the great majority of those present interested in the fishing industry in Western Australia are foreigners and would be of no use if we were dragged into difficulties with another nation. I again commend to the Premier and his Government the wonderful possibilities there are in connection with the migration of people who have been born and bred upon the sea. They know no other calling for they have followed fishing from generation to generation. If we were to secure the migration of those people, I believe it would be beneficial to the consumers. We know that at times when there is practically a glut of fish, hauls have been dumped overboard rather than that they should be placed upon the market. I am hopeful that good will result from the conference I have referred to and I trust the Premier will see that Western Australia is represented at any future similar conference. The Chairman of the Migration and Development Commission, Mr. H. W. Gepp, presided, and 16 main points were set down for discussion by the conference, which sat for several days. The 16 subjects were—

(1) The question of the necessity of developing the fishing industry on the coasts of Australia.

(2) Trawling and related industries, and by what means they may be developed.

(3) Transport and distribution of fish, including marketing.

(4) The capture and treatment of non-edible fish for the production of oils, leathers, fertilisers, etc.

(5) Collection of data concerning main currents and distribution of plankton.

(6) Improved methods of preserving fish (a) from capture to sale in fresh condition, (b) in the form of tinned fish, and (c) in the form of dried fish.

(7) The possibilities of acclimatising suitable species of food fishes.

(8) Uniform regulation regarding minimum weights at which different species of fish may be captured.

(9) The necessity for uniform laws regarding the capture and treatment of whales, granting of whaling licenses, etc.

(10) The development of the crayfish industry.

(11) The classification and the distribution of the sponges of Australia and the possibilities of developing this industry.

(12) The question of uniformity in the granting of licenses for the capture of turtles, and the regulating of close seasons, etc.

(13) The establishment and maintenance of a central marine biological station, and (b) the establishment of an institute in association with an Australian university for the development of teaching and research in fishery matters.

(14) Factors of destruction in fisheries matters.

(15) The relation between fisheries development and migration.

The list I have read demonstrates that the conference was an important one, and I sincerely trust the Premier will see to it that we are represented at the next conference. Personally I deplore the fact that Mr. Aldrich and possibly one of our Ministers were not present at this conference, because the fishing industry is such a valuable asset that anything we can gain as a result of representation at a Commonwealth conference should prove beneficial to the State. The fisher folk from England would be excellent settlers. They are Britishers and know the fishing industry from A to Z. I believe we missed a golden opportunity when we neglected to encourage their migration to Western Australia. There is one section of the Estimates that I hope will not be agreed to by the Committee; while I hope for that result, I do not expect it. I refer to the Vote for the State Accident Insurance Office, £3,316. That office was established without the authority of Parliament. Of course I know that under existing conditions the Government are able to carry

on with or without the consent of Parliament. I think the principle is wrong. Just to show the effect that the Workers' Compensation Act has had, we find that the Government in their desire to assist the mining industry—I am in accord with the proposal—have now decided to pay the impost of £4 10s. per £100 paid in wages by the mining companies. That shows where these increased charges lead us to. By the provisions of that Act we levied a charge upon the mining industry that represented a heavy impost, and now the Government have seen fit to come to the assistance of the mining industry by accepting the financial responsibility for the payment. While I shall not take any exception to it, I desire to sound a note of warning. I find that the "Australasian" of the 15th October last, dealing with the question of unemployment in Queensland, stated—

The fact that rural dwellers have not been the only people to suffer loss and privation as the result of the drought is proved by the unemployment figures and the present trade depression in every city and town in the State. As far back as December, 1926, it became evident that the claims on the Unemployed Workers' Insurance Fund would exceed all expectations. The sustenance payments for that month were £29,790, and in the succeeding months the number increased until the "peak" was reached in March of this year, when the monthly payments amounted to £45,714. For the year ended 31st March the claims were £48,980, and the sum made available for sustenance was £311,833—grim statistics for a young and wealthy State. To ensure the stability of the fund, the rate of contribution was increased to 4d. a week as from 1st July, 1927, but even this expedient failed to make up the leeway between receipts and disbursements. At the end of the financial year the fund was actually £97,434 in debt. Brisbane headed the list for sustenance payments with £99,132. Townsville being next with £27,288, and Rockhampton third with £24,633. The great majority of those who applied for assistance were sugar-workers, railway construction and maintenance workers, pastoral workers, and water-side workers.

It seems to me that the imposition of these various charges upon industry is having a bad effect. I do not propose to deal with the question of State insurance, to which consideration can be given when the Bill is before us. In Queensland, however, we find that an enormous amount of money has had to be paid to the unemployed. No doubt a great deal of that was due to the drought, but I want those members of this Chamber who are so keen in their desire to place increased burdens upon industry, to realise what the effect is. No matter what they are

able to gain by means of concessions through the awards of the Arbitration Court, they are of no value if the workers cannot secure employment. There are many other matters upon which I could touch, but I shall not proceed at much greater length. Before concluding I would like to deal with the land tax. In 1923-24, when the present Government took office, the amount collected from the land tax was £79,449. Last year the Treasurer collected £147,415 and this year he estimates that he will collect £160,000 or an increase of £88,551, representing over 100 per cent. advance, compared with the collections of 1923-24.

Mr. Clydesdale: What has been the expenditure?

Mr. THOMSON: What expenditure?

Mr. Clydesdale: Expenditure upon land settlement.

Mr. THOMSON: A considerable amount has been expended in connection with land settlement and particularly in connection with group settlement, but it can safely be stated 90 per cent. of the people who have been assisted will pay interest to the Agricultural Bank. In those circumstances, while there has been a certain amount of expenditure on land settlement, the fact remains that it is a good sound investment. That is demonstrated by the splendid financial position in which the Government find themselves to-day. I will not dwell at length upon the point, but in view of the buoyant state of the Treasury, I hope the Premier will give friendly consideration to a request that will come from another place in an effort to absolve landowners from paying more than one tax—

Hon. G. Taylor: That will be dealt with easily.

Mr. Griffiths: But the Premier says, "Not yet!"

Mr. THOMSON: There is another matter with which I wish to deal. We have already discussed certain restrictions that are to be placed upon employment brokers. The Minister for Works pointed out that the State Labour Bureau was prepared to carry out the whole of the work of employment broking. That may be so, but I find that on the Estimates £2,884 is provided for the State Labour Bureau. If it costs £2,884 to carry on the very small proportion of the work that is undertaken by the State Labour Bureau, how do the Government expect the private employment brokers to carry on if they are to be denied

the privilege of charging adequate fees! However, I am delighted that the Estimates show the Premier to be in the happy position of being able to budget for a surplus. I certainly lost a bet on it, because I stated that he would budget for more than £34,000. Although it is a small surplus, the fact that it is a surplus is satisfactory. On top of that, if we are able to secure the Financial Agreement it will mean that the Treasurer will have an additional £384,000 to play with.

Hon. G. Taylor: He will play with it.

Mr. THOMSON: Further, there is the windfall of £44,000 that he will receive from Abrahams. I presume that that small contribution will be paid over very unwillingly. However, the position is satisfactory and I trust that a continuation of good seasons and the exercise of sweet reason on the part of the Government in their dealings with all sections of the community, will result in increased prosperity for the State.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [8.30]: Before dealing with the Budget I should like to refer to one or two matters of interest touched upon by the member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) this afternoon. The hon. member seems to be afraid that because we have a good season here, while the other States have not that luck, the banks doing business in this State will take advantage of the repayment of any loans in the near future and remit those moneys to the Eastern States. Even if they did so it would only be playing the game, for if the hon. member were to analyse the figures of the banking institutions he would find that in the aggregate they have lent in this State considerably more money than the desposits they have received.

Mr. Lindsay: That is the usual thing, is it not?

Mr. ANGELO: No, it is not. Up to the present time the other States have been allowing their deposits to be used in making advances in this State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have found our own capital at the same time.

Mr. ANGELO: No, if you analyse the figures you will find it is not so. However, I do not think there need be the slightest fear of any money being transferred from this State to the Eastern States. Because, after all, the banker looks for the maximum amount of security and the maximum amount of interest; and the bankers know they have

a far better security for the advances they make in this State than for those made in the Eastern States. The lands of the Eastern States, it is generally recognised, are pretty highly capitalised. Therefore the banker, when he makes an advance against those lands, has only the usual margin of security to work upon, whereas in this State, in addition to that usual margin he has the difference between the present and the prospective value for the land.

Mr. Lindsay: Then why are they pulling in?

Mr. Clydesdale: Will the banks advance on that?

Mr. ANGELO: As long as they have the money to do so, yes. As for the interest, owing to the large number of firms and private individuals in the Eastern States who have money to lend, the banks cannot get the same rate of interest there as they get in this State. So we can rest assured that any money the banks can possibly divert to Western Australia for investment in the way of advances to their customers will be so diverted. Now we come to the reason why the banks are pulling up. It is because they realise that the farmers and others have been extravagant of late in buying expensive machinery and expensive motor cars, when they can scarcely afford to do so. No sooner do the farmers get the returns from their harvest than they buy these expensive articles. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) knows that it is so.

Mr. Lindsay: But they have to buy machinery.

Mr. ANGELO: Still, a man ought to cut his coat according to his cloth. Unfortunately, I do not know whether it is the fault of plausible machinery agents, the farmers are buying more machinery than their position warrants. Then look at the enormous number of expensive motor cars in the agricultural districts. Can some of the farmers afford it?

Mr. Lindsay: Why pick the farmers?

Mr. ANGELO: I mention them as one section of the community. Motor cars are purchased by many other people who can ill-afford it. That is why the banks have had to pull in. It is not only the individual cost of the motor cars, but the ever-increasing amount of money that has to be sent away, unfortunately to the United States, to pay for those cars. That is why the bankers have had to pull up. Further, there is the inducement to invest in Government loans which,

although the interest is not very high, eliminates any risk of loss. Moreover, that business can be carried on with very little cost of administration. But whilst our securities are so good, and we can afford to pay the little higher rate of interest, the member for Pingelly need not fear that there will be any great withdrawal of moneys from this State. Another matter of interest mentioned by the hon. member was the Engineer-in-chief's report on the Fremantle harbour and the railways leading thereto. I read that report, as published in the Press, with great interest, but I as a layman would never presume to express an opinion on it. Obviously it is a report that was written only after considerable investigation and careful thought. But no matter how well the Government may be satisfied with that report, I think they will be well advised to have it checked by another expert. It may be said we have other engineers with whom Mr. Stileman could consult. That is so, but those engineers have their special work in the various branches. This is a very comprehensive scheme, and of necessity will be a very costly one. Any scheme involving the expenditure of a million pounds or more should certainly be checked by another expert. I feel positive that Mr. Stileman would be the last to object to that.

Mr. Kenneally: Who is the other expert?

The Premier: This report is really a check on the report of Sir George Buchanan, an expert who was here a few years ago.

Mr. ANGELO: I thought it was Mr. Stileman's own ideas.

The Premier: So it is, but it serves also as a check upon Sir George Buchanan.

Mr. ANGELO: Well, it points to the necessity for still another check. If one great expert like Sir George Buchanan says one thing, and another expert says another thing, we should have an umpire to determine who is correct.

The Minister for Mines: I would be prepared to back the Engineer-in-chief of this State, who has given a great deal of attention and thought to his report, against a man who galloped through the State in a couple of days.

Mr. ANGELO: I am with the Minister in that. But as the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) was just going to remark, when a doctor is called in to a serious case he diagnoses it, and then in all probability he will call in another doctor for consultation. This is going to be a serious matter, for not only

does it mean the future development of our principal harbour, but it means also the start of a better and more complete system of railways leading to that harbour. Take the city of Perth: I suppose some expert laid it out a great many years ago.

The Premier: He was not much of an expert.

Mr. ANGELO: Perhaps not. The same thing has occurred in other places. Only to-day I heard the comment that our railway system, that was started on expert advice, is anything but a satisfactory system, because the railways run in all directions.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Well, we must have them running in all directions.

Mr. ANGELO: But some of them are too far apart, and some of them are too close together.

Mr. Griffiths: And some of them are not there at all.

Mr. ANGELO: Even the hon. member's railway forms part of the completed system. Later on he may get it in that way as part of the transeontinental system. However, I do not think it would be a very expensive matter to get a check on Mr. Stileman's report.

Mr. Clydesdale: Whom would you propose for the job?

Mr. ANGELO: I should say that New Zealand, with its numerous harbours, would have a highly competent man as Engineer-in-chief. Could we not borrow him for two or three months? So long as we paid his fare, doubtless he would be glad to come. Then there is Queensland. We might get a man from there. I should not like to see an expenditure of over a million pounds on one man's word, though he were the best man in the world.

Mr. Thomson: What we want is a public works committee.

Mr. ANGELO: We have had too many losses in the past for want of a competent expert's advice.

Hon. G. Taylor: We had expert advice on the Fremantle harbour when we sank £200,000 in the dock.

Mr. ANGELO: Exactly. Possibly for the expenditure of £1,000 we could get a check that might save us hundreds of thousands of pounds in the end.

Mr. Clydesdale: A man would have to be here for 12 months before he could express an opinion on and check Mr. Stileman's report.

Mr. ANGELO: Even if we had to keep him for two years it might be profitable.

Mr. Clydesdale: You would hold up the work for 20 years.

Mr. ANGELO: I do not want to see a single spadeful chopped out until we know precisely what we are up against. I regard Mr. Stileman as a very able Engineer-in-Chief, and I think that if it were suggested to him that his scheme should be checked he would be sufficiently broadminded to say, "Yes, certainly."

Hon. G. Taylor: If we had had a check on the Carnarvon Meat Works it would have saved money.

Mr. ANGELO: The trouble is that although we had a check, it was not the right check. A man was sent up to advise the pastoralists as to whether or not they should have the meat works, and shortly afterwards that man had to leave the Wyndham Meat Works because he was found to be incompetent. I am sorry indeed that we have to discuss the Estimates without first having dealt with the Financial Agreement. It savours of a man starting to build a house without knowing how much money he has. All our investigations, all our criticisms and all our wise and unwise remarks may be of no avail if the agreement is finalised. Even the Premier said, "It will be noticed I have based the estimated receipts from the Commonwealth on the proposed Financial Agreement." Yet the agreement is non-existent. It has to be approved by the Governments of the several States, by the Federal Government and then by a referendum of the people. It may be 12 months before the agreement is finalised. Still, these Estimates are based on the agreement.

Mr. Griffiths: We cannot wait for that finalisation.

Mr. ANGELO: I think the agreement should have been ignored meanwhile, and the Estimates framed without taking it into consideration at all. I compliment the Premier on having adopted the wise precaution of placing £150,000 last year and £350,000 this year in suspense pending the result of the negotiations between the Federal Government and the State Governments. I am rather disappointed that the Premier, when speaking last week, did not reply to several questions raised earlier in the session. During the debate on the Address-in-reply various items in

the Governor's Speech and in the Premier's statement of the financial position were criticised. Unfortunately the Premier was not present when some of the criticisms were made, but we were told that an explanation would be given when the Budget Speech was delivered. Several times I asked where certain money had gone. The Premier's deputy could not or would not say anything; neither would any other Minister tell me. The only member who did vouchsafe an explanation was the member for Menzies (Mr. Panton), who told us that the money was in a jam-tin. I do not mind if the money is in a jam-tin so long as it is being properly preserved.

Mr. Thomson: And hermetically sealed.

Mr. ANGELO: And the tin is branded, "Not for cooking purposes." That is the only explanation we could get at the time. There are a few matters I wish to mention again in the hope that the Premier, when dealing with the Estimates of the Treasury Department, will give us some information. I do not wish to suggest that everything in the garden is not lovely, but I for one cannot find an explanation in the statements he has furnished and cannot understand why, in connection with other matters, he has adopted a particular course. Speaking the other night, he said that 19 millions of loan money carried no sinking fund.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Money borrowed during the last four years.

Mr. ANGELO: That being so, it was all the more wrong for the Premier to take advantage of the £58,000 surplus under the goldfields water scheme loan and put it into Consolidated Revenue. I feel sure that any business man, knowing that 19 millions of loan money was not carrying sinking fund, would have left the £58,000 in the sinking fund in order to adjust the loans later on. I have discussed this matter with quite a number of business men and, though I admit opinions varied as to what should have been done with the money, all were agreed that it was wrong to put it into Consolidated Revenue.

The Minister for Mines: Most of them would have liked a cut out of it.

Mr. ANGELO: The accumulating of that £58,000 must have extended over many years during which we were showing a deficit. Consequently there was only one channel into which the £58,000 should have gone, and that was in reduction of the



deficit. There was £150,000 that the Premier admitted was debited last year, not to interest account, but to miscellaneous services. I would like him to tell us why the debit is made to that particular fund instead of another, so that if any of us later on becomes Treasurer he might know the reason.

Mr. Kenneally: Why look so far into the future?

Mr. ANGELO: One can never tell. In Sydney only a few days ago a civil servant discharged by Mr. Lang entered Parliament and, on that very day, he became a Minister in the new Cabinet. There is a chance for everybody.

Mr. Clydesdale: There would be a chance for you!

Mr. ANGELO: The Premier's statement shows that he over-estimated interest by £125,191 showing that he did not debit £150,000 to interest. I should like to know why it was debited to miscellaneous services. The Premier assures us that the money has been placed in a suspense account. I am glad indeed to have that assurance. He said the amount was set aside as a reserve to meet losses on group settlement. In addition to that amount there is the difference between the one per cent. he pays on money provided by the British and Federal Governments and the six per cent. charged for it. That would amount to considerably over £100,000. We are getting the money at one per cent. and charging settlers from five to seven per cent.; I am not sure of the exact rate.

The Premier: We are not charging the groups seven per cent. It is  $5\frac{1}{4}$  per cent.

Mr. Davy: It is a varying amount.

Mr. ANGELO: Call it five per cent. The difference between one per cent. and an average of five per cent. would mean about £100,000. I should like to know whether that amount also has been put into a reserve fund.

The Premier: No, you are all astray. It is in revenue and the £150,000 is out of revenue.

Mr. Davy: You cannot debit the £150,000 twice.

Mr. ANGELO: I could not understand a speech that was made in another place, but it looks as if there have been two debits and one credit to reserve fund. We have the Premier's assurance that the £150,000 has been paid into a reserve fund. I accept his assurance. I should like him to tell us what has become of the difference between

the one per cent. he is paying for the money and the rate he is getting for it. That money undoubtedly should be put into suspense account or into a reserve of interest account to be used to compensate for losses we are bound to make on the group settlement scheme when the figures are finalised. I should like the Premier, when the opportunity occurs, to give us more information about the special Commonwealth grant of £565,000. The Premier told us that £200,000 of it was to come off taxation, £200,000 was to go towards the extinction of the deficit and £165,000 to assist mining. We know that he scored to the extent of £27,250 on the first amount.

The Premier: That is not correct. I did not score a penny.

Mr. ANGELO: That is according to the different viewpoints.

The Premier: I do not care what the viewpoint is; I did not score a penny.

Mr. ANGELO: May I give my viewpoint? The Premier said, "I am going to use £200,000 of the Commonwealth grant in order to reduce income taxation by 33½ per cent." At the end of the year, the Premier tells us, he received by way of income tax £345,500. That is 66½ per cent. of what he expected to get, so that the 33½ per cent. he did not get owing to the reduction represented £172,750.

Mr. Davy: The Premier cannot get away from that.

The Premier: But I can.

Mr. ANGELO: The difference between £172,750 and the £200,000 he got from the Federal grant to compensate him for the reduction of taxation was £27,250, which saving really represented the surplus for last year.

The Premier: I did not get a shilling of it.

Mr. ANGELO: Then I should like to know what the Premier did with the £27,250.

The Premier: I did not get it.

Mr. ANGELO: I wish the Premier had it in his pocket, but we all know he is too honest to do anything like that.

The Premier: I lost on that deal.

Mr. Davy: No, it is a matter of simple arithmetic.

The Premier: It is not. I will take it to any body of accountants you like to name and show that I did not gain by it.

Mr. Davy: I will accept that challenge.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. ANGELO: The next item was the second £200,000. This the Premier said he was going to use towards the extinction of the deficit. I have here the Premier's statement, showing surpluses and deficiencies on Consolidated Revenue. It will be found in Return No. 4. At the end of 1926 the accumulated deficit was £6,297,628. The surplus for last year was £28,245, and the return shows that the accumulated deficiency at the end of 1927 was £6,269,383. I should like the Premier to tell us how he has applied that £200,000. I should have thought if it was to go towards the extinction of the deficit this account would have shown £6,069,383, instead of £6,269,383. I feel sure the Premier will tell us how it was applied. I have some curious electors in my district, who are always asking me what has happened. It would be only fair to members as well as to himself if the Premier would explain exactly, when speaking on the Treasury vote, how this has been applied. I should then be able to satisfy my electors.

The Premier: I hope I shall be able to satisfy your very intelligent electors.

Mr. ANGELO: That is what I want the Premier to do. The next item was £165,000 to assist mining. The Premier tells us that the amount set aside last year from the Federal disabilities grant for the assistance of mining has not been expended. I should like him to tell us so that I may satisfy these friends of mine where this money was on the 30th June last. I am sure he will be able to tell us that it was in a reserve fund set up for its safekeeping until the time comes to use it. I want his assurance on that point so that I can show it to my friends per medium of "Hansard."

Mr. Lindsay: Your friends are rather inquisitive.

Mr. Clydesdale: There are many shurks to be found up at Carnarvon.

Mr. ANGELO: Regarding the £200,000 that was to be paid off the deficit, I presume the Premier will be able to tell us that it was used to wipe off the unfunded portion of the deficit. I would remind the Premier that when speaking last year he said the unfunded portion of the deficit amounted to £157,450. If that is the solution, here is a sum of £42,461 that he scored. No doubt the Premier will be able to tell us to the satisfaction of all how the money was applied.

The Premier: According to your argument I scored about half a million.

Mr. ANGELO: I would be only too pleased to be able to satisfy myself and my friends that everything in the garden is lovely, and that the surplus of £28,000, with the exception of the £58,000 which I can never quite reconcile, is genuine and true. Nothing would please me better. I cannot help thinking that it was a deficit of at least £30,000 the Premier made rather than a surplus of £28,000. The Premier was good enough to tell the House when he decided on a 33½ per cent. reduction in income tax that I was the only member to give a warning.

The Premier: According to your figures the warning was not necessary, because I made £27,000.

Mr. ANGELO: I want to show that it was a warning and nothing more. I said—

We are all pleased indeed that the Premier decided to allocate the money in that way. At the same time, looking at the financial aspect, I do not know whether it was quite wise to devote the whole of the £200,000 to the reduction of taxation. It is estimated that the revenue for the financial year will amount to £9,791,000, and the Premier estimates a surplus of only £10,000. That is barely one per cent. It is easy for some little thing to miscarry, and for the expected £10,000 surplus to disappear. In that event we shall again be faced with a deficit. We are too close to the balancing line to make such a drastic reduction in taxation as 33½ per cent. Had I been the Premier I would have declared a 15 per cent. reduction straight away, and placed an amount equalling another 15 per cent. in a suspense account to be used as a rebate if the year's transactions turned out satisfactorily.

I said, "We are all pleased indeed that the Premier decided to allocate the money in that way." Two or three days before the election I found a poster placarded in Carnarvon. It was addressed to the electors of the Gascoyne district and said, "Who opposed the reduction in taxation? E. H. Angelo, M.L.A. See what he says in 'Hansard.'" This is over the signature of the Minister for Works as campaign director. The poster starts off showing that I said:—"I do not know whether it was quite wise to devote the whole of the £200,000 to the reduction of taxation." It left out entirely my sentence "We are all pleased indeed that the Premier decided to allocate the money in that way." I like fair play.

Mr. Lindsay: No wonder your friends were inquisitive, after that.

Mr. ANGELO: Only one placard was put up in Carnarvon, but I believe that throughout the district and in Shark Bay they were sent out in hundreds, and that everyone got at least half a dozen copies so that no one should miss it. Another placard was also put up, but this acted as a kind of boomarang.

Hon. G. Taylor: Was it a free distribution?

Mr. ANGELO: Yes. When the Minister is as old as I am he will find it pays better, when quoting a speech, to give the whole substance of it, and not cut out an important section like this.

The Premier: That may have been due to the exigencies of space.

Mr. ANGELO: It is a pity that the Minister started at the top. His own signature was in large letters.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You could bring an action against him for misrepresentation.

Mr. ANGELO: It did not matter much.

Hon. G. Taylor: Campaign directors are free.

The Premier: From the ordinary rules.

Mr. ANGELO: I am pleased the Premier has decided to allocate the £40,000 he will get out of the Savings Bank in the way indicated. I am also pleased that a committee has been appointed to see what can be done to consolidate our public offices. I hope the £40,000 will go some way towards buying the Town Hall, and the construction of a solid seven or eight-storey building on our present site, taking in the Town Hall as well. Some people say that is too valuable a site for shops. That may be so. What is to prevent the Government from having a few shops for letting purposes, provided we can consolidate all our Government buildings in one block, in the same way that the Federal Government are doing?

Mr. Davy: You would not knock down the Town Hall would you?

Mr. ANGELO: Undoubtedly.

Hon. G. Taylor: He would knock down anything.

Mr. ANGELO: St. Paul's Cathedral very nearly fell down two or three years ago on its own account. We shall have our Town Hall tumbling down yet.

Mr. Davy: Not if I can avoid it.

The Premier: Because St. Paul's nearly fell, that is no argument why we should knock down the Town Hall.

Mr. ANGELO: Now that the City Council have spoilt half of the building by

putting shops there I have not the same feeling about the Town Hall.

Mr. Davy: You could easily pull down the verandah.

Mr. ANGELO: I think those who do business with Government offices would be delighted if one central block of buildings could be erected to accommodate all the offices. The buildings could go up seven or eight storeys. There is plenty of room up above.

The Premier: What about the sunshine?

Mr. ANGELO: That could be provided for in the way the Federal Government have done with the G.P.O. buildings. I am pleased that a committee has been appointed to see what can be done in the matter of bringing the various Government offices together, and domiciling them upon one block. I am glad to see a progressive policy has been adopted by the Government in the building of more railways.

Mr. Clydesdale: You have not believed in anything the Government have done so far.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes, I have. I am pleased they realise the importance of pushing ahead with railway construction. I have young fellows coming from the Eastern States—to-day I had three—who are wanting land. All of them had some money, and were willing to put their life savings into Western Australian farming properties. They had been unable to get any land. They went to the Lands Department, but there was nothing available there. I took them to the Soldier Settlement Office. One was a returned soldier and I thought he might be able to get some abandoned farm, but nothing suitable was offering. It is a great pity when we have all these people coming here and desiring land, and wishing to become Western Australians, that we cannot give them any land. Cinderella has risen from the ashes with the help of her golden grain and her golden fleeces. It is up to the Premier to act as Prince Charming and help her on her way, so that when she arrives at the ballroom she will be recognised as the fairest daughter of Australia. We can only do this if the Premier provides her with the necessary coach to take her on her journey. I am therefore glad to see that he is also providing plenty of rolling stock. I am very pleased about the new sleeping coaches on the Kalbarrie line. They are badly needed. I mentioned it last year and hoped that something would be done. I suggested that a surcharge of 5s. might be imposed for the use of these

special sleepers, and I understand that within a week or two the Minister put on the 5s. before the coaches were provided. That may be good policy; it is looking ahead. He may by this time have saved enough to pay the extra cost involved in the new sleepers. We have no railways in the North except one from Port Hedland to Marble Bar.

The Premier: Can I not hand you out a harbour or two, or a new jetty?

Mr. ANGELO: We can do with another steamer. Steamers are our railways.

Mr. Clydesdale: How would railways pay up north?

Mr. ANGELO: We Nor'-West members are one party for a steamer. The Nor'-West must have a fortnightly service. I will give an instance of what is happening nowadays. In the little town of Shark Bay a new industry has been started. Some lads have put £3,000 or £4,000 into a fish-freezing venture, the fish to be sent to Perth. Owing to the stranding of the "Koolinda" the Singapore steamers refuse to go into Shark Bay. To get over the difficulty the Honorary Minister controlling the State Shipping Service, Mr. Hickey, was kind enough immediately to send up the Chief Harbour Master in the "Kybra" to re-open the channel by putting down buoys. The steamer "Gascoyne," which was coming down the coast, intended to call at Shark Bay, having been informed that there was £400 worth of fish lying at Shark Bay and deteriorating for want of conveyance. The "Gascoyne" was advised that the channel was open, but nevertheless she did not call in at Shark Bay, and the fish remained unshipped. Such a thing is heart-breaking to men who have put all their savings into a venture. Further, such a thing could not occur if there was a fortnightly steamer. One little matter in which the Premier might help the North-West is the dropping of the surcharge on harbour dues there. The surcharge represents a war-time impost which has never been taken off, and which represents rather a large expense. Every little helps the people up there. If the Premier could show the North consideration by remitting that war time charge, his action would be much appreciated.

The Premier: But when we remit charges on the railways and other utilities, we are told that the people generally do not benefit by the reduction, which is not passed on by the retailers. It might be the same in the case of remission of harbour dues.

Mr. ANGELO: If the Premier will grant this concession, I will watch the matter carefully, and if the retailers do not make a

corresponding reduction, I will ask the hon. gentleman to re-impose the surcharge. However, I feel sure the retailers will be glad to give northern consumers the benefit of any reduction the Premier may make. I was glad that in his speech the Premier said—

Anything having an adverse effect upon the railway receipts, such as an unfavourable season, operates most disastrously on the State's finances.

I am glad the Premier realises that. An old song says, "Bad times will come again once more." Now is the time for the Treasurer to show himself the statesman I honestly believe him to be, by not immediately doing, as improvident people are apt to do, splash money up. We are going to have hard times again.

Mr. Griffiths: I thought the song said, "Hard times, come again no more."

Mr. ANGELO: I feel sure that the Premier will keep a stiff upper lip and resolve to hold something to the good. For many years, unfortunately, through adverse times and the war and its aftermath Western Australia has had big deficits, but now that prosperity has come to the State once more, let us always remember that it is possible for bad times to recur. I am glad the Premier realises the position, realises that the future of Western Australia is in his hands for some time—two and a half years, if not longer. It is his duty as a statesman and as our leading public man never to forget that the State must not take undue advantage of good times to spend more than it can afford.

Hon. G. Taylor: How much will the new steamship cost?

Mr. ANGELO: The present State steamers are profit-making.

The Premier: I regard the request as very reasonable.

Mr. ANGELO: Let me tell the Premier that if I were not certain a new steamer would pay, I would not ask for it.

The Premier: In London two years ago I tried to get the money for two ships and was told I had better come back again in a year or two.

Mr. ANGELO: The present boat is paying, and two boats will pay much better. Many people will not patronise the one State boat because there is only a monthly service and at times they have to resort to other lines. I conclude by telling the Premier that I appreciate, as I am certain other members also do, the kindly references he made to our Leader in the final portion of his speech. It is what I think the Leader of

the Opposition would have done in the Premier's case were the positions reversed. These little touches of Nature make the whole world kin. It is these little courtesies that help us to work harmoniously together for the welfare of Western Australia.

[*Mr. Lutey took the Chair.*]

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [9.25]: There are certain matters I could refer to in this debate, but in commencing I wish to remark that during the discussion my own views have been expressed by other members on various points, and that therefore I am in the happy position of having only a little to top off with. One question touched on by the member for Murray-Wellington (Hon. W. J. George) deserves the serious attention of the Government and the people—the question of the central railway station and of a definite move being made one way or another with regard to its being shifted or else improved and made permanent. The central railway station question has been discussed for many years. I remember that in 1906 Mr. G. T. Poole, formerly Chief Government Architect, drew a plan of the city beautiful which included the removal of the central railway station from its present site to one at the north end of Perth. There was a suggestion that the present site could be made available for public buildings, and that much of it could be sold or leased, thus creating enhanced values, which would pay for the shifting of the railway station and, in addition, provide a handsome profit available for improvements in various directions. I therefore ask the Government to take at this juncture the advice of their officers as to definitely settling the question of the central railway station once and for all, so that the site and other details may be decided. It has been declared on all hands, by the Town Planning Committee and many public citizens, that the central railway station question is blocking the progress of the city and also blocking business in many directions. Following on that question, we have noticed in the Press recently that the terminus of the taxi routes from Cottesloe has been removed to Wellington street, and that the alteration is not giving satisfaction to the people. There is before another place a motion for the disallowance of the regulation in question, with a view to substituting the route formerly in operation. Questions such as this will become greater, not less,

as time goes on; and therefore the issue should be settled by the Government in such a way as to content the people, and not to harass them as they have recently been harassed. It has been suggested, wisely I think, that there should be a select committee to inquire into this subject in order that the best advice may be obtained and all the routes adequately discussed, and the question thrashed out once and for all in such a way that the people will be satisfied. It is useless for this House or another place over and over again to disallow regulations. The time has gone by when we can hope to carry all the traffic of the metropolitan area on the railways. As the roads are now being improved and the town and suburbs are growing, we must face the question, not at the behest of a few Government officials, but after a thorough investigation by, possibly, a select committee. I would like to see that question as well as the central railway station site investigated at the earliest possible moment. Now a few words as to the metropolitan local bodies. Undoubtedly these are being left in the race of new road-making in Western Australia. We have trunk roads, arterial roads and main roads, and also every sort of grant outside the metropolitan area: but that area itself is facing a position that is quite intolerable. I was glad the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) referred to that subject at some length last night. The municipalities are working under an Act which has been in operation for about 50 years, having been framed on an old English Act passed before the days of traction engines and motor cars. Most of the metropolitan road boards, in view of the limited rating powers conferred on them, and with rules and regulations framed under an obsolete Act, are bearing an impossible burden. From traffic fees they receive only an insignificant amount; their rating powers, as I have said, are definitely limited; the cost of upkeep of their roads is being quadrupled, and they have no possible means of relief. As a result the local bodies in the metropolitan area, with the possible exception of the City of Perth, which has a bigger assessing power by reason of greater population, are for the most part using inferior plant and are unable to acquire the road-making plant necessary for good roads. Their rating power is so limited and the return from traffic fees is so limited, that it is quite impossible for these boards to keep up the roads in the metropolitan area outside

the City of Perth. I believe that the Government intend to introduce a Bill to amend the Municipalities Act this session, but I commend to the Government the consideration of the plight of local governing bodies and the difficulties that they are confronted with. The eyes of the State and Federal Governments are turned to the provision of main roads, trunk and arterial, beyond the boundaries of the metropolitan area. As a result they are leaving conditions inside the metropolitan area that are intolerable. It is not because those who are carrying on the duties of local government are disgruntled or are lazy, that they are complaining they cannot carry on their road construction. It is not because of any dissatisfaction and laxity that roads are being closed. It is done for the obvious reason that the taxis, motor buses, lorries and trucks have increased out of all bounds during recent years, and have cast upon the local authorities an ever-increasing burden and difficulty regarding the condition of the roads. It is certain that before long the profit that flows from the increased use of petrol and power-driven vehicles must be tapped at some source to maintain the economical and efficient condition of the roads. By that means the wear and tear could be attended to and the roads kept in good order. If the problem is great to-day, in five years' time it will be so much greater. Our position is not different from that experienced in other parts of the world, where the traffic problem, in its relation to revenue, is causing great difficulties. I will mention the municipalities of Claremont and Cottesloe that are within the boundaries of my electorate. They are tied down definitely by an Act of Parliament. They cannot spend more than a certain amount of money and they have no means of raising additional funds. Yet the problem confronting them increases four or five times every year. The position has to be faced and I hope that there will be legislation shortly to deal with the question sufficiently to enable the local governing bodies to maintain their roads in a reasonably good condition.

Mr. Davy: Would not amalgamation help?

Mr. NORTH: Yes. I have previously dealt with that phase of the question; in fact it is becoming almost an annual topic for me to discuss. There should be some redistribution of boundaries so as to enable four or five local bodies to combine in the purchase of necessary plant and so forth.

Mr. Davy: What is the point of having the Claremont Road Board and the Claremont Municipal Council?

Mr. NORTH: Quite so. What is the point? The whole problem confronting local authorities will have to be gone into thoroughly. Perhaps that could not be dealt with satisfactorily by the mere introduction of a Bill to amend the Municipalities Act. It might be better if a Royal Commission or a select committee were appointed to go into the position thoroughly. Such a body might be able to thrash out the problems involved in financial and other directions.

Mr. Clydesdale: And amalgamation, too.

Mr. NORTH: Yes. I have advocated that for a long time. In Australia we have dealt with the financial position from the wrong angle. We are trying to do things upside down; we are trying to balance on our apex. The Federal Government take by far the largest share of our funds. The next biggest share goes to the State Government, leaving those who have by far the smallest revenue—the local governing authorities—to carry practically all the burden on their shoulders. If it is impossible to interfere with the Federal side of the question, and if the State demands must be met, then perhaps it may be possible, by consultation with the Federal and State Governments, to arrive at some means by which the position of the local authorities will be relieved. Petrol is being used to an ever-increasing extent and the same may be said regarding motor tyres. Therefore, the money that follows the motor trade should be tapped at some convenient source for the purpose of maintaining the roads in the metropolitan area, just as it is tapped to-day for roads in the country districts. I will not say more on this question at the present stage because it does not require reiteration or elaboration. It requires to be dealt with. I hope we will have an opportunity of dealing with legislation to cope with the position to some extent during the present session. There is one question that is not often dealt with in the House, but which, I think, is of some importance. I refer to the fish supplies in the estuaries from the Swan to Albany and thence around the coast. It has been said by prominent fishermen that in 25 or 30 years time our estuaries will be cleaned out of edible fish. We look on and say nothing, but take things for granted. We conclude that as the metropolitan area is growing it is natural that the requirements of our increased population must inevitably mean

that the fish will be cleaned out of our waterways. But that is not the position. I am informed by those who have studied the fishing business in other parts of the world as well as here that, with a little attention, the Swan River and the estuaries along our coast, which formerly teemed with fish, but where to-day one cannot, comparatively speaking, see a fish at all, could easily be stocked or the fish at least protected in various ways. The first method I would suggest concerns the shag menace. I am told that the shags are protected and that the birds are looked upon as important landmarks on the river. I understand that a healthy adult shag is able to consume 8lbs. of fish per day. That represents an enormous quantity per annum. When it is realised that there are perhaps 10,000 shags on the Swan River alone—that is an estimate given to me by a competent fisherman—we can appreciate the quantity of edible fish consumed each year. It is easy, then, to understand why the fish are disappearing from the river. The question arises as to why the shag is protected. What virtues are there in the shag? That query would make a good heading for a column in the Press. It is hard to understand why we have protected the shag on the Swan and on the various estuaries. I would commend that point to the Chief Inspector of Fisheries for his consideration. The question is a really serious one for the State, for we are faced with a largely increased population and the disappearance of a source of wealth. Why should our various holiday resorts be spoiled merely because of our neglect to cope with the shag menace? I am informed that the nesting places of the birds are known and that if proper steps were taken the shags could be cleaned up within two years.

Mr. Davy: Where are the nesting places?

Mr. NORTH: At Rottnest and on the islands along the coast. The nesting places are far from human habitation. No possible good can come out of a shag; the bird is of no use whatever. It merely destroys 8lbs. of fish per day; yet if a person should raise a rifle to shoot one, I believe he could be prosecuted. I do not think it is fair to say that the shag should be protected because it eats cobblers, the sting of which is very painful.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the cobbler is a good edible fish.

Mr. NORTH: Considering that thousands of pounds worth of fish have gone to waste as the result of the depredations of shags,

something should be done to remedy the position. I will mention another direction in which the Chief Inspector of Fisheries could receive considerable assistance. I refer to the netting of fish in our rivers. I recently mentioned this matter by way of a question in the House and the reply I received was that all possible action was being taken by the authorities. As a matter of fact, it is known by those who frequent the river that the regulations are flagrantly broken. There are men on the lookout in case the police launch should steam down-river. It is like having a brass band playing to announce the coming of the launch, so easily can she be spotted from a distance. The fact that illegal netting can take place in the circumstance is bad enough, but the fact that men are using very small mesh nets is worse still. Common sense will tell us that if a mesh small enough to catch a minnow is used, the result will be that all the young fish in the river will be destroyed. The time has come when we should deal with matters relating to fishing in the estuaries from Perth down the coast to Albany and beyond. If that were done it would be of advantage to holiday makers and also to the State itself, because of the increased wealth that would be available from our estuaries as time went on. I shall not say anything further but will content myself with discussing various items that affect my electorate.

MR. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [9.40]: I do not propose to detain the House for long but will merely deal with one or two matters in relation to mining and land settlement. I am not at all satisfied regarding the way in which a scheme from which I had hoped much good would result, has been operating. I refer to the establishment of advisory mining boards. I am not satisfied that the results we anticipated have been obtained.

Hon. G. Taylor: They have done nothing at all.

Mr. CORBOY: I would not say that, but I do feel that the boards have merely taken from the shoulders of some officials of the Mines Department work that was formerly done as efficiently by those officials.

Hon. G. Taylor: More expeditiously and better.

Mr. CORBOY: I will not agree to that statement, either. It has not been my experience. Certainly the boards have carried out their work at least as efficiently

and expeditiously, but I do not know that we have gained anything by their establishment. I consider the officers of the department were carrying on the same work and, to some extent, they are still carrying on the work they were doing before the boards were established.

Hon. G. Taylor: Have you any idea what the establishment of the boards has cost?

Mr. CORBOY: I understand the cost has not been great.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is not what the Minister stated.

Mr. CORBOY: I am given to understand that it has not been costly at all. On the other hand, I feel that the boards have not been given the power, nor have they been allowed by the Minister—I am not speaking particularly of the present Minister for Mines or of the previous Minister—to do the work that I am sure all goldfields members hoped they would be expected to do. I would like to see the local advisory boards given power to initiate, in an advisory capacity, schemes for boring or for other exploratory work underground in various parts of our mining fields, whether active mining operations are being carried on there or not. At present nothing can be done until active mining work is carried on in a particular locality and application is made to the department for assistance. The advisory board concerned is then asked to report on the advisability or otherwise of granting the assistance. The boards should have power to initiate schemes, test the merits of fields that are not being mined but which, in the opinion of the boards, are worthy of investigation. I also feel that the services of the State Mining Engineer are not being utilised as they should be. That officer at present is nothing more than a glorified clerk doing office routine work and drawing up paper reports in an office in Perth. The State Mining Engineer, because of his training and capacity, should be used more for advisory purposes to enable shows that are in active production or being brought into production, to develop on the right lines. But instead of utilising his services as a mining engineer to determine the best underground policy or the best treatment plant policy of a show, we are using him as we use many senior clerical officers administering offices in Perth. I am sure it

is not necessary to get a man certificated as a member of the Institute of Mining Engineers to do office work. If that is all that is necessary in a State Mining Engineer, let us have a non-technical man, and let us use the difference in monetary value of the two men to some better purpose. I think our present State Mining Engineer, Mr. Montgomery, or whoever may succeed him when shortly he will retire from that position, should be expected to lay down the policy of development and the type of treatment plant necessary to our existing shows.

Mr. Davy: There is administering the department already a non-technical man.

Mr. CORBOY: Not only is there a non-technical head of the department, but the assistant head also is a non-technical man, and each of them is assisted by various other non-technical men who are quite capable of doing all the clerical work necessary. I am not quarrelling with what Mr. Montgomery has done. He has simply done what has been expected of him by various Ministers of Mines over a long period of years; but I say that Mr. Montgomery, with his training, can be used in a much more valuable way to the mining industry than by putting him in an office in Perth and expecting him to carry out clerical duties. I also think that the Central Mining Board should have its functions extended to give it greater power to direct the policy of a mine in which Government funds are being expended. The board, instead of deciding whether two or three prospectors should receive £20 worth of Government stores to enable them to go out prospecting, should be engaged in the actual direction of the policy and management of some of the bigger shows in which Government funds are being expended for the purposes of testing. When a big show, a mine really worth while, is in receipt of Government financial assistance, one can assume that its position is due to lack of foresight in management and development during the preceding years. That being so, the Central Mining Board should consist of men competent to take over the actual direction of the development and management of that show and put it on its feet. After all, if a good mine is at low tide financially and needs Government assistance, it is evidence of lack of competence in the management and development of the show. So the Central Mining Board should be competent to direct the policy of



that show and see to it that the Government funds going into the mine are expended in a way that will thoroughly test the mine and determine whether or not it is worth while going on with it. We have in my own electorate instances of the grossest possible waste of Government funds in assisting mines, simply because there was no power vested in such a body as the Central Mining Board to direct the expenditure of the money.

Hon. G. Taylor: What about the State Mining Engineer?

Mr. CORBOY: He was sitting in his office in Perth, as he was expected to do.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is not expected of him at all.

Mr. CORBOY: I say that for a long period of years successive Ministers for Mines have expected to have the State Mining Engineer at their elbow in Perth, instead of his being out in the field.

Hon. G. Taylor: He should be largely in the field.

Mr. CORBOY: Of course he should be. That is my point. I was going to give the instance of a mine that the hon. member has seen many times when travelling through my electorate. I refer to Fraser's Mine at Southern Cross, in which during the first three-year period for which I was member for Yilgarn, no less than £5,000 of Government money was deliberately wasted in baling water out of the mine into the main street. In a period of three years not one ton of ore was broken out of that mine and crushed. The man who got the £5,000 simply sat back drawing £10 per week driving the engine that was doing the baling. And directly the Government said, "No more till you get out a crushing," he walked off the show, and within a very few days of baling ceasing the mine was again flooded. It would cost another £5,000 to bale out the mine to-day. I say that is wrong.

Hon. G. Taylor: What was the Mines Department doing all that time?

Mr. CORBOY: Perhaps the Minister can explain that. I cannot.

Hon. G. Taylor: It was bad administration.

Mr. CORBOY: It was certainly a gross waste of public funds. I agree with my friend that it was bad administration. However, I had not intended to say that, because it occurred during the period in which the Government supported by my friend sat on this side. It was a fault of the system of administration in the department, not of

any particular government that happened to be in office. Had the State Mining Engineer and his officers had the power, or had the Central Mining Board had the power, to manage and control the development of shows in which Government moneys were being expended on a lavish scale, that could not have occurred.

Hon. G. Taylor: The State Mining Engineer recommends all advances in mining ventures.

Mr. CORBOY: It is rather extraordinary—one does not like saying this—that sometimes the show that should get an advance does not get it, whilst the show that should not get it secures it every time. During the last 18 months of the three-year period to which I have referred I refused to have anything to do with any request to the department for financial assistance. Although the Minister was aware of the stand I had taken in regard to assisting Fraser's Mine, he still continued to pour money into the sink. I made him acquainted with my attitude, yet within a week of my telling him what I thought of the position he granted a further £500 of that £5,000 advance. So it is difficult sometimes to understand why these things occur. We require to reorganise the whole of the department and give somebody authority to direct the development and management of any show in which Government moneys are being expended. The expert knowledge available in the Mines Department and the Geological Survey Department should be used more than it is at present for the investigation and development of our base metal deposits. Both our Mines Department and our Geological Survey Department have concentrated too much on gold. Many of our mining people cannot think of mining in any other term than gold. That is largely due to the fact that our Mines Department and our Geological Survey Department themselves have not done all that might have been expected of them in pointing out the values of our base metal deposits.

Mr. Davy: You have one officer in the department to look after petroleum.

Mr. CORBOY: My friend reminds me of another member of this Chamber who ought to know better, but who wanted to know what we were doing keeping an oil man in the Geological Survey Department, because we had a petrologist there. The fact remains that it would perhaps astonish most members to look up the Public Service list and see the number of technical officers associated

with our Geological Survey Department and our Department of Mines. We have mineralogists, petrologists, and all sorts of experts who are undoubtedly very competent, and whose advice and knowledge should be of the greatest possible benefit to Western Australia. But unfortunately their services are not being availed of as they should be to assist the mining industry and particularly to assist in the development of our base metal deposits. There is one officer who in my inexpert and non-technical opinion should devote at least nine-tenths of his time to field work. I worked in the Geological Survey Department for nearly 12 months, and in the whole of that time that officer never once went out of the office to do any work. The whole of his activities were confined to work inside the office, and in my opinion he would have been at least ten times more valuable in the field directing and helping in the development of our mineral deposits. That position unfortunately exists right through the department. It is very much more congenial for a man to work all the time in an office in Perth than to go out in the fields for two or three months, subjecting himself to fairly rough travelling and camping in order to assist the various mining companies and others. Those officers, because they are not goaded to take the field, find it more convenient to remain in their offices. I hope some reorganisation of the department will be undertaken to enable us to make greater use of the technical advice of the officers available. Every member representing a goldfields constituency knows that the bulk of the time of departmental officers is occupied in making reports of very small value on all sorts of tinpot applications. Officers drawing fairly considerable salaries are detailed to make reports on all sorts of tiddlywinking things that should not occupy their attention at all. They should be engaged in making comprehensive reports to determine the commercial possibilities of the various mineral deposits throughout the State, and even if it took two, three or five years to set forth the commercial possibilities in definite form, the time should be devoted to the work. Assistance to prospectors could be granted on a more liberal scale than has been the practice so far. I do not wish to labour this point, because I understand the Minister is now considering the advisableness of dealing with certain matters in my electorate, and I have no desire to attempt to prejudice or influence his decision. The de-

partment, however, could take a broader view of the matter than that of their own costs. Practical men know that the cost of taking a crushing, for instance, from Bulbinna to the Coolgardie State battery is not confined to the cartage, railway and battery charges. It is necessary for a man to accompany the crushing to the battery to see it go through, and that sometimes involves a fortnight's stay in Coolgardie, during which time he must spend a few shillings. That expenditure ought to be added to the cost of getting the crushing through. A prospector is hampered through not having crushing facilities handy to the place where he is getting the ore. Prospectors in my district find the cost of waiting a grave handicap. They have no grievance on the score of the assistance granted on cartage and railage, nor on the score of the charges made by the Coolgardie State battery. The assistance given is as liberal as it possibly could be, but the gilt is completely knocked off the crushing by reason of a man having to go to Coolgardie and hang about there for ten days or a fortnight while his crushing goes through.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is the most expensive part of the process.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes; a man might take in a 20-ton crushing that goes half an ounce to the ton. The department's figures would show that he had made a handsome profit, but after he had knocked around Coolgardie for a fortnight, not much of the profit would be left. The department might well stretch a point for the benefit of men engaged in active prospecting and development, even if it meant the loss of a few pounds, by providing crushing facilities on the spot. It has struck me that the Government have been somewhat insistent on the central goldfields mining companies doing their job as laid down in the report of Mr. Kingsley Thomas. True, the Government have not refused to assist the companies; as a matter of fact this week the Government gave evidence of a desire to assist the companies wherever possible, but they have not been as generous as they would have been had the companies immediately given effect to Mr. Kingsley Thomas's suggestions. On the other hand, Mr. Kingsley Thomas recommended the Government to do certain things, and the Government have not been nearly so insistent in carrying out the recommendations that applied to them. Mr. Kingsley Thomas made a couple of recommendations which, if given effect to, would prove of considerable benefit

to the industry. When the Minister for Mines is dealing with the development of mining I hope he will not lose sight of those recommendations. Particularly do I hope he will recognise the value of making more extended use of the undoubted technical knowledge available amongst the officers of the department. Let us have clerks if clerks are needed, but do not use highly skilled technical officers to do clerical work. Let us have the benefit of their ability to direct mining shows, and thus make some tangible effort to place mining on a sounder basis than it occupies to-day. Let me refer to the development of the South-Eastern portion of the State; I speak of the country lying south of the eastern goldfields line and east of the spur lines running out from the Great Southern railway. In the eastern portion of the State there is a huge territory that has scarcely been tapped. There is a little settlement at Ravensthorpe, not a great deal, and efforts have been made in the last few years to establish settlement on a comprehensive scale in the Esperance-northwards area. In addition there is considerable territory available that I hope will be used to a much greater extent in the next year or two than it has been so far. I am more concerned about the method by which the country will be opened up and developed rather than the question whether it will be developed. I consider that the land hunger now existing will force the development of that country, and so I feel more concerned about the methods of development to be employed. Lying south of Southern Cross is the biggest continuous area of first-class country that exists anywhere in Western Australia. It is known as the Forestania belt, and surveyors who have already made a rough classification and survey of it estimate that it is capable of absorbing between 1,500 and 1,600 settlers. That is enormous. We have an area of country there capable of carrying 1,500 or 1,600 settlers each with a block of 1,000 acres in one continuous belt. Unfortunately that land lies some distance from present rail communication. It extends from some 40 miles south of Southern Cross to about 110 miles, and is 30 to 40 miles wide. It lies from 80 to 90 miles east of the present spur lines running eastwards from the Great Southern line. An extensive railway policy is necessary to open up that territory. Despite that, the area of land available justifies whatever expenditure is necessary to carry out the job.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is it all wheat land?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes. I have been right through it. It is a continuous belt of heavy salmon gum and gimlet forest. There is practically nothing but salmon and gimlet in it. There are a few patches of boree but not many.

Mr. Griffiths: Is there any morrel?

Mr. CORBOY: I have never seen a morrel tree in that locality. It is all salmon gum and gimlet. There is a little mallee amongst the salmon and gimlet, and there are a few patches of boree. The whole of that country, as any practical farmer knows, is eminently suitable for wheat production. That area alone is capable of settling between 1,500 and 1,600 settlers. It is a most valuable asset to the State. Knowing how valuable it is I am sure it will be opened up. I am most concerned, however, about the method in which it will be opened up.

Hon. G. Taylor: There would be surface water on it?

Mr. CORBOY: I believe some mining has been done there, and wherever water has been struck it has been salt, as is usual in salmon gum country.

Hon. G. Taylor: Are there any rocks there available for catchment?

Mr. CORBOY: There are five splendid rock wells along the track inside that belt. There is good water in each of them. They are Government wells, and have been properly constructed and protected against vermin. The catchment is quite good. Most of the country is undulating and there is practically nothing flat about it. The Engineer-in-Chief has put up a comprehensive scheme for the construction of two principal trunk railways through the south-eastern part of the State. I hope that before the Government come to any decision as to the adoption of his scheme, they will also give the Railway Advisory Board every opportunity to submit their ideas as to the best method of opening up that part of the State. I have gone into both reports as thoroughly as possible, and am satisfied that the board has just as sound a scheme as has the Engineer-in-Chief. I hope the Government will satisfy themselves beyond all doubt as to which authority is right before coming to any decision as to the method to be followed in opening up that part of the State. I regret very much the position that exists in connection with farming in the Ravensthorpe area. For some 20 years over

100,000 acres have been alienated in that district. Despite this only 8,000 acres are under crop. A few settlers have played the game, have developed their holdings, and are doing their best to pioneer the district and place it on a sound footing.

Mr. Griffiths: Freights have killed wheat growing there.

Mr. CORBOY: The great majority of those who took up this land have hung on to it ever since for speculative purposes and have not done a tap to it. Had everyone done what these few settlers have done, there would have been no question of freights, because all hands would have been able to charter a ship and send their wheat away as was done at Esperance. Those few settlers are faced with an almost impossible position. If they do not get relief they must go off the land after all their years of work. Because of the smallness of the district there is only one wheat buyer there, and the settlers must accept whatever price is offering. In addition to this burden, they have to face a freight of no less than 11½d. per bushel from Ravenshorpe to the Fremantle wharf. That is double the highest freight existing in any part of the railway system of the State. The highest freight is from Nyabing to Fremantle. The Ravenshorpe settlers have to rail their wheat from Hopetoun and then ship it to Albany or Fremantle, and for this they have to pay 11½d. per bushel. There has been a reduction of no less than one-third in the freight since I have represented the district. Before that it was not less than 1s. 3d. a bushel. Last year the settlers had to accept 4s. 2d. a bushel and face a freight of 11½d. They are in an impossible position, and cannot carry on. I hope it will be possible either to give them some relief as to the freights, or in some other direction, such as forcing the other owners of the land in the district to put it to proper use. If the land were all brought under cultivation, this would solve the difficulty of the settlers, for sufficient wheat could be produced to enable them to fill a ship of their own and send their wheat direct to some European port.

Mr. Thomson: The present settlers are in urgent need of relief.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes, that is so. The difficulties confronting them must be faced, and they must be given some relief. If one started out to subsidise wheat growing, I do not know where it would end.

Mr. Thomson: Because of their peculiar circumstances, these people are entitled to favourable consideration.

Mr. Davy: It would end at about the same place as it would end in the case of subsidising gold mining.

Mr. CORBOY: These people have put up an exceptionally good fight after a long period of years.

Hon. G. Taylor: A reduction in freight would not be a sufficient consideration for them.

Mr. Thomson: They could be given a through bill of lading.

Mr. CORBOY: They have that at present. There is not much to quarrel about with regard to the State shipping service. That service gave the whole of the reduction that was secured on the last occasion. It is the Railway Department, unfortunately, which has sat tight. The only solution seems to be that the Government should subsidise the carriage of that wheat. Personally I am not a scrap concerned as to where the concession comes from: that is the Treasurer's job. The position of those people is hopeless at present, especially as they are being forced, year after year, to accept 3d. or 4d. per bushel below Western Australian parity for their wheat. I sincerely hope action will be taken by the Government not only to subsidise or assist in some way the carriage of that wheat to its market, but also to force into production lands held for speculative purposes over so many years in that district. If the whole of the lands taken up in the district had been brought into production, undoubtedly the difficulties of the settlers in regard to freight would have solved themselves by this time. The greater part of the land there is not carrying a grain of wheat or a head of stock to-day. I ask that the law be enforced in regard to such unused land. From the intending settler's point of view, all the land worth taking up in the district has already been alienated, though a great deal of it is not being used. I hope the Government will avail themselves of the powers vested in them and force that land into production, thus helping towards a solution of the freight problem. While on the land question I wish to state that despite the Jeremiahs, the people who have asserted that the Southern Cross, Yilgarn, and Bullfinch areas are capable of producing only one bushel per acre, two of the most responsible officers of the Agricultural Department have declared that those areas will probably

top the State average for wheat production this year. I admit straight out that the district has had an exceptional season, nearly five inches of rain falling in September. I assure the Treasurer, and also the Minister for Lands, that there is no misunderstanding in the minds of the settlers. They realise that the season has been exceptional, and Ministers need not fear any motor car mania because of 21 and 22-bushel crops on most of the properties there this year. The settlers also realise that they will not get such a season next year, but probably a normal season, and that therefore they must go in for sheep, the combination of wheat and sheep. Before they can do that, however, it is essential that they should have something in the nature of an established water supply. The settlers are practically alongside the gold-fields main, and I appeal to the Treasurer to take up once more the question of reticulating the area from the mains, thus enabling the settlers to stock their holdings as they should. There is no doubt about the stock-carrying capacity of the country. If the Honorary Minister assisting in the administration of the Lands Department were here, he would tell members, as I do, that alongside the cleared roads the feed is as high as the crops, which are magnificent. The crops are clean, and alongside the roads there is a wonderful growth of feed this year. With water facilities available, an enormous quantity of stock would be carried in the district. I hope the time is not far distant when the Government will have the money available to open up that area. A start should be made by running out key mains to set points, and there erecting standpipes.

**Mr. E. B. Johnston:** Are the dingoes a trouble?

**Mr. CORBOY:** Not yet; but they will become troublesome, and it may be necessary to provide against them. The settlers have always recognised that, and it is not uncommon in passing through the district to see posts already in the ground for dog-proof fencing, which is being done first instead of last in that district. It may come as a surprise to members when I tell them that from Southern Cross to Bullfinch, and east of the line from Southern Cross to Bullfinch, not west of it, there will be exported this year, it is estimated, 88,000 bags of wheat. That is a magnificent achievement for the second harvest of those people. So one can say that although the season has

been wonderful, the district has proved itself, has proved that we have not even yet pushed agricultural development too far east. I hope the Government will make every effort to continue the investigations already started in the district, and show how the land can best be utilised. I trust the points I have advanced will receive some attention from the Ministers for Lands and Mines, and that we shall continue to have the same activities in the future as we have had in the past.

**MR. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle) [10.29]: The Estimates for this year show a decrease in the revenue to be derived from the Fremantle Harbour Trust, owing to the large amount of dredging rendered necessary by the washaway of the Fremantle railway bridge last year. At first the decrease struck me as remarkable; but as the result of inquiries I have discovered that the effect of the washaway was to silt up part of the harbour. Although as a general rule the Harbour Works Department do the dredging, in this particular case there has been some negligence on the part of the Railway Department. The Government propose that during the coming year the cost of dredging shall be a debit against the Harbour Trust. That is wrong logically. The cost should be debited to the Railway Department, who are responsible for the silting up of the harbour. It will mean that the revenue from the trust will be less this year. I think the whole system is wrong. Governments have regarded the Fremantle Harbour Trust as a good milch cow. From the Harbour Trust there comes about £100,000 every year into Consolidated Revenue, and no Government will let that go lightly. While that revenue is going into the funds of the State every year, works are being carried out from loan funds on which we have to pay interest. I believe the Harbour Trust should be more self-contained and should be allowed to retain the profits for use in connection with the maintenance and improvement of the harbour. I believe we could go further than that and allow the trust to float loans for necessary work in the Fremantle harbour. I will not proceed further with that point, but I think it is a question that should receive attention, because the procedure proposed seems to be departing from the usual method under which money for dredging instead of being debited against the harbour works is to be debited against the Harbour Trust. The pace at which the reconstruction of Victoria Quay is proceeding is far too slow, and at the pres-

ent rate it will be many years before the work is completed. Work has been proceeding on Victoria Quay for a long time and yet not very much has been done. Unless the work is speeded up, both in connection with the Victoria Quay and with the North Wharf as well, each wharf will be in a dangerous condition. So far as the bridge is concerned, I will leave anything I have to say until the Loan Estimates are before us. I expect that provision will be made for that work, but whether or not I shall be disappointed I cannot say. I hope the provision will be made, in which event I shall be saved from speaking about something that should have been included. There is another matter to which I desire to refer because it indicates how one department is able to over-ride another. It is true that I am somewhat of a new chum in this House, but I cannot quite understand how one Minister seems to be able to over-ride another Minister. Some time ago I had occasion to refer to the treatment meted out to a school teacher at the most western part of my electorate, Rottneest Island. The little board of control operating there decided that the school teacher had been wasting water and without ado they cut off the water from his quarters and established it in the paddock adjoining the school. I protested to the Minister for Education and a few weeks afterwards I received the following reply from him:—

With reference to your interview with me recently on the subject of the Rottneest School, I have to inform you that the Works Department have been asked to arrange for the provision of a tap in the school yard and one in the teacher's quarters.

That seemed satisfactory and I thought I was making progress. A few weeks later I received the following letter from the Works Department:—

With reference to the inquiry you made with regard to the provision of a tap at the school quarters at Rottneest, I have, by direction, to inform you that an order was given for a tap to be supplied, but only just before the regular boat service ceased, and endeavours are now being made to get the secretary of the board to utilise the services of one of his men to fix the tap.

I immediately communicated the contents of the letter to the school teacher at Rottneest.

Mr. Thomson: You thought your job was done.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I thought the water tap difficulty had been fixed up and that I would not hear any further complaints on that score from the island. A few days after the Minister for Works had returned from the

Eastern States—he was appointed to the position of President of the Rottneest Board of Control as well—he paid a visit of inspection to Rottneest Island. When he returned to the mainland I received the following letter from the Works Department:—

Adverting to my letter of the 19th inst. regarding the provision of a tap at the school quarters at Rottneest, I have to inform you that my hon. Minister inquired into this matter when he was at Rottneest on Saturday, and he states that good reasons existed for the removal of the tap, and that it will not work hardship to the children, and those to whom it may cause some inconvenience have themselves to blame.

That sounds very nice! In these days when we stand for British justice, we should expect both sides to be heard. We should expect that a Minister would realise that there were two sides to the question. The Minister for Works heard one side of the case only. He accepted the ex parte statements of interested persons and did not hear the version of the school teacher at all. The least the Minister could have done was to give the school teacher a hearing.

Hon. G. Taylor. He sent the Honorary Minister to conduct an inquiry.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I went to the Minister for Education shortly afterwards and protested to him about the see-saw way the business had been dealt with, and later I received a letter from Mr. Drew.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You should have a Cabinet meeting to deal with such a matter.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Minister for Education wrote as follows:—

Further to my letter of the 29th April, relative to the water supply at the Rottneest school, I now regret to inform you that the Minister for Works is unable to authorise the desired connection. The Minister advises me that he has personally looked into the matter, and he states that good reasons existed for the removal of the tap. He is of the opinion that the children will not suffer any hardship.

Members will see that notwithstanding that Mr. Drew first investigated the case and found that the tap should be restored, the Minister for Works decided that it should not be restored.

Mr. Thomson: That shows how closely Ministers attend to their duties.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I hope the tap will not wreck the Government.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hope not. This may seem a small matter, but there is an important principle involved. Owing to the action of the Minister for Works the school-master or his wife will be put to inconven-

ience and seeing that the man is next door to a cripple I consider the treatment extended to him extremely harsh. If the man had been wasting water, I still say that the treatment was harsh. The board decided to cut the water off without giving him a chance at all.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Had he a meter installed?

Mr. SLEEMAN: There are no meters there. Other people at Rottnest can have water throughout their houses and in their bath rooms and so on, yet because this man is supposed to have wasted a little water, he is put to this inconvenience. It may be said that people in the country have to suffer greater hardships, but that does not excuse the treatment that was meted out to the teacher at Rottnest. I have never heard of such a thing being done before, although I know water has been cut off when people have not been able to pay their rates.

Mr. Lindsay: I have done it myself hundreds of times when people have wasted water.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Were they your employees?

Mr. Lindsay: No, I was employed to do it. That was one of my jobs at the time.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I will not take up any further time in dealing with this question. Members seem inclined to take the tap as a joke, but if they were in the position of the school teacher they would not regard it as such. It is all very well to talk of matters of national interest in the House, but when we find that one of our electors is getting anything but a fair deal, it is time to bring the matter forward. Certainly it is the little things that count. Other items here I shall be able to deal with on the separate divisions, but had I not got up when I did I should not have been able to ventilate that grievance.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Legislative Assembly, £2,728:*

Item, Members' Postage and Telegrams £325:

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Vote last year was £325, and the actual expenditure was £375. The original stamp allowance was exhausted at the end of March, and an excess vote of £50 was granted. That ran out at the end of April. During May and June many members had none of their allowance left, and had to pay pretty heavily, for they could not get any stamps at all. I understand that ten members of

the House draw £10 each, while the other 40 draw £5 each. It is a question whether something permanent should not be done if in the future the fund should be exhausted. Certainly provision should be made that those members who suffered last year should not be left lamenting again this year.

The PREMIER: It is very kind of the hon. member to take up the case for other members. I should imagine that if every member was so prolific a writer as the hon. member who has spoken, the allowance would require to be trebled. I do not say the hon. member should not use his allowance. Probably he uses it to good purpose. But in years past the amount set down here has been sufficient, until it came to last year, when of course we had a general election, which largely increased the demands upon members' stamps. Since we do not expect to have a general election this year, we should be able to get through on the amount set down. For many years after I entered the House there was no stamp allowance at all.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the main allowance was very small.

The PREMIER: Yes, only one-third of what it is to-day. I think members can get along with £10 each for stamps. From inquiries made I learn that a fair number do not use the whole of their allowance.

Mr. Thomson: You can't say that of many country members.

The PREMIER: Yes, even country members. I think the amount is sufficient.

Mr. THOMSON: There are occasions even without elections when the amount provided is not sufficient. There should be some elasticity in regard to this item. I know the Premier has not laid down the allowance, for it was laid down by the House Committee. But when the postage was 1d., members were allowed £10, and with the postage at 1½d. it is still £10. Frequently I have a considerable number of telegrams to send, and I think the Premier would have been justified in increasing the allowance. However, since he does not seem inclined to do so, I will content myself with supporting the protest put up by the member for Avon.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Joint House Committee £4,767, Joint Printing Committee £4,251, Joint Library Committee £375—agreed to.*

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.51 p.m.*