

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 2nd August, 1922.

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

QUESTION—WHEAT, QUANTITIES AVAILABLE.

Hon. J. DUFFELL asked the Minister for Education: 1, What quantity of wheat is still available in this State for export? 2, What quantity of wheat is still available for local consumption?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Approximately 3,000 tons. 2, Approximately 20,000 tons.

QUESTION—CLOSER SETTLEMENT BILL.

Select Committee's Inquiry.

Hon. J. DUFFELL asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay on the Table of the House a print of the evidence taken by the Select Committee on the Closer Settlement Bill introduced during the last session of Parliament, and the letter from the Chairman of that committee addressed to him as Leader of the House after that evidence had been taken?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Yes. The papers will be made available to-morrow.

QUESTION—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY, FEES.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay on the Table of the House a return showing the fees paid under "The Inspection of Machinery Act, 1904"—(a) For inspection of all types of machinery, boilers, and air receivers, (b) For each grade of certificate to engine-drivers?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. The return is attached hereto. 2, Regarding air receivers, these were not provided for under the 1904 Act and no statutory authority to charge fees existed.

QUESTION—PUBLIC DEBT.

Hon. A. SANDERSON asked the Minister for Education: 1, On 30th June, 1922, how much inscribed stock was current (a) in London? (b) Elsewhere? 2, Of the public debt of Western Australia on 30th June, 1922, how much is in inscribed stock and how much in other securities? 3, Of the total public debt of Western Australia on 30th June, 1922, how much is chargeable with sinking fund?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, (a) £32,955,353. (b) £8,887,693. 2, Inscribed stock, £41,843,046; other securities, £13,117,303. 3, £35,041,852.

QUESTION — FREMANTLE—BUNBURY SWAMP LANDS.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay on the Table of the House all papers held in the Lands Department giving information as to levels and area of swamp lands between Fremantle and Bunbury.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: These papers are very voluminous and will be made available to the hon. member at the office of the department. Any that he then desires to have placed on the Table of the House can be produced.

QUESTION—CARNATION WEED.

Hon. H. STEWART (for Hon. C. F. Baxter) asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay on the Table of the House all papers relating to the Carnation weed?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: These papers are being continually required in the Department, but are available for the hon. member's perusal.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT, STAFF.

Hon. H. STEWART (for Hon. C. F. Baxter) asked the Minister for Education: Will he furnish a return showing (a) the number of additional appointments to the staff of the Agricultural Department from 30th January, 1921, to 30th June, 1922? (b) The positions held and salaries paid to all those appointed during that term?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: (a) Nine. (b) Two "agricultural advisers," salary £252 per annum each; one "field officer," salary £234 per annum; six "cadets," salary £72 per annum each. (Retirements and transfers made during this period show a saving of over £2,000 after allowing for these new appointments.)

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, NARROGIN.

Hon. H. STEWART (for Hon. C. F. Baxter) asked the Minister for Education:

What was the expenditure during the past 18 months at the Narrogin Agricultural School on (a) Buildings? (b) Improvements to farm property? (c) Additional machinery?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: The amount of expenditure during the past 18 months at the Narrogin Agricultural School is as follows: (a) Buildings, approximately £4,000, including work nearing completion. (b) Improvements to farm property, £643 (water and light). (c) Additional machinery, £75; repairs to machinery, £111.

QUESTION—NORNALUP WORKS, EXPENDITURE.

Hon. H. STEWART (for Hon. C. F. Baxter) asked the Minister for Education: Have the Government expended any moneys in the Nornalup area during the past 2½ years? If so, what is the nature of such expenditure and what are the separate costs of the different works which have been carried out?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Yes. Lands and Surveys Department. Surveys: Precise information is not available until obtained from Bridgetown. Expenditure during the past 2½ years is between £3,000 and £4,000. Public Works Department (roads and bridges): Bridgetown-Denmark railway survey, £19,434; Bridgetown-Denmark road, £18,243; bush rest houses, Bridgetown-Denmark road, £35; Deep River bridge, £605; Frankland River bridge, £1,764; Walpole River bridge, £301; total, £40,382.

QUESTION—PEEL ESTATE AND GROUP SETTLEMENTS.

Hon. H. STEWART (for Hon. C. F. Baxter) asked the Minister for Education: What do the Government advise settlers to produce on the Peel Estate and group settlements?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Dairy produce, pigs, fruit, potatoes, vegetables, fodder crops.

QUESTION—RAILWAY PROJECT.

Lake Grace to Newdegate.

Hon. H. STEWART (for Hon. C. F. Baxter) asked the Minister for Education: Is it the intention of the Government to extend the railway from Lake Grace to Newdegate?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: The matter has not been determined.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 1), £1,763,950.

Received from the Assembly, and read a first time.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.43]: In accordance with notice given, I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable a Supply Bill to be received from the Legislative Assembly and to be passed through all its stages at one sitting.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.44]: I propose to move an amendment to the Minister's motion. I understand the hon. gentleman is not inclined to object to the amendment. We know that the Leader of the House has important business to attend to on behalf of the State in Melbourne, for which purpose he must leave not later than Thursday. The House will therefore practically be in recess for a fortnight, and I do not wish to lose the value of that time when it can be profitably employed. At the beginning of the session I gave notice of motion asking for the appointment of a joint select committee to inquire into the working of the electric light agreement made between the Government and the Perth City Council. I found that if I pursued that motion the proposed committee could not avail itself of the fortnight's recess which we are about to have. Therefore I have withdrawn that motion, and to-day given notice of another in its place, asking for the appointment of a select committee of this House only. If hon. members will assent to the amendment which I am about to move, then to-morrow I will move for the appointment of the select committee, and we can do some useful work during the fortnight. That is my sole object. I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the motion:—"And, further, to consider and adopt if thought fit a motion having for its object the appointment of a select committee to report on the operations and working of the agreement entered into between the Government and the Perth Municipal Council, dated 16th October, 1913, in respect of the purchase of electric current.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [4.47]: I second the amendment, but only with a certain amount of hesitation. It is not desirable to suspend the Standing Orders except for very good reasons. It would be wrong to make this amendment a precedent. A notice of motion is required for the suspension of the Standing Orders for a specific purpose, and to alter that purpose by an amendment is, I think, contrary to the spirit of the procedure. It is highly undesirable that on some future occasion this should be used as a precedent for the amendment of a motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders. On that future occasion such an amendment might involve something very much more important than is involved in the amendment before us. I hope the House

will agree to the amendment, but I hope also this procedure will not be taken as a precedent, nor as any encouragement for the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban)—On amendment—[4.50]: It will be within your recollection, Sir, that six years ago the Leader of the House made these remarks:—

“The intention of the present Government in regard to finance is to restore full Parliamentary authority. I think I could not express our policy in that respect any better if I spoke for half an hour. We desire in all these matters to restore the authority of Parliament in every respect.”

It is the desire of the Government to restore the authority of Parliament in dealing with the State's finances, yet we are asked to suspend the Standing Orders, a course which practically destroys Parliamentary control over the finances. Without opportunity for discussion, we are to suspend the Standing Orders and put the Bill through in one sitting. For what purpose? To enable the Leader of the House to go to Melbourne.

The Minister for Education: No; it has always been done.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: What does the hon. member mean by that—since he has been in office?

The Minister for Education: And before.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Then this is the ordinary procedure of Parliamentary practice! Where? In this State, in Australia?

The Minister for Education: Everywhere.

Point of Order.

The President: For the information of new members, I might point out that Standing Order 423 reads as follows:—

In cases of urgent necessity any Standing Order, or sessional Order, or Orders of the Council, may be suspended on motion duly made and seconded, without notice, provided that such motion is carried by an absolute majority of the whole number of members.

I think the motion and the amendment ought to be put separately, because they have no connection with each other. I ask that hon. members address themselves to the amendment first.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Standing Order 123 says that the question, having been proposed, may be amended by leaving out certain words only, by inserting or adding certain words, or by leaving out certain words in order to insert or add other words.

The President: I am not opposing the amendment. I am merely explaining that the two do not seem to have application to each other, and that therefore the question to be decided is whether the amendment should be adopted.

Hon. A. Lovekin: If it is not put in the way I am suggesting, I shall be in some difficulty, because I have not given notice of

the amendment; I was not able to do so until the Minister put his motion on the Notice Paper. I submit that I am quite within my rights in moving the amendment.

The President: I do not say you are not. I want the House to say whether or not it will adopt the amendment. If agreed to, it will make one motion with that of the Minister.

Hon. J. Ewing: Does Mr. Lovekin intend to go on with this motion to-day? That is the crux of the position. Due notice was given of the Minister's motion, and so it has only to be carried by a majority. Could not Mr. Lovekin give notice to-day and move his amendment to-morrow, when his motion for the appointment of the select committee will come on? As it is, the Minister's motion can be carried by a majority, whereas the hon. member's amendment will require to be carried by an absolute majority of the whole House.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Standing Order 125 provides that every amendment must be relevant to the question to which it is proposed to be made. I ask, do you Sir, rule that this amendment is relevant to the motion?

Hon. A. Lovekin: I submit that the amendment is relevant under Standing Order 123. Both the motion and the amendment are for the suspension of the Standing Orders.

The President: I have decided that the amendment is in order. All that the House has to determine is whether it will agree to the amendment being taken with the motion.

Debate resumed.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am indifferent whether it is for the appointment of this select committee or for the business of the whole House that the Standing Orders are to be suspended. It would be a good thing to suspend the Standing Orders for the rest of the session; then we could do anything we liked, and the Leader of the House and Sir James Mitchell and Mr. Scaddan could run this country as a triumvirate. The sooner they ran it on the rocks, the better. We could not wish for a fitter illustration than the contradiction of this restoring of the authority of Parliament. We are to adjourn for a fortnight. For what purpose? To allow the Minister to go to Melbourne. What for? To get some money, I suppose. I am opposed to suspending our Standing Orders under present conditions. I should explain the danger of this procedure to those members who have newly come amongst us, and whom I am pleased to welcome here. This is the beginning of the session, and this is the first Supply Bill. At the end of the session we shall be asked to again suspend the Standing Orders and, at three, four, five or six o'clock in the morning, the Government will run through the whole of their financial policy. That is no exaggeration, as the records will show. It has been the procedure ever since the present Leader of the House came into office. Our intention is to restore full Parliamentary authority. What

will happen if we do not suspend the Standing Orders? Where will the money come from for the two months' supply?

The PRESIDENT: Hon. members might address themselves to the amendment. If the amendment is agreed to the two questions may then be discussed as one. If the amendment be rejected the question of suspending the Standing Orders in connection with the Supply Bill only will be before the House.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I evidently misunderstood the position. I now understand that what we are permitted to discuss is Mr. Lovekin's amendment as to whether this select committee should also be embraced in the motion.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I really gave notice of it yesterday.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It would be more simple if we suspended the Standing Orders altogether and did what we liked. I have hitherto regarded the Standing Orders with a certain amount of respect. We now appear to be discussing the electric lighting of Perth. Let us assume that this is an urgent matter and one of importance. What the hon. member wishes is to tack this on to the motion moved by the Leader of the House. We have had a note of warning from probably one of the most highly qualified members on the floor of the House on the question of constitutional procedure, namely Mr. Kirwan. If we put this through I do not see how anyone else will be prevented from tacking on to a motion of this sort any other subject he liked. The Standing Orders, the wisdom of the ages, are provided for the regulation of our ordinary business.

Hon. A. Lovekin: If there is urgency, why not?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If there was a crisis there might be urgency. Possibly there is another crisis.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We do not want a crisis, but useful work.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Exactly. Apparently we are to begin by abolishing altogether the Standing Orders which have been given to us.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Not at all.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: These Standing Orders, the concentrated wisdom of the ages, are given to us to guide us in our public business. Very properly we are permitted to suspend the Standing Orders to deal with matters of urgency. We are now asked to regard electric lighting as a matter of urgency.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Not the Bill; it is the time that is a matter of urgency.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If Mr. Kirwan has not been able to convince the House of the unwisdom of this procedure, no remarks of mine will have any effect. I am therefore content to associate myself to the fullest extent with the note of warning uttered by Mr. Kirwan that the method of procedure is radically unsound.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.5]: I support the amendment moved by Mr. Lovekin. I cannot forget what oc-

curred during last session when a very important Bill was before us, and a select committee appointed to deal with it. That committee was appointed too late for it to make any progress in the matter of reforming or amending the Bill. It will be conceded that the subject matter of the amendment is of such vital importance that, if it has to be dealt with, the sooner we get to work on it the better. No doubt it means a tremendous amount of time and labour for those connected with the select committee, but the question is of such importance as to demand the very best of those who will be associated with it. It is therefore essential that the members in question should be able to get to work while the Leader of the House is in Melbourne transacting important business on behalf of the State. I am sure he would be relieved to know that in his absence this Chamber will not be altogether idle, but will be engaged in work of a useful nature.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—on amendment) [5.8]: I have no objection to the amendment. As Mr. Lovekin has made reference to my intention to go to Melbourne, it may be as well for me to explain the position. Shortly after the Premier left for London a question arose between the Commonwealth and all the States with regard to advances made by the Commonwealth to the States for the purpose of soldier settlement. Extensive correspondence has been carried on between the different State Treasurers, and the matter is now being brought to a head. The Treasurer of the senior State has convened a conference which will meet next week in Melbourne. I should have preferred that the Premier had attended this conference, and no doubt the Treasurers of the other States would have preferred it; but after his long absence in London, it is impossible for the Premier to be away at present. As I have conducted the whole of the correspondence as Acting Premier in his absence, he is anxious that I should attend the conference. It is a matter of great importance, otherwise I would not think of asking the House, as I propose to do, to adjourn for a fortnight in order that I may attend.

The PRESIDENT: Before putting the amendment I wish to make it clear that in voting on it members are including the subject matter of it for consideration under the motion to suspend the Standing Orders.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.13]: I congratulate Mr. Lovekin on getting his electric lighting business into the list.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is desired to deal with the principle.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The more serious matter is in connection with the finances. We are asked to suspend the Standing Orders to put the Supply Bill through in one sitting. I am satisfied that the statement of the Leader of the House that this is

the ordinary constitutional procedure in other Parliaments of the British Empire is entirely inaccurate.

The Minister for Education: It is repeatedly done in the House of Commons on the first Supply Bill.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: This is not the House of Commons. If the Minister refers to what has happened during the last five or six years in the House of Commons I am sure he must know to what extent the procedure and conditions have changed there. I see no necessity for putting this Bill through with the Standing Orders suspended. I am not positive as to the technical ground of the procedure, and am speaking subject to correction. If it is necessary to get the authority of this Chamber until the end of August, was it necessary to get it on the 1st July? How did the Government get the money from the 1st July? Were we asked for our consent? Was the question discussed, and were the Standing Orders suspended in order to do so? They were not. Why should we be compelled to be associated with this unbusinesslike way of conducting our public affairs? It cannot be according to the British Constitution to rush business through, particularly in regard to finance. I say the Minister for Education is inaccurate in his statement. Suppose he were not going to Melbourne, would it be necessary to put this Bill through in one sitting?

The Minister for Education: It would be the usual practice.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Perfectly true, because in the ordinary course of business Parliamentary authority would be given, and we would have a full opportunity for discussing the measure at the proper time and in the proper way. Members who have been here for over 12 months and probably also the newcomers, having followed our procedure, know that if we pass the motion before the Chamber and suspend the Standing Orders to deal with this Bill, at the end of the session the whole of the Government's financial proposals will come before us and will be put through in a hurried manner. I am not prepared to associate myself in any way with this financial procedure. These financial methods are radically unsound and have proved most disastrous. If hon. members are going to suspend the Standing Orders and pass the Bill, I would again refer them to the statement made by the Leader of the House on the 19th September, 1916, which I have already quoted. I do not consider the House is responsible, and I certainly am not, for running the country, but we all have our respective responsibilities in this matter. Each individual member has his place and his responsibilities. Do not let us exaggerate the position but do not let us shirk our responsibilities. As the Leader of the House has been permitted to make an explanation regarding his visit to Melbourne, I take it I am permitted to make my comments on his statements. They will be brief. It seems to me to be utterly un-

necessary for him to go to Melbourne. The business can be done through his colleagues or the Premiers or through our Federal representatives. If they are not able to secure what he is aiming at, his presence in Melbourne will not do much good. I am convinced of that. The debtor has a sound defence when he says that he will not pay.

Hon. J. Ewing: Is the Minister going to pay debts?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: We know his visit is in connection with this financial question. We will probably have him coming back, to be met with brass bands and with two Archbishops to welcome him. We are told by a high prelate that we are to do nothing but sit here and help. I am not prepared to follow the episcopal authority in that direction.

Hon. J. Ewing: Criticism is helpful.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have no hesitation in saying that if there were reasonable indication of support, I would divide the House to show that we will not tolerate this method of doing public business.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [5.18]: I can only say that it has been the practice not only since I have been a Minister of the Crown, but ever since there has been a Parliament in Western Australia, for the first Supply Bill to be passed with the suspension of the Standing Orders, in a single day. I have looked up the procedure adopted for the three years preceding the war and in each case the Standing Orders were suspended and the Supply Bill passed, the whole proceedings not occupying more than a page of "Hansard." This question has always been treated as a formal matter. There are many other opportunities, such as on the Address-in-reply, for discussing the finances. It is necessary for the Government to obtain a preliminary advance and that is all the Supply Bill aims at.

Question put and passed.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.19]: I do not intend to detain the House at any length. I do not know that there is anything I can add to the statements which have already been published. If there is any further information hon. members desire to obtain, I can readily supply it, if they ask for it. The Supply Bill brought forward at the present stage of the session is the usual one for two months and in this case it is for July, which has already expired, and for August. The Premier is at present engaged in the preparation of the Estimates. A preliminary draft of the Estimates was drawn up in his absence and forwarded to him at Colombo. He has been working on them ever since and as soon as possible the Estimates will be presented in another place. How long the Estimates will be before hon. members in that Chamber and

when they will reach us, I cannot say, but I hope it will be at a much earlier stage than usual. This present authority is merely for two months supply to cover the period to the end of August. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [5.22]: I feel that the Supply Bill should not pass through the Chamber, in view of the present state of the finances, without some discussion. If the Bill were passed without any comment, it would imply acquiescence on our part, in the policy of the Government. If I know anything regarding the genuine feelings of members of this Chamber, I think they feel, as I do, that the Government should do more than in the past to improve the financial position of the State. This House has a special responsibility in money matters inasmuch as it represents the taxpayers or those who have to bear the main burden of taxation. For that reason, it is particularly desirable that members should express their views on questions affecting finance, criticise the Government's proposal and offer such suggestions as may be advisable. A reference was made by the Leader of the House to the discussion which will take place on the Estimates at a later stage of the session. Members who have been in this Chamber for some time know that the discussion on the Estimates is usually not a good opportunity to deal with financial questions. The Estimates are generally brought in at a very late stage of the session and sometimes in the early hours of the morning, when the House is not in a condition to express itself regarding financial matters as members would desire. I suggest, particularly to new members, that if they are desirous of ventilating their views on the financial question, the best opportunity is when a Supply Bill is before the House. I do not suggest they should do that in order to delay the passage of the Bill, because delay will not do any good. If I thought that by delaying the passage of the Bill, we could improve the methods of the Government regarding finance, there is nothing that I would not do to achieve that end. I think members of this Chamber should have something to say, in view of the present extraordinary position of the State's finances. It may be an unpleasant and thankless task to repeat what is well known to hon. members of the Chamber and to the country generally, but I feel that the financial position of the State is not sufficiently impressed upon the minds of the Government, nor is the gravity of the situation appreciated by them. It would not be too much to suggest that we should have constantly before us, both in this Chamber and in another place, the fact that the accumulated deficit amounts to £5,700,000. If that information were posted in the most prominent position in both Houses of Parliament and in Ministers' offices, and if the fact were before every party meeting held throughout the country, we could not give too much prominence to the financial problem, because on that depends

the whole of the future prosperity of the State.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Someone has said that finance is government, and if our financial position be not sound, then the whole fabric of the State is unsound and we will, sooner or later, be placed in a very parlous position, if the present state of affairs continues. Sooner or later, if the present drift is maintained, we will have to appeal to the Federal Government under the clause of the Constitution which permits the Commonwealth Government to assist States in necessitous circumstances. I am not one of those who talk about bankruptcy and insolvency. They are unpleasant words and, no matter what the Government may do, there is no possibility of the State becoming bankrupt or insolvent because we are perfectly satisfied that the Commonwealth would not allow that position to be created, in view of the special provision in the Federal Constitution to meet a condition of affairs akin to that towards which the present Government seem to be leading the State. On the 27th July, 1916, the Scaddan Government went out of office. We all remember the comments that were made regarding the financial policy of that administration, and the leader in the condemnation of the financial policy of the Scaddan Government is to-day the Leader of this House. The new Government, of which he was one of the most prominent members, came in to establish two things. There were two special definite planks in their platform. One was for the establishment of sound finance and the other was for the restoration of the authority of Parliament. Mr. Sanderson, a little while ago, quoted a speech in which that remark was made over and over again by those who are members of the present Government. It is not my intention to refer to the question of restoring the authority of Parliament further than this: We need only mention what was done concerning the Lake Clifton railway; we know how the authority of Parliament was defied by the construction of the Como tramway despite the distinct instructions of Parliament that it should not be constructed and that there should be no extension of the metropolitan tramways without the authority of Parliament. These are two of the most glaring examples of the authority of Parliament having been defied. This does not affect the Council, but if another Chamber puts up with that sort of thing—a matter which rises far above the disputes of party politics—the party Chamber will sink considerably in the estimation of all who have any regard for the responsibility that ought to attach to Parliamentary government. We have seen how the Government have defied the authority of Parliament despite the fact that they came into office to restore the authority of Parliament, and I think it is even better known how they have acted in the matter of establishing the finances on a sound basis, straightening them out and living within the State's income. "Live within our income"

was the famous cry in those days. What actually happened can be put into a very few words. The Scaddan Government, whom these people so much condemned because of their financial policy, in a period of four years and nine months piled up a deficit of £1,360,000. Since the Scaddan Government went out in 1916—that is six years ago—and the Government came in standing for sound finance, the straightening of the finances and to insist on the State living within its income, a deficit of four and a half millions has been piled up. That is the record of the Government who came in to establish sound finance.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Can you find any record to beat that?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I think there is no record in the history of the world to beat that, when the population of the State is taken into account. The action of the Government is all the more unpardonable when we examine the circumstances attending their term of office. The war was in progress. Sometimes it is said, "Because of the war, this has happened." I say it is shameful that this should have happened while the war was in progress. This State had not to bear the burden of war expenditure. The burden of war expenditure was borne by the Commonwealth. It was the duty of the State during that time of stress and trouble to do everything possible to straighten out its finances and conserve its resources. Instead of that the Government went on spending extravagantly. Had there been any falling-off of revenue as a result of the war, there would have been some excuse for the Government, but year after year during the war period the revenue went on increasing, and year after year—though Mr. Sanderson, Mr. Holmes, and other members pleaded with the Government and put before them the position I am putting now—all we got were promises which have been proved to be utterly unavailing. Year after year has passed, and the same retrogression has continued. Further promises will no doubt be made now. We shall be told that, if something had not happened last year, or if something else had happened, the finances would be in a better position. Meanwhile things are going from bad to worse. Consider for one moment the tremendous growth of our revenue. I need quote only the figures for the financial year 1916-17, when the Government came into office, and the figures for last year. During these years there was a continuous growth of revenue. The revenue received during the first twelve months by the Government which succeeded the Scaddan Government—of that Government the present Government are the heirs, and the Leader of this House has been a member all along—was £4,570,000. During last year the revenue was £8,919,000. During these six years the revenue improved by £2,400,000. During last year we received £2,400,000 more than was received during the year subsequent to the Scaddan Government going out of office. But what do we find on the expenditure side? The expenditure has increased at the same or even a greater rate.

It has risen from £5,276,000 to £7,639,000. These figures show that it is not due to any falling-off of revenue or to any causes produced by the war, that the Government find themselves in their present position. It is simply and solely due to their spending far more money than they ought in order to make themselves popular in various directions. They have retained office by making promises which have never been fulfilled and by securing the support and sympathy of other parties who, it seems to me, do not realise how the dust has been thrown into their eyes.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The Government are paying the increased interest on the ten millions of money borrowed between 1911 and 1916.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: As regards the amount of money borrowed since then, I can give the exact figures. The hon. member is very wide of the mark when he talks in that way. It is sometimes asked, "Of what use are these speeches"—speeches such as I am making at present, and the speeches made by Mr. Sanderson and Mr. Holmes over and over again. It is rather painful for us to have to repeat all these things with tiresome reiteration and find nothing done. The only satisfaction which can rest with us is that we have tried and are trying to do our duty. So long as the present state of affairs continues, I shall not refrain from speaking in this way. It is occasionally said that our criticism is purely destructive. I deny that. Over and over again wise and useful suggestions have been made to improve the financial position. I have always contended that the financial position of to-day is not beyond redemption. I think it is beyond the capacity of the present Government to rectify it, but because it is beyond their capacity, it does not necessarily follow that the position is beyond redemption. If men came into power who had the courage to be unpopular, who recognised that it was necessary to tax heavily and to act drastically, it would be quite possible to restore the finances of the State. I am one of those who for years have voted against increased taxation, and I shall continue to vote against any increase of taxation to the present Government. Year after year the Government have been piling on taxation, though not with my consent. The stand I have taken with regard to increased taxation is this: If a Government come into power who will dare to be unpopular, who will tax the people heavily and will dare to enforce drastic economy, reorganise the departments and see that extravagance is abolished, they will have my support. I want to see extravagance abolished from the Premier's Department itself, which is the talk of Perth, and I want to see the reorganisation of a department so hopelessly inefficient and helplessly extravagant as the Public Works Department. There is great scope for economy. I shall always oppose any increase of taxation until I am satisfied that the Government are genuinely desirous of improving the finances. I do not desire that all the taxation resources of the country should be exhausted. Sooner

or later there must come a government of strong men who will dare to be unpopular and who will take control of the affairs of this country, and when that time comes I desire that there shall be some sources of taxation left open to them to assist them and help the State out of the fearful mess into which the present Government have got it.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: If you got strong Ministers of that sort in power, they would not get the support of Parliament.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I question that. If Ministers of that class came in I think they would receive the support of Parliament. There might be a good deal of difficulty, but I think the broad common sense of Parliament and of the State generally would prevail. It would be better to have a Government of this kind if they lasted for only a fortnight or a month, rather than go on in the helpless condition that prevails to-day. I made some reference to speeches delivered on the financial situation in this State. It is said there have been no suggestions for improvement, and that all the criticism has been destructive criticism. I deny that. To give one instance, I would quote Mr. Lovekin. Towards the end of last session he made a speech full of suggestions for the improvement of the finances, and every suggestion was worthy of consideration. With some of them I might not have altogether agreed, but some were certainly worthy of adoption. What happened? The Leader of the House, in his reply, dismissed the whole of the hon. member's arguments by referring to one comment Mr. Lovekin made about the age at which children should be admitted to public schools. He condemned the attitude of the hon. member on that one point alone, and that was the sole burden of the Minister's reply to all the suggestions advanced by Mr. Lovekin. I have over and over again urged that if the Government themselves cannot deal with this matter of the finances, they should get the advice of the best financial authorities in the State, but not necessarily follow it. The Imperial Government have done this, and surely what they have done to get expert advice ought not to be beneath the dignity of this State. Of all the suggestions made from time to time, no notice whatever has been taken. The drift continues, and the only certainty we have is that the finances of the State are rapidly going from bad to worse. It is fortunate that we have the Commonwealth, on whom we shall presently be able to fall back for assistance. Despite the comments made regarding the supposed hostile attitude of the Commonwealth Government to Western Australia, I feel sure they will see that the worst does not happen to this State. It will be rather a deplorable condition if we have to make an appeal to the Commonwealth for financial assistance, and it will be something that certainly will not be in keeping with the dignity of a sovereign State. That, however, is a state of things which will inevitably happen. I know that when the Minister replies he will say that the immigration policy of the Gov-

ernment will change everything, that that policy is going to improve our financial position. Every year he tells us of something new which is going to improve the existing state of things. But the one thing that is absolutely certain to me is that the financial position is such that we cannot meet our troubles by bringing to the State 75,000 immigrants. Of course there will be all the activities following the expenditure of the six millions loan, and everything in the garden will be lovely. Anyone would imagine that the policy that is being brought forward by the Government in the matter of immigration is something new, and we are led to believe that no previous effort has been made in the past in the direction of peopling this country. The Government would have us believe that the immigration policy is entirely a new and novel thing. I have a few figures which will show that we have done a good deal in the past in the way of immigration, and these figures will prove that a considerable sum of money has been spent in connection with agricultural immigration. I have before me some particulars of loan expenditure in this direction in previous years. I will take the pre-war years and show hon. members what was spent under the heading of immigration. In 1913-14 the loan expenditure amounted to nearly three million pounds; in 1912-13 it amounted to 3½ million pounds; and in 1911-12 the total was £2,309,000. Let us see how that money has been spent and compare it with the proposal of the present Government. I find that the greater part of the pre-war loan money was spent on railways, nearly all agricultural railways.

Hon. H. Stewart: The Bullfinch line was constructed about that time.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The majority of the railways were in agricultural centres. The Bullfinch was only a small line, but I do not think it was constructed in any of the years that I mentioned. However, the expenditure on that line was not material. It was small in comparison with the money spent on other lines. In 1913-14 the expenditure on railways alone was over a million; in the year before that it was a million and a half, and in 1912 it was £1,320,000. On immigration before the war—I take it that means bringing people from the Old Country and assisting them by way of paying their passages out—the amount spent was considerable. In 1913-14 the total was £56,000, in 1912-13 it was £63,000, and in 1911-12 it was £96,000. The Government propose now to give us something more definite than we had in the earlier years, inasmuch as they now directly specify the number of immigrants to be brought to the State each year for a period of three years. We shall then have a total of 75,000. I am thoroughly in favour of an immigration policy, and I believe that the mere fact that this Government are talking immigration, and are in favour of immigration, is almost the sole redeeming feature of an otherwise worthless Ministerial combination. The

proposal of the Government, however, will be more of Australian than of Western Australian advantage. What has happened in the past is going to happen in the future. We may like it or not, but the fact remains that an immense number of the settlers who will be brought out will not remain in Western Australia, they will go elsewhere.

Hon. J. Ewing. You really do not think that.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I am absolutely convinced of that; I am as certain of it as that to-morrow's sun will rise, that a large number of those people who are to be brought here will find their way to the Eastern States. Some hon. members deny that such will be the case, but I do not think we need go any further for support of my remarks than the Governor's Speech. There it is stated that during the period of 12 years the excess of arrivals over departures was something like 9,000. I know that on the Eastern Goldfields during the last year or two a number of people were desirous of settling on the land in Western Australia. They had forgotten their associations in the Old Country. I could give a list of names of people who tried to get land in Western Australia and who, in despair, finally went to the Eastern States. That kind of thing has happened on the goldfields over and over again. Some of those were people who did not even require help from the Agricultural Bank or the Industries Assistance Board. Only the other day I was speaking to a man who had secured an immigrant to work on a farm. That immigrant was a good worker but he remained on the farm only long enough to save money to enable him to go to the Eastern States. The glamour of the Eastern States is bound to attract many of the new arrivals. Many came here from the Eastern States, many who are of a restless disposition and who drift about Australia before ultimately settling down. Even supposing the most perfect arrangements be made, I think we will lose a large number of the people it is proposed to bring out. The whole question of immigration is one of good administration and good organisation. What hope is there of good administration or good organisation when we know what we do know of the present Government? There has been hopeless maladministration, but though the organisation and administration be good, I am certain we will still lose a large percentage of those who may be brought to Western Australia. The mere fact of their coming here shows that they are restless spirits, and having broken from their home associations, they will drift away. Under the best administration we may lose a large number and I consider we shall lose three-fourths of them. I assume that there will be no improvement in the future and we can hope for nothing so long as the present Government, with all the muddle and mess for which they have been responsible, remain in office.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.55]: Having listened to the hon. member, it seems to me that we have got back to the Address-in-reply. Is the question which has been discussed closely connected with the giving of Supply to the Government? I am not going to take up much time on that particular point, because I say that the Government have their responsibility and we have ours, and having clearly defined the limits of our powers, I do not think we are entitled to over-step them. One must also remember the opinions of others which have been expressed in this Chamber. We are not here to express our individual opinions. It is not the essential part of our business to give disjointed personal opinions on the position of affairs. I take it we are sent here to represent our constituents, and we must do our duty to the last and with the conviction that we are going to carry everything before us. I am satisfied that the time will come when the present Government will be swept into the oblivion they deserve. Do not make any mistake about that. Do not think that because we have picture palace demonstrations got up by picture palace managers and land agents to welcome back the head of the Government, with a brass band preceding him in the streets, that that kind of thing is going to impress us. If I want to be impressed by picture palace influence I will go and see a Charlie Chaplin picture. But I intend to protest, and intend to steer a strong and straight course in the direction I am going, and that is to educate and assist the public, who dominate the position. Those are the people I am here speaking for. Those are the only people I recognise as my masters. Now as regards the financial position of this country, let us get back to a little information which I obtained to-day. We have plenty of time, a full fortnight, to consider our position; and I would ask hon. members, I would beg hon. members, not as a personal favour, but as a favour to the people I am speaking for, that they will take into consideration this very small return which has been given. Our public debt, according to the statements we had this afternoon, and I want to be up to date, is 55 millions of money.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is gross.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Let me put the thing in my own way. I speak now of the answers to the questions I put this afternoon.

Hon. H. Stewart: To which portion of question 1 are you referring? I was not fast enough to get it all down.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: We ought to have had time to consider the figures. However, the Standing Orders have been suspended. If the figures which have been given me are incorrect—of course I do not suggest intentionally, but by mistake—our public debt is 55 millions. That is so according to the figures given this afternoon, though they were prepared in a hurry; as the Premier says, "There is no time to lose." Of those

55 millions, 42 are in inscribed stock, and 13 in other securities.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The 55 millions would include Treasury Bills, would it not?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I try to be as accurate as I can.

The Minister for Education: That figure is gross.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am surprised at the impudence of the financial authorities of this State, absolutely astonished. I do not know where they put the deficit; but they drag out a surplus, and say things are all right. As to the 42 millions in inscribed stock, 33 millions are in London and about eight millions in Australia. Now we come to the sinking fund, which I believe is roughly eight millions. The deficit is about six millions, let us say for the sake of simplicity. I admit, then, that legitimately one could deduct a couple of millions from the figure of the public debt. But do not let us deduct the eight millions of sinking fund.

The Minister for Education: But the deficit is included in that indebtedness.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Is the hon. gentleman positive on that point?

The Minister for Education: Yes.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I think it must be so, on those figures.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: We ought to discuss the matter and be quite certain, but we have not the necessary time. However, when we hear references to the sinking fund, let us remember that of the total debt only 35 millions is chargeable with sinking fund. The importance of that could be elaborated, and should be elaborated; but I will leave hon. members to work it out during the fortnight and see what an intimate connection the fact of only 35 millions of the inscribed stock being chargeable with sinking fund has with the statement so frequently made to us that in a large measure the difficult position in which we find ourselves is due to the fact that we are contributing so much to the sinking fund for the whole of our public debt. We are not doing anything of the sort. But let us not forget that we shall very soon be contributing sinking fund to a large proportion of our debt, because to the 35 millions now chargeable there will be added a considerable amount chargeable with sinking fund when it becomes inscribed stock. I do not wish to detain hon. members or delay public business unduly; so I will leave it at that. One will have an opportunity on the Address-in-reply to deal with the immigration policy.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [6.8]: I wish to associate myself with some, though not with all, of Mr. Kirwan's remarks. As to the Governments that have been in office latterly, I have repeatedly stated here that the financial position of the State can only be remedied if we have a Ministry of men of the right type to tackle the position. Such a Ministry would win the respect and support of the people of the country, if they did not win the support of the Parliament

in existence at the time Ministers showed their colours. What disappoints me in the conduct of the present Government is that year after year they put up plausible excuses as to why they cannot adopt some of the means suggested in order to meet the position, a position which is no more difficult than has faced and is facing other countries. There is, for example, the Government of New Zealand, who have taken drastic steps and are considerably improving their position. Our present Ministers are perfectly candid. They put forward only one remedy, which is to get more people into the country. That, Ministers say, will be a solution of all our troubles. Everyone in Western Australia wants to see increased population here, and therefore everyone favours an immigration policy; but that is no reason whatever for not endeavouring to modify the present conduct of the business of this country. Ministers have simply abandoned the question. They say the position cannot be remedied by any other means than that of getting increased population to share the burden of taxation and reduce the indebtedness per head. It depends on the success of the means adopted for settling those people, and on whether they remain here, instead of leaving the State, as has been done by immigrants in the past. The Premier has told us that by reason of the amount per head we shall receive from the Commonwealth Government in respect of these people, namely the 25s. per capita, we shall have no expense in connection with the finances required during the period we shall be responsible for two per cent. Now, taking the figure given by Mr. Lovekin yesterday as necessary to settle a family in the South-West, namely £750, and charging interest at six per cent. on that amount for the period of five years, we see that it would be a matter of about £47 per family per annum that this country would have to pay in interest. But at the 25s. per head of the population we need 39 people to recoup us that £47. I can see that in this matter Mr. Lovekin is somewhat befogged. The Premier's contention was that these people would cost us nothing, as we would be getting the 25s. per head from the Commonwealth. But, I repeat, at the rate of 25s. per head we want 39 people.

Hon. J. Duffell: But the period is five years.

Hon. H. STEWART: I think the hon. member appreciates the figures. Here is the position. If we are going to bring out only families averaging 12 in number, all I can say is that we shall be bringing out very fine families which should grow into very fine settlers. But I think we can hardly expect so high an average as that. To my mind it appears that there has been considerable looseness displayed in making the statement that under this scheme there will be practically no cost to the State of Western Australia, because of the increase in the population and the amount we get by way of per capita payment. The number

of people per farm will not be sufficient to create that position, contrary to what has been stated in the Press

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. H. STEWART: Before tea I was remarking that more definite steps than have yet been taken are required to bring about an improvement in the finances. In earlier years the Government expressed their intention of practising economy and reducing the deficit. Now in a general way they have abandoned that and pinned their faith to remedying the position by an immigration policy. I have previously expressed my pleasure at the vigour with which the immigration policy is likely to be carried out, and I fully appreciate the way in which the Premier concentrates on the development of the country. But I think something further is necessary in the reorganisation of the finances. The Premier has remarked that the Government would have to provide little if any money during the first five years because the per capita payment from the State would meet the two per cent. quota of the interest bill. If that be the position, and if six thousand people are settled during that period, in order that the per capita payment might meet the interest bill every one of the settlers will require to have associated with him 12 other people. Stated another way, if 2,000 settlers are placed on the land each year, and if we have arriving annually 25,000 people, and if £750 per head is to be advanced to the actual settlers, there will require to be 12 people with each settler in order to meet the interest on the amount of capital involved. The indication is that we are relying on each of those settlers to support 12 other persons. In the earlier stages of their settlement it cannot be done. There appears to be no justification for believing that within five years immigration will substantially improve the financial position of the State. Mr. Kirwan was wholesale in his denunciation of the administration of the series of Governments which have been carrying on since 1916.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Not without justification.

Hon. H. STEWART: The hon. member is quite entitled to his opinion. Whereas I agree with Mr. Kirwan's remarks as to the necessity for a Government of solid men, who by a policy of economy will improve the financial position, yet I do not associate myself with his wholesale unqualified condemnation of all the members of the Government. For instance, the Minister for Agriculture has won my admiration for his administration of the Lands Department during the Premier's absence. The hon. member will hardly include that Minister in his denunciation.

Hon. T. Moore: I have not seen anything remarkable from him.

Hon. H. STEWART: Some would not. However, I do not think this is the time for elaborating on that; I can attend to it at

some other time. As for the other Ministers, if we compare the efforts of the present Government with those of other Governments, we can only conclude that in some instances Ministers are neither better nor worse than others. Some of them do not even attempt to balance their ledgers, but adopt a policy of "spend while we have it." To a large extent that is the attitude of the Minister for Education. Of the very large increase in his expenditure I feel that a good deal might have been saved without impairing either the efficiency of his department or that of the coming generation. Frequently, when one criticises, one is asked, why not suggest something better? In many instances members have put forward suggestions, but the reply invariably given by the Government is that they will consider the matter when the time is opportune. Helpful suggestions, when put forward by hon. members, are not welcomed by the Government. That attitude is clearly shown by the slight notice that is generally taken of the reports of Royal Commissioners, although these are appointed by the Government. The methods followed by the Government are indirectly acting adversely towards any improvement in the condition and the prosperity of the country. In some directions their actions are not such as to encourage private enterprise in developing along lines which will make for increased work and the production of increased wealth. We all feel that the discovery of oil in Western Australia would be a great thing for the State—possibly as great a thing as the discovery of a new goldfield. Not long after the amending Mining Act was passed the whole of the State was leased in immense areas. The Act was not drawn up on lines that had met with the approval of the head of the Mines Department, who pointed out, in correspondence which took place prior to the Bill coming before Parliament, that it was not desirable in the interests of vigorous and enterprising prospecting to have oil leases granted in areas that were too large. The State has now been parcelled out in a few areas under certain restrictions, one of which was to limit the area which the successful discoverer of oil would be entitled to prior to other leases being granted. We now find that these rights have been sub-leased to other people. In the case of one prospecting area I understand there are now four subsidiary companies. No doubt those sub-lessees will, in the event of oil being discovered, each exercise pressure to secure the same rights to a reward area as the original lessee enjoyed. The position, however, is at variance with the desires of Parliament at the time when the Bill was passed. The policy of the Government generally is opposed to active prosecution by private individuals of work which will increase the amount of employment to people in the State. This position has been brought about by the action of the Government in granting these large areas. I admit that the granting of sub-leases is not opposed to increasing the amount of employment, but I do say the Government took action which is contrary to the spirit of Parlia-

ment. The position thus set up cannot be maintained unless it is subsequently legalised by legislation or Ministerial action. In other directions the actions of the Government are opposed to improving the financial position and to extending activities within the State. I refer now to workers' homes, the extension of the principle of which I was opposed to last session. When the Government enlarge their activities, as they have done in this way, private people will not take the risk of investing money. They feel their securities will be undermined by the Government starting out on the same lines of industry—in this case, house building. The State sawmills have now been extended by the establishment of depôts where many classes of building material are disposed of. The Government are still making it a condition in practically every public work that the material for it shall be obtained from either the State sawmills or the depôts associated with them. In the Great Southern it is often possible to obtain a supply of good scantlings from bush timber on the spot for some public work, such timber being prepared by the bushmen and being quite effective and satisfactory for the class of job. Instead of doing that the Government haul sawn scantlings over a considerable distance to put into these public works. This is an illustration to show that there is room for Ministers in their own spheres to do something more than they have done in the past five years towards improving the position of the finances. The general policy of the Government is not one, as a whole, which will bring about what Ministers desire, when they practically pin their faith on increased immigration for agricultural settlement by virtue of their having been able to arrange a cheap loan for five years.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (East) [7.55]: It seems to have become an established practice in this Chamber for a Bill of this nature to be brought before us. Although I am loth to depart from that practice and wish to assist the Government, there are certain phases of our expenditure I feel are open to review. Some hon. members have dealt extensively with these matters, but seeing that the House will probably rise for a fortnight it is just as well that members should have something to say now. It may have the effect of holding the hands of the Government in some of their wild expenditure. Each year we are told something will be done to put our finances right, and each year we hear the same old tale of a deficit of three-quarters of a million. One wonders where the end will be. Immigration is a splendid thing and I stand behind the Government in their immigration schemes. I would warn them, however, that they have to make full reparation for the new arrivals. I do not think they are ready for them yet. Even now we are losing good people from the State—

Hon. T. Moore: That is so.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Because there is no land ready for them. Daily I come in contact with people who cannot secure land.

We have the country and the Government should have been ready to make it available long ago. They have started at the wrong end. The Government do not appear to be very much concerned about the financial position. They go on in just the same way. There has been a Royal Commission inquiring into the railways. The report of Mr. Stead is to me, as a layman, very alarming. We shall probably hear in the future whether the Government intend to remedy things there and stop the big leakages we are told exist, and see that the service is carried out on better lines. I am of opinion that there are other departments which could be shown in the same light as the Railway Department, if we had a competent Commissioner to inquire into all the corners as Mr. Stead has done in the railways. There has been increased expenditure all the time. Immigration will no doubt help us in years to come, but it will take time for us to receive any benefit from that scheme. In the meanwhile we shall go on drifting to the bad. The Commissioner for the North-West has taken up his residence in the north and now has a staff around him. The Minister says this will assist the North-West, but I have yet to learn in what direction. We had an able engineer looking after the North-West, and if the Government wanted a man of higher standing, why did they not appoint another officer of the same kind? Why start out on a new and costly organisation? The Government appear to be following the lines of the Federal Government. They want a man for some special purpose. When he is appointed he gathers a big staff around him and builds up a huge department. That is a fault of the Government service. The larger the staff an officer has the larger is his salary. I hope in the course of his remarks the Leader of the House will show us in what way the North-West will benefit by the appointment of this Commissioner. I have no doubt the Commissioner will recommend expenditure and possibly this will be beyond the means of the Government. I am not opposing the development of the North-West, but it must be done on sound and economical lines. The establishment of a Commissioner in the North-West, even though he be a man with qualifications, is not going to assist us. There are other matters which require consideration. We read in the newspapers about the drift to the city. That is a subject which is spoken of from public platforms all over the place. It is a most deplorable thing in connection with Australia generally, not Western Australia alone, that such a drift is taking place. What are we doing in Western Australia to stop it? On the contrary, we are doing all we can to encourage that drift and we are encouraging it through our educational system. Is it not a fact that we are educating our young people up to such a standard that they cannot find suitable employment here? They will not go to work in the country districts and they have to go abroad to other countries. Are we getting

the best results possible through our educational system, for the expenditure incurred?

Hon. T. Moore: Do you want the standard reduced?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I do not want it reduced, but why educate our young people in the secondary schools to a standard which suits them only for city work?

Hon. J. Mills: They are doing it all over the Commonwealth.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is no reason why we should do it here.

Hon. T. Moore: The secondary school education fits youths for country life.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Do hon. members see secondary school children going into the country? Hon. members know that they cannot drag them out of the towns.

Hon. T. Moore: I question that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Hon. members know that such is the case, just as well as I do. Then again, in a State of such magnitude as Western Australia, we need to produce our own requirements, and we are far from that position to-day. We should provide the best facilities for our settlers on the land to indicate to them how they can get the best advantage from their soils under scientific methods. We have a small agricultural school at Narrogin, but the place is totally unsuitable for such an institution. During my term as Minister for Agriculture, the Government agreed to let me have £2,000 to spend on that institution. After going fully into the matter, I was convinced that the place was unsuitable. It was not an institution of the class we require here to deal scientifically with our soils and, consequently, I did not spend the money which was made available to me. As a result, the vote lapsed at the end of the financial year. In the meantime, it was agreed that a committee should be appointed to inquire into the advisability of establishing an agricultural college in Western Australia. So far as I know that committee's report has not been made available yet. From my knowledge, however, I know that they recommend the establishment of an agricultural college. Western Australia should have such an institution and it would cost very little more than does the place at Narrogin, which is totally unsuitable. While I did not spend £2,000 on the school at Narrogin, I asked for particulars regarding that institution to-day and was informed that the cost of the additional buildings, erected during the past eighteen months, was approximately £4,000, while the improvements to the property included £643 for water and lighting. There, hon. members have £4,643 expended on a place that is totally unsuitable for such a purpose. If we take the amount which would be realised through the disposal of the Narrogin farm, we would have sufficient as a nucleus with which to start an agricultural college.

Hon. J. Mills: Who picked the spot, Mr. Bertie Johnston?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: He did not. I believe it was chosen before Mr. Johnston represented Narrogin. I may be wrong, but

I do not think he had anything to do with it. The Government are wrong in spending sums of such magnitude on a place which is quite unsuitable. It is time we had an agricultural college established on soil that is suitable for such a purpose, instead of having an institution established on a poor class of soil, as is the case at Narrogin. Regarding the money spent on areas which it is proposed to settle, I asked for some particulars regarding one particular area, namely Nornalup. I understood that money was being expended there, and while I agree that we have to develop that portion of the State, I say we must do it slowly; we must not rush in to develop areas in the South-West while there is no market for the produce. I asked for particulars about the Peel Estate and what produce the settlers there were being advised to go in for. I was informed that they were being advised to go in for dairy produce, pigs and fruit, potatoes, vegetables and fodder crops. I do not know where the settlers will get a market for the three last mentioned items. There are times when the price of potatoes is high, but that is not the time when our potatoes will come into the market. In addition, we have to grow potatoes very cheaply if we are to compete with products from the Eastern States, under the present system. I would like to see our potato growers successful, but their market is very limited. The difficulty may be overcome by the use of dehydrators. As to the production of vegetables, I am afraid it will not be long before the Peel Estate will be in the hands of the Chinamen, because the vegetable market is not here. The cultivation of dairy produce is essentially an industry which must be established on old soils. It will take a number of years on new soil to get the best results. At the present time those engaged in the dairying industry about the metropolitan area, who depend upon the city of Perth for the disposal of their commodities, are not making much money. As to pigs and fruit, there are good markets for these commodities.

Hon. J. Duffell: There is a market for pigs if they grow their bacon at a reasonable price.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: All these products require good markets. That is an aspect which should be considered in connection with the immigration scheme. One of the most important matters which must receive consideration is the provision of markets. To get back to the Nornalup proposals: The country there is somewhat similar, in that it is suitable for the cultivation of those products referred to in connection with the Peel Estate. The distance Nornalup is from the city makes it hopeless to talk about bringing vegetables from that area to the metropolis. Considering the enormous amount of money necessary to provide harbour facilities, or to construct a railway to Nornalup, I contend that the time is not opportune to spend money in that district.

Hon. T. Moore: It is only wasting money.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We have equally good land adjacent to the existing railways.

Hon. J. Ewing: Why not develop both?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That has been our trouble. We endeavoured to develop the wheat areas as a whole and strung out railways throughout the country like a spider's web. Consequently the whole of the wheat areas is not settled yet. We want to develop the areas where the railways have been taken and then extend to other areas. Regarding the information I received when I asked for particulars of expenditure in the Nornalup district, I was staggered when I heard it this afternoon. I find that the amount expended for surveys, under the Lands and Surveys Department, amounted to between £3,000 and £4,000. Under the Public Works Department, roads and bridges section, the expenditure has been: Bridgetown-Denmark railway survey, £19,434; Bridgetown-Denmark road, £18,243—I suppose that road is for the tourist traffic, but, at any rate, there will be little use for that great mileage—; Bush rest houses, Bridgetown-Denmark road, £35; Deep River bridge, £605; Frankland River bridge, £1,764; Walpole River bridge, £301, or a total of £40,382, which, with the £4,000 already referred to, brings up the total to £44,000 odd. What return will we get for that expenditure?

Hon. J. Ewing: That is only preliminary work.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: But there is no possibility of getting a return for that money for a very long time. What is the good of spending money in those areas until we are ready to settle them? We are not ready to settle the Nornalup area and we will not be for a very long time to come, because it is so isolated. It is all very well for people to say that it is only a matter of £40,000. If we add up these items of £40,000, they show us in what direction the expenditure is proceeding. The greatest consideration is necessary regarding these small amounts, because they all mount up. I do not know whether there are other parts of the State which have been dealt with like the Nornalup area. To me it is a most serious thing and it should be so to every member of this Chamber. If we have a number of projects like that at Nornalup, where shall we get to? On the 16th March, 1917, I brought a motion before this Chamber regarding the settlement of returned soldiers. The proposal on that occasion was to spend money in the Nornalup area, and because of the proposal to expend that money I advanced my motion. The whole of that debate was centred around the one aspect and that was, that it was unwise to expend Government moneys in that area. Mr. Kirwan, Mr. Sanderson and you, Mr. President, spoke at length on the subject. Then, too, Mr. Kingsmill—unfortunately we have not got his assistance on the present occasion—also spoke strongly on the subject.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Another case of restoring the authority of Parliament.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There was no definite motion, but Mr. Kingsmill spoke very strongly against the expenditure of Government money there, and he had a thorough knowledge of the district. His speech was very strong indeed. I have not seen Nornalup but, from inquiries, I learn that there is some very good country there. However, it is not the quality of the country that counts but the expenditure. There is no hope of receiving any return from this expenditure for many years to come and a lot of the work done will have to be done all over again. In a matter of a few years, it will probably be impossible to find the route of the survey.

Hon. J. Ewing: There will be a railway there then.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We have had this lesson before. Areas have been cleared and the bush has grown up again and left them in a worse state than before. Surely we do not want to repeat such foolishness. I ask the Government to call a halt in expenditure of this kind. Yesterday I gave notice of a question regarding the Newdegate area. It was, "Do the Government intend to extend the line from Lake Grace to Newdegate?" and the answer I received to-day was "The matter has not been determined." What are we to understand from that? Is it that no consideration has been given to the question of extending the line? If so, I want to know why the Government are undertaking clearing at Newdegate before they have decided to couple it up with a line. I am not advocating the construction of this railway. From what I have heard of Newdegate, there is nothing like the area of good land we are led to believe. I ask the Leader of the House to urge the Government to obtain definite particulars of the good land at Newdegate before the construction of this line is considered. The Minister for Agriculture brought three farmers from Lake Grace to confer with him regarding the clearing of this land. The Minister, like myself, is a farmer, and should know all there is to be known about this land. Money should not be expended in that area until the Government are absolutely certain that some good will result from it. Why clear land and then tell people they can select it though they will be 40 miles distant from a railway over poor country, mostly sandplain, and that they will not get a railway.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is already one of the conditions. The Government do not bind themselves to build a railway.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Then what is the use of throwing the land open? It will only be taken up by speculators. Everyone hopes that the Government will be successful in their immigration policy, but they will need to get a hustle on or they will not be ready to give effect to it. Of course there will be failures among the new settlers, but if the Government do succeed in settling these people on the land, the State will have a chance of going ahead. The Government,

however, must consider the question of finding markets. The Government should consider the advisableness of guaranteeing a price for wheat. I have mentioned this matter before, but I was never so strong on the point as I am at present. If the Government guaranteed 5s. a bushel for wheat for three years, it would be one of the soundest arrangements they could possibly make. It would lead to the doubling of the area under crop. By going out, as the Minister for Agriculture has done, on a campaign of production, asking the farmers to put larger areas under cultivation, nothing will be accomplished. It might have been successful during the war. In fact, an appeal was made then and the farmers responded, but the war is a matter of the past. Now it becomes a cold business proposition. The farmer will not do it for the asking, but if 5s. a bushel were guaranteed as an inducement, the area under crop would be doubled. If we gave a guarantee of this kind for three years, there would be an influx of the very class of people so badly needed in this State, I mean the sons of farmers with capital and experience from the Eastern States. The Government should give them this bait. Even if it resulted in the loss of half a million of money, well, probably the money would be lost in other directions anyhow.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: And the farmer may as well get it?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: If the farmer did get it, he would put it back into the land and produce more revenue for the State. The Leader of the House smiles at my proposition. I do not think any loss would result from the adoption of this suggestion.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I am afraid there would be a big risk, though.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I do not think so. The indications for the coming season are that wheat will open at 5s. a bushel. There are offers in the Eastern States for forward buying at 5s. 9d. The world's market is depleted of foodstuffs and I feel confident there will be a good demand and a good price for wheat for years to come.

The Minister for Education: Then why do you want a guarantee?

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: It is said that we cannot sell our Western Australian flour.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We have not the wheat to grist into flour. I do not think there is any doubt about selling the flour when the wheat is gristed. It was never a question of quality; we were in such a position with the Australian Wheat Board that our price was always 2d. or 3d. a bushel above that of other countries. There is no better quality flour in the world than Western Australian flour, but overseas buyers will not pay £1 or 25s. a ton more for our flour. I think Mr. Ardagh must have had in mind this question of offal for his dairy.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: I had in mind the remark of the Minister for Agriculture that we could not sell the flour.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: While I intend to support the Bill, I hope the remarks I have made will be considered by the Government.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN (West) [8.25]: Had I been listening to this debate from the gallery I would have come to the conclusion that the Government had not one supporter in this House.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You have always supported them.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Judging by the remarks of Mr. Kirwan and Mr. Sanderson, one would be forced to the conclusion that the present Government are incompetent to carry on the administration of the affairs of the State. If this is so, it is only fair that the Government should not be granted Supply.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Governments are not made in this House.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: A certain amount of cant seems to have been indulged in, and I say that without reflecting on any member. Those members who have spoken so strongly against the Government regarding maladministration would, if the fate of the Government depended upon their support, vote for the Government. There is nothing genuine about criticism of that kind. I intend to vote against granting the Government this Supply, and I shall watch with interest to see whether critics of the Government will be prepared to do likewise. In view of their criticism, with which I agree, because I have tried to convince the House for three years that the Government are not competent to carry on the administration, they should go further and show by their votes that they mean what they have said. I challenge those members to show that they are true to their convictions by refusing to grant the Government Supply. I think I heard one member express the opinion that he desired to make the Council the dominant House of the Legislature. Here is an opportunity. It is quite competent for this House to refuse to grant the present incompetent Government any further Supply. We have heard a lot about maladministration and about the Government not attempting to effect any economies. I would remind members that the Government did effect an economy by abolishing the honorary Ministers, an economy which proved of advantage to Ministers. The Leader of the House has to go to the Eastern States and we are asked to adjourn pending his return because there is no one to carry on in his place. This is an impossible position. When it is a question affecting the pockets of Ministers, they know how to effect economy. I give them credit for that, but we are entitled to ask them to protect the interests of the taxpayers, even as they have protected their own interests. It is unusual for a Supply Bill to evoke so much discussion in this House, but members, after discharging so much hot air in criticism of the Government, should be prepared to vote in the direction indicated by their criticism. If the

Government are so incompetent as is alleged, they should not be granted Supply.

Hon. J. Duffell: And you would not get your salary.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I am not worrying about that. If hon. members are genuine in the expressions they have given utterance to this afternoon about the Government being incompetent, the only way out is for us to vote against the granting of Supply.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: And so create chaos.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [8.32]: I do not wish to give a silent vote in connection with this matter, and neither do I wish to delay the House. There has been a great deal of earnestness thrown into the debate which is a good thing for us all, and I do hope it will be a good thing for the Government as well.

The Minister for Education: I feel better for it already.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: If the Government take the criticism to heart, the country must benefit. I merely wish to draw attention to a matter that I think is very serious indeed, and it is in connection with our financial position. We saw that during June there was a wonderful surplus, and we also saw that in July there was a correspondingly wonderful deficit.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: We get it every year just the same.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I have always understood that one of the functions of government was to place a complete monthly statement of affairs before the community, and with a true statement of affairs disclosed, we, the representatives of the people, would know where we were. But when we see an extraordinary surplus in one month and a correspondingly large deficit in the next month, and that in order to secure the surplus we encroach upon 10 days of the succeeding month, which seems to me to be an entirely new departure—

The Minister for Education: It has been done every year for the past 25 years.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Why is it done? I have always understood that the financial year closed on the 30th June, and that the true position of affairs had to be disclosed as it stood on that date. I certainly think that many of the figures are covered up from time to time and that we do not get the true position. I regret that the financial position is not very much better than it is, and I regret also that the taxation under which we are struggling has not improved the position. So far as I can see we are likely to have much heavier taxation in the future. It is unsatisfactory to think that our financial position cannot be improved, but we are doing our best to introduce further population to help us to carry the burden. Every endeavour should be made by the Government to encourage a population which will bring capital with it. It is not only a question of our becoming responsible for the financing of all the newcomers; an earnest endeavour

should be made by everyone to encourage people to come here with their own money. There does not seem to be a tendency on the part of people to introduce capital into the State; there seems to be a greater tendency for those who have it to leave the State. I usually hear that wherever I go, and it is a fact to be regretted. Mr. Baxter referred to a matter that has always been near my heart, and it is the one mistake made by this Government and other Governments in the past that they have never definitely decided on the establishment of an agricultural college where those from other parts of the world could learn something of local conditions and how to farm our lands. There is a good opportunity now for the Government to lay the foundation of such a college which could be utilised as a receiving station for the settlers whom the Government are about to bring to the State. I understand that six millions of money is to be spent in connection with the proposal to introduce British settlers to Western Australia. We do not wish to bring them here and keep them hanging about the city. I am told they are likely to be taken to Blackboy Hill camp, which I consider is a good place to put them, although it may be a little too near the city. They should be taken into the country where there should be an establishment ready to receive them. This would give them an introduction to our inland areas, and would probably give them an inclination to settle straight away on the land. At the same time, they could receive certain instructions. We should encourage these people by every means to go on the land and remain there just as the early settlers did. I trust that there will be a big influx of population and that the Government will spend the money which they are about to secure even more judiciously than has been suggested by hon. members this evening. I am pleased that a good many members have had a heart to heart talk with the Minister who himself announced by way of interjection that he felt better for it.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to remind hon. members that we are discussing a Supply Bill. The discussion has extended over a wide range of subjects, and I would therefore ask hon. members, who may yet wish to speak, to confine their remarks as much as possible to the subject matter of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [8.40]: I do not think there is any need to again traverse the ground that has been gone over very frequently during the past five or six years. I cannot help saying, however, that I do not think some of the critics of the Government have been at all generous. They have refused at all times to recognise the regular difficulties in which the Government have been placed; they have refused to recognise the fact that Governments all the world over have been faced with exactly the same difficulties in dealing with matters of public finance.

Hon. T. Moore: Did you recognise it in 1916?

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The Governments that have had to pay for war expenditure have been in difficulties, but not other Governments.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, they have. The hon. member forgets that the purchasing power of the sovereign has decreased enormously, and he forgets also that the increased revenue—taking into consideration the relative purchasing power of the sovereign—represents practically nothing at all. He forgets, too, to tell the House that the increase in salaries and wages which the Government have had to meet, practically swallows one half of the additional revenue we are receiving and that the other half is more than accounted for by the growth of the annual interest and sinking fund payments. I do not intend to go exhaustively into that matter. It is not many years since our railways not only paid their own interest and sinking fund but returned a substantial surplus to revenue. At the present time, so far from returning interest and sinking fund, the railways show a loss amounting to considerably more than half our total deficit. Another point is that hon. members overlook the fact that Western Australia alone of all the States in the Commonwealth has throughout maintained its contribution to the sinking fund. Had any of the other States done as we have done they would have been involved in deficits just as large as ours, and as a matter of fact the increase in the deficit from 1911 to the present time, including the period the Labour Government were in power, has been less than the accumulated sinking fund. That is a fact that our critics always ignore. It does not seem patriotic to hold up Western Australia as a bad example in comparison with the other States, when, as a matter of fact, if those States had done as Western Australia has done in the matter of providing a sinking fund, they would be placed in exactly the same position as we find ourselves in.

Hon. V. Hamersley: I do not think any member of this House has made that comparison.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, it has been made frequently. Very frequently we have been held up in that way. The other States have not suffered anything like so greatly in their public revenue on account of the war as we have. Further, as regards the other States, the small sinking funds they had before the war they have suspended, and have allowed them to remain suspended to this day. Had those States contributed to their sinking funds during and since the war, they would have been as badly off in the matter of deficits as we are. The hon. member said that he would support any Government proposing drastic action in the way of economy, retrenchment, and so on. I say at once that I do not believe drastic action of that kind to be desirable for Western Aus-

tralia. I believe that the result of such action would be to make our last state worse than our first. While I admit the necessity for economy in every direction, and whilst I shall, in replying on the Address-in-reply—I do not think it is expected of me to go into those details now—demonstrate that very substantial economies have been effected, I do emphatically deny that the financial condition of the State is anything like so bad as some hon. members have represented it. Whilst on the one hand during these years of unparalleled difficulty large deficits have accumulated, on the other hand the State has through its contributions from revenue to the sinking fund and the earnings of the accumulated sinking fund more than covered its deficit. The creditors of the State do not think that its position is bad.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The deficit is yearly growing worse. How long will it be before the accumulated deficit will exceed the accumulated sinking fund?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: At the rate the two are growing, that will never occur. Mr. Kirwan referred to "the hostile attitude of Western Australia to the Commonwealth." I do not think that is a remark in any way called for. I think it is a very easy matter for Western Australia to prove to demonstration that she has suffered considerably through federation, and that she is suffering to-day, and that the compact as it was understood between the States and the Commonwealth has not been carried into effect. For instance, it was provided in the Federal Constitution that at the end of every year all the surplus revenue of the Commonwealth should be distributed amongst the States. Subsequently an Act of the Federal Parliament was passed which made certain provisions but still contained that condition, that all the surplus revenue of the Commonwealth should be distributed amongst the States. Has that compact ever been carried out?

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It applies to all the States equally.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: True; but, on the other hand, what is the policy of the Commonwealth? I trust, Mr. President, that in endeavouring to reply to these remarks I shall not be offending against your very proper direction as to the limits of the debate. The general policy of the Commonwealth, particularly in its protective aspect, has been to build up the industries of the other States at the expense of Western Australia. It is in that direction that we suffer by comparison with them. Certain remarks have been made regarding the immigration scheme, and Mr. Kirwan expressed the opinion that three-fourths of the people who are brought out will find their way to the Eastern States. Now, why? Does the hon. member think that the Eastern States are better than Western Australia? He speaks of the difficulty some goldfields people have had in obtaining land in Western Australia. I venture to

say there is no other State of the Commonwealth where it is possible to obtain land so easily or so cheaply as in Western Australia. Certain people may have had difficulty in obtaining the land they want. If concrete cases are put up to me I will have them inquired into. But anybody wanting land can get it more easily and more cheaply in Western Australia than in any other part of the Commonwealth. If that were not so, there would be no point in Mr. Baxter's remark that a guarantee was all that was necessary to induce the sons of Eastern States farmers to come here.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Yes, but do you—

The PRESIDENT: I would ask hon. members not to interject too much. The position of a Minister of the Crown is so different from that of any other member of the House that I think he ought to get a fair and clear hearing. All his statements are, or should be, of a responsible nature, binding not only himself, but also his Government. In those circumstances I think he ought to get as fair and clear a hearing as possible. It is not every member who can speak under the irritating fire of interjections. Whilst, of course, any interjections which have for their object explanation or further information will always be permitted, I ask hon. members in the circumstances, not to make irritating interjections, but to allow the member representing the Government to make a full and free statement on matters of great interest to everybody.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I was about to say that I do not think it is a fact that so large a percentage of the people brought to this State have gone away. The figures supplied in the Governor's Speech are accurate, but they do not suggest what Mr. Kirwan seems to think they suggest. In fact, they do not state that. They state that during a certain period a number of people, if I remember rightly, 45,000, were brought to the State by the Government, but that the excess of arrivals over departures during that period was only 9,000, indicating that some 35,000 of those who were brought here were needed to make up what would otherwise have been an excess of departures over arrivals. I think we must all realise that our population has undergone a very great change during the last few years. Looking back, say, 10 or 12 years, and taking the population of the goldfields, and the population of the agricultural districts at that time, and then contrasting the goldfields population and the population of the agricultural districts to-day, one must see how tremendous have been the changes. What has happened has been, I think, that a very large number of the goldfields population who left the goldfields have left the State altogether, and that their places have to a large extent been taken by newcomers. At any rate, the Government do recognise that there is a danger of perhaps losing some of our present population or some of the people coming here. That is the reason why this immigration policy has been framed on lines differing so materially from those of any immigration

policy of the past. Every past immigration policy has been based on a large expenditure by the Government for every individual brought here. We have sent home agents to carry on propaganda work, and we have borne a considerable portion of the cost of the passages. In this immigration policy the whole of the propaganda work is done for us. We, by officers appointed by us, supervise the selection of the immigrants so as to ensure that only suitable people are sent here. The Commonwealth pay all the rest of the expense, and pay the whole of the passages out here, and undertake to return any immigrants that by some mischance may have slipped through and are unsuitable settlers. So that, instead of having to pay out large sums to secure immigrants, we are securing them landed here free of cost. In addition to that, we have secured a large proportion of the money required for their settlement. I say "a large proportion" because I do not for a moment suggest that one can do everything that will be necessary to accommodate a new population of 75,000 people and also carry on the ordinary extension of the State for six millions of money. But we have provided, so far as the £6,000,000 is concerned, for a period of five years, during which only one-third of the interest shall be chargeable to the State. Mr. Stewart referred to the remark in the Governor's Speech that under the Surplus Revenue Act our third would be practically met by the Commonwealth contribution of 25s. per head. It is a very simple calculation. The money on which that two-thirds interest is to be borne by the Commonwealth and the State is to be in the proportion of £2,000,000 to 25,000 people. If there are less than 25,000 people brought out, there will be less than £2,000,000 to share interest on. One third of the interest on £2,000,000 would be £40,000, at six per cent. Our share of interest will be £35,000 or £36,000, because the rate of interest is less than six per cent.; and 25s. per head on 25,000 people is equal to about £31,000. I think it would be a mistake on my part, and certainly not in accordance with your wishes, Mr. President, if I went into other phases of the immigration question which have been touched on in the course of another debate but have not been touched on to-day. However, I do wish to make clear the point that it is not thought for one moment that the 6,000 people to be settled in the South-West are going to provide all that is necessary in the way of work and sustenance for the 75,000 immigrants. That is not contemplated for one moment. In fact, it is not likely that any of those 6,000 will be settled until quite a large number of immigrants have been brought into the State. If hon. members will read carefully the scheme put forward by the Premier and published in the "West Australian" of the 25th January this year, they will see that the first thing he states is not the settlement of these 6,000 immigrants. He says, "The first use we will

make of this money is to strengthen the funds of the Agricultural Bank, so as to advance at the rate of an extra million per annum to people already settled on the land for clearing, in order that the wheat production of the State may be doubled, and also for fencing and other purposes." It is contemplated that that work will provide for a large number of the immigrants. Following upon that is the work required to settle 6,000 additional settlers in the South-West. I am confident in my own mind that it is easily possible in a State of this size and with the sparse population that we have at the present time, to absorb 75,000 additional people in a period of five years. I am sure of it. Under this scheme it is being done on terms more advantageous than have ever been thought of before. Mr. Lovekin set up the proposition that this scheme would be disastrous to our financial policy and disastrous to the State. As an alternative he suggested that we should ask the Imperial and the Commonwealth Governments to bear the whole of the responsibility of these 6,000 settlers, that those Governments should provide the whole of the £6,000,000 without any charge and collect it back from the 6,000 settlers, relieving us entirely so far as those 6,000 settlers are concerned. Now, the difference between the hon. member's proposition and the Government's proposition is this: He says, "Let the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments loan that money to those 6,000 settlers, and take all the risk of failure, and collect the money back from them." But the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments will at once say, "We cannot do anything of the kind because we cannot oversee or look after these people. They are your settlers, and you must be responsible for them. You advance the money to them, and collect it back from them. We know there will be failures and losses, and to compensate you for those we will make you a present of £1,200,000." Mr. Lovekin would say, "Let them take all the risk and responsibility." The Government say, "We will take all the risk and responsibility, and the other Governments will give us £1,200,000." The loss through failure may be more or may be less than £1,200,000, but the difference is not going to be such as to make the difference between a policy of disaster and a policy of safety for the State.

Hon. A. Lovekin: There is the extended advance for the balance of the settlers. Do not forget that.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Mr. Sanderson suggested that during the next fortnight consideration might be given to the figures which were supplied to him to-day. The hon. member should ask for the figures he actually wants. He put up the questions. "(1) On the 30th June, 1922, how much inscribed stock was current (a) in London, (b) elsewhere? (2) Of the public debt of Western Australia on the 30th June, 1922, how much is in inscribed stock and how much in other securities? (3) Of the

public debt of Western Australia on the 30th June, 1922, how much is chargeable with sinking fund?" To each of those questions an explicit answer was given, whereupon the hon. member proceeded to set up a balance sheet showing what the State owes. Instead of adopting that misleading course, he can get complete statements which will show him the debits and credits and all details. If he wants information to establish a financial statement of the affairs of the country from a loan point of view, let him ask for what he really wants, and it shall be furnished him. He knows perfectly well that the sinking fund obligations do not begin until three years after the flotation of the loan. That accounts for the difference between the amount paying sinking fund and the total loan indebtedness. He suggested that our position would go from bad to worse, because these loans would come into that period when they have to bear sinking fund. But he forgot to mention that we should have profits on the other side. During the last financial year we were relieved of a sum of £46,000 interest and sinking fund on the Coolgardie water scheme loan, and during the current financial year our relief from that source will be double that amount, or something like £90,000; because we have contributed to that sinking fund all the money that is required, and it will no longer be necessary to pay any sinking fund or interest on that portion of the loan which has already been purchased by the sinking fund trustees. In a short time the whole of our obligation in regard to that 2½ million loan will be relieved. It is all very well to say we are going to have the new loans coming to the sinking fund period, for, as against that, we are going to be relieved in the way I have described. Mr. Stewart, after speaking of many things, condemned the policy of the Government in respect of workers' homes. I hope that policy will be extended until practically every worker in Western Australia owns his own home. Personally, I do not care whether or not it interferes with private enterprise. In the country districts private enterprise has been shy of building houses for the people. There is not a country town which has not suffered because suitable homes cannot be provided for the people employed there. I hope that this Government, if they remain in power, or if, as Mr. Sanderson suggests, they are swept into oblivion, then the Government which succeeds them, will carry on vigorously this policy of workers' homes until they reach that stage when every worker has his own home. From every point of view it will be a grand thing for Western Australia when we reach that stage. I was greatly surprised to hear Mr. Baxter condemn secondary education for country children.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You have doubled the expenditure.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The salaries of the teachers have been practically

doubled; that is where the expenditure has been increased. The hon. member condemns secondary education in the country. I was under the impression that he was one of my supporters in that policy.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: At election time he will be.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Mr. Baxter seems to think that in order to keep the young people on the farms, it is necessary to keep them ignorant. Then, with charming inconsistency, he advocates the establishment of an agricultural college. In that I am in accord with him. It has been very disappointing to me that the Government have not been able to provide the necessary funds ere this. But the establishment of an agricultural college before we had established district high schools in the country would have been no good at all, for we should not have had students for the agricultural college.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Many have gone out of the State.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am with Mr. Baxter and Mr. Hamersley in contending that the sooner the agricultural college is established the better. The Narrogin Farm School is doing excellent work. It did excellent work under the control of Mr. Baxter, and now that a little more money has been spent on it it will do even better work in the future. But it does not do the work of an agricultural college. What it does is this: There are in the country many people who for various reasons object to sending their children to secondary schools in the city. Their objections are very sound. But they say, "If my boy, when he leaves the State school at 14, can go to a farm school for a couple of years, I am quite willing that his general education shall be continued, so long as he is being introduced to farm work." And so they agree to send their boys to the Narrogin Farm School; indeed they send them in greater numbers than can be accommodated. They are there for only two years, but the result of that school is that every year 30 boys go out from it who otherwise would have gone straight from the primary school to the farm at 14 years of age; they go out two years older, with two years' extra knowledge, two extra years of general education and a suitable introduction to farm work. The Narrogin Farm School is doing splendid work, and when the agricultural college is established, the field of the Narrogin Farm School will still be there. Indeed I am not sure that it will not be wise to establish further schools; because an agricultural college means that a boy goes on until he is 19 or 20 years of age. There are and always will be a great number of country children who cannot do that, but who might be able to take advantage of the short course at the farm school.

Hon. H. Stewart: The spheres of the two are quite distinct.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, and both of them absolutely necessary. In regard to the Nornalup district, I did not look

at the figures very closely. Half the amount is for the survey of the railway already authorised by Parliament and about to be constructed. Now I come to the suggestion of a 5s. per bushel guarantee on wheat. There is a lot to be said in favour of it. The hon. member says "Do this, and you will double the wheat production." The production is nearly 15 million bushels to-day; doubled, that would mean 30 million bushels. If in any one of those years we were to drop 1s. out of the guarantee, there would go a million and a half!

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: More than was lost over the Wyndham Meat Works!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: In a single year we might drop a million and a half. I do not condemn a guarantee for wheat growing. But Mr. Baxter is quite right when he says that there is every indication that the price will keep up. In that alone there is sufficient encouragement for the farmer to go on growing wheat so long as the Government continue to advance at reasonable rates the money required to clear his land and so make it available for cropping.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: Why not guarantee the wages of the worker?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is very difficult for the Government to guarantee anything. The only other matter I wish to refer to is Mr. Hamersley's statement regarding the June surplus and the July deficit. I am amazed to think that a man so long in public life should be under the impression that for the first time we have kept the Treasury books open for the purpose of including some of the July receipts in the tally for June. It has been done for many years past. The practice was introduced in Sir John Forrest's time, more than 20 years ago. I am not prepared at the moment to give the exact reason for it, but, as I say, more than 20 years ago the practice was introduced of keeping the books open until the 10th July for the receipt of revenue to the end of June, and it has been the practice ever since.

Hon. H. Stewart: Why not abolish it?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Treasurer who abolished it would have a big deficit to face in the first year. No Treasurer likes to be put in that position. The result of the practice is that the June revenue is large because of the ten days' collection in July, while the July revenue is small because it is ten days short. We have always had a good surplus in June and a considerable deficit in July. But the figures of revenue and expenditure are compiled, not by Ministers, but by the Treasury officials, and I can assure hon. members that no attempt is made to fake these figures.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Issue and application of £1,763,950:

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: This clause embraces the whole of the Bill and I wish to take the opportunity to refer to a comment made by the Leader of the House on some of my remarks during the second reading. He pointed out that, while I referred to the deficit and to its gradual accumulation during a number of years, I made no reference whatsoever to the sinking fund and to the fact that the sinking fund to a certain extent counterbalanced the deficit. In not referring to the sinking fund, I was acting in accordance with what was done by the Leader of the House himself when he was such a brilliant and able critic of the Government who occupied office prior to his becoming Leader of the House. When he spoke in such terms of condemnation regarding the financial methods of the Scaddan Government, he did not refer, and very rightly so, to the fact that the accumulated deficit of the Scaddan Government, amounting to £1,300,000, could be set off against the sinking fund. He carefully refrained from making the comparison that he has been so readily and frequently making since he himself has been a Minister. The reason why I did not refer to the sinking fund was that, whether we had a sinking fund or not, there was a departure from sound finance. Those who instituted our sinking fund were wise and far-seeing statesmen, and it is a very deplorable fact that the present Government have taken advantage of that wisdom to do the injury that has been done to our financial position. At no time was it more necessary to maintain the sinking fund than it is at present. The loans we raised in the past were secured mainly at a very low price. We all know how the price of money has increased and that there is no immediate prospect of any considerable reduction. A day will come when we shall have to meet our indebtedness and, therefore, it is all the more necessary in view of the probable high price of money in future that the sinking fund should be maintained. It is not to the credit of the present or any other Government that they departed from the wise system of finance instituted by former Governments. In not referring to the sinking fund, I was following the example of the Leader of the House himself when he continually criticised a deficit very much smaller than this. He may put it as he likes, but I maintain it is a departure, and a very serious departure, from the very excellent system instituted in the past. Reference has been made to the attitude of what is commonly described as the Commonwealth towards the State. The two methods to which the Minister referred were questions of policy on the part of Governments in power, not the Commonwealth. The fact of the protective policy of the Commonwealth operating severely in the case of Western Australia, by reason of its being a State in the early stage of development, was purely and solely due to the policy of the Government, and not to the Commonwealth itself.

The strongest champion of the protective policy from which we are now suffering was a man who did a great service for Western Australia and who certainly as a Minister of the Commonwealth Government in season and out of season advocated protection. That was the late Lord Forrest. Furthermore, he represented an agricultural constituency. The very people who are complaining to-day returned him to the House over and over again. Now fault is found with the Commonwealth instead of with those who supported the policy of particular Governments. Mr. Baglin expressed the opinion that those who had criticised the Government should vote against the Bill. I do not approve of the action of the Government. I consider they have been guilty of a series of blunders, but I do not think it would be the best course to vote against the Supply Bill and create financial chaos in the State. The Government would not be defeated, and the Government would not suffer. A number of people in no way concerned with the policy of the Government would be affected and, consequently, I hold that we would not be justified in throwing out the Supply Bill.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and passed.

MOTION—ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

To inquire by Select Committee.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [9.23]: It has been intimated to me that it is the desire of members, as we are going to adjourn for a week or so, that we should adjourn to-night instead of to-morrow. I am sure that the adoption of this course will be a convenience to the Leader of the House, who has an arduous task to perform in the East and who no doubt will be glad of some time to make preparation. It will also be a convenience to members, in that they will have an extra day to look into the important matters involved in the Government policy. Therefore, instead of moving my motion to-morrow, I propose, with the approval of the House, to move it now. It contemplates the appointment of a select committee to inquire into an important matter. I take it few members will object to any proposal which aims at the ascertainment of facts. That is all this motion is intended to do. It is said that, in respect to this agreement, we have a Government scheme generating electricity and making a loss. It is said also that one of the reasons for making a loss is that they cannot sell sufficient current.

The Minister for Education: I do not think it is making a loss.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The last figures I had from Mr. Taylor showed a slight loss on the generation. I hope this has been remedied. While the Government sold £29,000 worth of current to the City Council, the

City Council received from consumers £133,000 for that current. This may be a fact or it may not. It is said also that the Government cannot hope to cheapen, even to the City Council, the cost of electric current by reason of the fact that the load factor is not balanced. Before suggesting anything at all I wish to ascertain the facts and the appointment of a select committee will enable us to ascertain the facts. No one can reasonably object to this. I move—

(1) That a select committee be appointed to report upon the operations and working of an agreement entered into between the Government and the Perth Municipal Corporation dated the 16th October, 1913, in respect to the purchase and supply of electric current. (2) That such committee consist of five members, namely, the Hons. J. Duffell, J. Ewing, F. A. Baglin, V. Hamersley, and the mover. (3) That the committee have power to call for persons and papers. (4) That during the taking of evidence the committee have power to admit representatives of the Press at their discretion. (5) That the committee shall report on Tuesday, the 29th August, 1922.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [9.28]: I second the motion with the greatest of pleasure, particularly in view of the fact that for two sessions I have been endeavouring to get some enlightenment on this question. The Government did not seem inclined to spend any money in this direction to get expert evidence and advice, and therefore the only course open to us is to agree to an inquiry by a select committee, who, perhaps with the exception of the mover, are laymen. It seems to me that the mover of the motion is an engineer and a great authority on electricity. I hope the outcome of the inquiry will prove of great benefit to the State. I must express regret that we cannot go a great deal further in this direction. When the select committee have completed their inquiry, I may submit a proposal of a much more drastic nature relating to the electricity supply and the generation of electricity generally throughout the State.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [9.30]: I am loth to do anything that may damp the ardour of so energetic a member as Mr. Lovekin, who is interesting himself in a good many questions. I am sure we are all pleased that there is a member amongst us so concerned in the variety of matters he is dealing with. I must, however, protest against the extraordinary way in which he proposes to deal with this question. This afternoon he gave a definite promise to the House that the motion would not come on until to-morrow. It is not one that is likely to be objected to, but several members, including Mr. Sanderson, went away on the understanding that it would not be dealt with to-night. I, therefore, protest against this way of dealing with the business of the House after the distinct understanding that was arrived at.

Hon. J. Duffell: Mr. Sanderson knew when he went away that the House would not be sitting to-morrow.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: It is an extraordinary procedure, and one which I hope will not be repeated. Many members have to leave the House before it rises, and if this sort of thing is to go on, we shall none of us know what will happen while we are away. Mr. Lovekin gave as one reason for bringing on the motion to-night that the House would adjourn this evening. It was a good reason, but it was the first notification to that effect this House had. I am in sympathy with the reason for the adjournment. I do not agree with the remarks which were made to-day that the Leader of the House should not go to Melbourne to attend the Premiers' conference. There is no member of the Ministry who can put up a better case for the State to get a fair share in its relationship with the Commonwealth in connection with the particular matters in question than the Minister for Education. I am extremely glad he is going and that he was selected rather than some other member of the Ministry. It does seem an extraordinary thing, however, that because the Minister is going away this House is going to adjourn this evening for a fortnight. Several new members are present this session, and one of them I know is desirous of speaking. He will now have to wait two or three weeks before doing so. In the meantime he will be nursing his views upon the affairs of the country, in the same way that other members will have to do. It is to be regretted that there is not in the House an Honorary Minister to take charge of the business in circumstances such as this. I do not forget that it is possible for a man to take the position of Honorary Minister, in actual fact in an honorary capacity. I think there are members here who might take that position. There ought to be one representative of the Government to deal with a situation such as has now arisen. It is treating the House with indifference that, because the Minister in charge has to attend a conference in the Eastern States, there should be no one to take his place so that members may continue the debate upon the Address-in-reply. It is only fair to the Leader of the House that he should have assistance. The leading of this House is a very onerous duty. The Minister in charge has to make himself au fait with all Bills that come before us, and in addition attend to his Ministerial duties. In fairness to this Chamber and to the Minister representing the Government, there should be some one with him who could take his place should the occasion arise.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan) [9.35]: I hardly know whether it is Mr. Lovekin's intention to embrace all contracts and agreements made between the Government and the various local bodies. If not, I wish to enter my protest in opposition to the proposal.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. gentleman can vote against it.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Then I shall do so if that is the case. There are agreements other than that with the City Council. In selecting that body it appears that Mr. Lovekin's intention can only be to upset the agreement which exists between them and the Government.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No, I would not repudiate an agreement.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I cannot see what other effect his motion can have. The facts are already disclosed by the agreement that is laid upon the Table of the House, and is available to all members without its being necessary to appoint a select committee. The only result of the select committee can be to disapprove of the agreement and endeavour to have it varied.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Not at all.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Then what does the hon. member mean?

Hon. A. Lovekin: I want to find out how it is working.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Can the hon. member not find that out from the agreement?

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is not there.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: If the motion were made to apply to all the agreements entered into with the Government by local bodies, I should be agreeable to it. If not, I must vote against it.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Move an amendment to that effect, and I will support it.

Hon. J. Duffell: Get it out in the evidence.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I move an amendment—

That after the words "electric current" the words "and other agreements made with other local authorities for the supply of such current" be added.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I second the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (East) [9.40]: I also expected the motion to come on to-morrow. I am not opposing it, but should like to hear some argument from the mover in favour of it. No reasons have yet been advanced as to the necessity for a select committee to inquire into this agreement. I know the mover well enough to realise that there are some vital reasons for the inquiry.

Hon. J. Ewing: Of course there are.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Why should not these reasons be given to the House? Two members of the Metropolitan-Suburban Province and one of the Metropolitan Province are absent from the House.

The PRESIDENT: That is not the fault of the House.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Mr. Sanderson has no objection to this.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The motion was listed for to-morrow.

Hon. J. Duffell: They knew before they went it would come on to-night.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is hardly fair to the members in question that it should be brought on this evening. I endorse the remarks of Mr. Kirwan with regard to the necessity for some assistance being given to the Minister in charge. No Government should expect the business of this Chamber to be conducted by one Minister. It is not fair either to him or to the House. If an Honorary Minister were appointed, and I have no doubt there are several members who would be prepared to act in an honorary capacity, he could carry on the House during the absence of the Minister.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [8.45]: I did not notice that the amendment had been seconded. The addition proposed by the amendment seems to me unwise. Before we appoint a select committee to inquire into a business agreement, we ought to be given some very substantial reasons for doing so. The amendment, however, includes other local governing bodies; and therefore I doubt the wisdom of carrying the motion. I was rising to speak when you put the amendment, Mr. President, and I did not catch your eye. Now, is it wise, for reasons not yet disclosed, to appoint a select committee with power to investigate a number of business agreements—certainly, agreements between a Government department and local governing bodies? Is it wise to make public the results of business agreements? The mover, in replying, may be able to give satisfactory reasons as regards one agreement, but I think he will find it difficult to justify the inclusion of other agreements. In the circumstances it is quite likely that I shall vote against the motion.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan—in reply) [9.47]: One of my reasons for not elaborating the motion was that I was not sure of the facts. I want the select committee to ascertain the facts; and then, when we come to debate the question, we shall know what we are doing. All sorts of things have been stated about the operation of these agreements, such as that the Government are imposing differential rates, that the various municipalities are using these agreements to profiteer on the people. I am not putting up a case. All I ask the House to do is to give an opportunity of ascertaining the facts. When we know the facts, we can discuss the matter further. I do not vouch for any of the statements which have been made. I do not wish to take up the time of the House any further at this juncture.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
(Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [9.48]: I
move—

That sessional committees be appointed
as follows:—

Standing Orders: The President, the
Chairman of Committees, Hon. J. W.
Kirwan, Hon. A. Lovekin, and the mover.

Library: The President, Hon. A. Sau-
derson, and Hon. J. Nicholson.

Printing: The President, Hon. J. W.
Kirwan, and Hon. A. Lovekin.

House: The President, the Chairman
of Committees, Hon. J. Cornell, Hon. J.
Duffell, and Hon. J. W. Hickey.

In the case of the Standing Orders committee
I have added the names of Mr. Lovekin and
Mr. Kirwan in view of the fact that certain
amendments made in the Constitution during
recent years render it desirable that we should
look into the Standing Orders, having regard
to those matters.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
(Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [9.50]: I
move—

That the House at its rising adjourn
until Tuesday, the 22nd August.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan)
[9.51]: On this motion I should like to em-
phasise the remarks made by several hon.
members as to the position of our Leader
here. Probably we shall have a strenuous
session, and he will again be alone through
it as he was through the last session. There
ought to be found some one hon. member
who would be willing to accept an honorary
position in giving our Leader some relief,
and I rise merely to make the suggestion
that before the House meets again our Leader
should consult the Premier on the subject.

The PRESIDENT: That is a matter for
the Government.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.52 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 2nd August, 1922.

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

QUESTION—SCAFFOLDING
LEGISLATION.

Mr. SAMPSON (for Mr. Davies) asked
the Minister for Works: Is it his intention
to introduce this session a Bill to regulate
the erection and supervision of building
scaffolding?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:
The proposed Bill is receiving consideration.

QUESTIONS (7)—RAILWAY
MATTERS.*Petrol Coaches.*

Mr. LUTEY asked the Minister for Rail-
ways: 1, Has the Railway Department
ordered any more petrol coaches? 2, If so,
how many, and what is the approximate date
of delivery? 3, Is it the intention of the
Commissioner for Railways to run any of
them on the Brown Hill loop line?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS re-
plied: 1, No. 2, See No. 1. 3, As soon as
the suitability and efficiency of the motor
rail coach has been established, the question
of obtaining additional coaches and extend-
ing their use will be considered.

Spark Arrester, Premium.

Mr. CARTER asked the Minister for Rail-
ways: 1, Have the Government ever offered
a premium for the invention of a satisfactory
spark arrester for use on locomotives? 2,
What payments have been made, if any, in
this connection?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS re-
plied: 1, No. The profit to be derived by
the inventor is sufficient inducement. 2, In
the case of three employees of the Railway