

failure, and which ultimately must force upon the State recourse to both Imperial and Commonwealth authorities for financial aid.

As a member representing the Metropolitan Province it is my duty to put forward my views upon the proposals of the Government. I do not look upon the scheme as sound, and I would not, as a director of a company, recommend such proposals to my shareholders. The Speech contains the same old promises. The Canning water scheme is still under consideration. Perhaps the 75,000 people who are coming here may want some water, and we may get the work done. Let us hope the Wyndham Meat Works will turn out all right, but we shall have to wait and see the turn of events there. I should like, before concluding, to draw attention to an omission from the Speech. Last session here and in another place the Government promised to introduce a Bill to provide that they should have power to dispose of State trading concerns if they could successfully negotiate sales. This promise was not redeemed, and there is no reference in the Speech to such a measure. Unless we get an assurance from the Minister that at an early date such a Bill will be introduced in one of the Houses I shall deem it my duty to test the sincerity of the Government by bringing down a Bill myself. I have pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

On motion by Hon. A. Sanderson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.5 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 1st August, 1922.*

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

## QUESTION—RAILWAYS, COAL SUPPLIES.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What was the price per ton paid by the Railway Department for Newcastle and Collie coal (separately) in the years 1916-7, 1917-8, 1918-9, 1919-20, 1920-1, and 1921-2? 2, The equitable price that should have been paid for Collie coal in relation to the prices paid for the imported article in each year, separately? 3, What loss (if any) did the department sustain by using Collie coal in preference to Newcastle coal during the years mentioned? 4, What amount (if any) of money the State gained by using the local coal as against the imported coal during the years mentioned?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Average price for delivery at Fremantle and Collie: 1916-17, Newcastle coal 28s. 8d. per ton, Collie coal 11s. 5d. per ton; 1917-18, Newcastle coal 32s. 11d. per ton, Collie coal 12s. 11d. per ton; 1918-19, Newcastle coal 35s. 1½d. per ton, Collie coal 13s. per ton; 1919-20, Newcastle coal 41s. 8d. per ton, Collie coal 15s. 5d. per ton; 1920-21, Newcastle coal 47s. 5d. per ton, Collie coal 17s. 7½d. per ton; 1921-22, Newcastle coal 46s. 2½d. per ton, Collie coal 18s. 6d. per ton. 2, The policy and practice of the State are to use the local coal. The small quantity of Newcastle coal now consumed (under 3 per cent. of the whole) is used principally in running of trains in agricultural areas, during harvest months only, in order to diminish the risk of fire. It is not practicable to fix the price for Collie coal on the rate paid for the small quantity of imported coal used. For example, for the past year (ended 30th June, 1922) the Railway Department used in train running only 7,106 tons of Newcastle coal as against 233,495 tons of Collie coal. 3, No loss, on the whole. 4, If prices shown in answer to No. 1 as paid for Newcastle coal were applied to the Collie consumption on the basis of 150 Collie equals 100 Newcastle, the following additional amounts would have been required in the years quoted, viz.: 1916-17, £68,499; 1917-18, £83,893; 1918-19, £109,091; 1919-20, £149,958; 1920-21, £174,394; 1921-22, £144,893. No account is taken in the above figures of the effect of different lengths of haulage; the general effect would be to decrease the amounts shown. The equitable price of Collie coal, the production of this coal being a national purpose, should be the cost of production, based on fair rates and conditions to those employed in the industry, and a fair margin of profit on the capital invested therein, irrespective of the price of Newcastle, Welsh, American, or any other coal.

## QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAY BRIDGE, FREMANTLE.

*New Structure.*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Railways: In view of the report of the

Royal Commission on Railways, are the Government taking into consideration the early construction of a new railway bridge at Fremantle?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The matter is under consideration.

*Engineer's Report.*

Mr. MARSHALL (for Mr. McCallum) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it a fact that the responsible engineer has reported that it is impossible to further repair the Fremantle railway bridge to make it safe for traffic for a longer period than another eighteen months or so? 2, If so, is it the Minister's intention to lay the report upon the Table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

**QUESTIONS (2)—TAXATION, LAND AND INCOME.**

*Amounts owing.*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Premier: What were the amounts of income and land tax owing to the State, for which returns had been furnished to the Taxation Department, on 30th June, 1921, and on 30th June, 1922 (separately)?

The PREMIER replied: Land and Income Taxes outstanding were—30th June, 1921: Land Tax £14,182, Income Tax £161,699; 30th June, 1922: Land Tax £22,257, Income Tax £128,797. These figures represent the amounts outstanding in respect to returns furnished and assessed. I am unable to state the amount outstanding in respect to returns furnished and not assessed at 30th June, it being impossible to supply this information.

*State Taxation Commissioner.*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Premier: 1, Is the State Taxation Commissioner solely an official of the State—independent of the Commonwealth Government? 2, Is it the Premier's intention to lay on the Table of the House the agreement entered into by the State and Commonwealth Governments regarding the taking over of the State Taxation Department and the collection of taxes?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The State Commissioner of Taxation was appointed in accordance with Clause 1 (a) of the Agreement for the Joint Collection of Taxes. He is responsible to the State, and is free from interference or control by the Commonwealth in accordance with Clause 4. 2, Yes.

**QUESTION—WHEAT PURCHASES, WILLIAMS BROTHERS.**

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Did the Industries Assistance Board, at any time, cause an investigation to be made regarding the purchases of wheat, stated to be contrary to

the Industries Assistance Act, or the Wheat Marketing Act, by a firm trading as Williams Brothers at Northam? 2, If so, is it his intention to place on the Table of the House the reports of all officials who dealt with the question?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Investigations were made, but no prosecution was instituted because the time limit under the law had expired. 2, It is not considered necessary to do so in the circumstances.

**QUESTIONS (2)—LAND SETTLEMENT.**

*Preparation for Groups.*

Mr. PICKERING asked the Premier: 1, Was any definite promise made by him when in England as to the area to be cleared and partly cleared on individual blocks in group settlements? 2, Has any provision for sites been made for erection of business premises in conjunction with group settlement? If not, is it his intention to make such provision?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. The scheme submitted to the Imperial Government as a basis of negotiation provided for five acres clearing and 20 acres partial clearing, but to reduce costs in the interests of settlers the larger trees are not now removed. The clearing is sufficient for cultivation and planting of fruit, and these trees can subsequently be removed by the settlers if required. 2, The Lands Department is already looking into the question of survey of townships.

*Road Facilities, Marybrook Estate.*

Mr. PICKERING asked the Premier: Will he make immediate provision for the relief of the settlers on the Marybrook estate, near Busselton, who have been awaiting road facilities for the past two years, and are now entirely cut off from communication with main roads.

The PREMIER replied: The Public Works Department has already been instructed to make the necessary provision, and money has been made available for the work.

**QUESTION—ROYAL COMMISSION, RAILWAYS.**

Mr. MARSHALL (for Mr. McCallum) asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to have printed the report and evidence of the Royal Commission which inquired into the working of the State railways? 2, Do the Government purpose giving the House an opportunity to discuss the report?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes.

**QUESTION—ELECTRIC MOTORS DRIVING PUMPS.**

Mr. MARSHALL (for Mr. McCallum) asked the Minister for Mines: Is it the intention of the Government to apply the pro-

visions of the Inspection of Machinery Act so far as fees and inspection are concerned to electrically driven motors used for driving pumps on orchards and market gardens when such motors are attended exclusively by the owner?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: (a) If such motors are under one-horse power, no inspection is required; (b) If of more than one-horse power there is no alternative but to inspect, and of course charge the prescribed fee; (c) The question of exempting from the provisions of the Act, under Section 14, electrical motors used exclusively by agriculturalists and pastoralists in pursuit of their calling, upon which no labour other than their own is employed and which are not connected with dangerous machinery, such as circular saws, etc., is being considered.

#### QUESTION—WAGES AND HOURS.

Mr. MARSHALL (for Mr. McCallum) asked the Premier: 1, Was the action of Mr. Munt, the Assistant Public Service Commissioner, in writing to employers inciting them to follow the lead given by the Government in reducing wages and lengthening working hours taken under the instructions or with the approval of Ministers? 2, Is it to be taken as the set policy of the Government to extend industrial unrest and stir up industrial strife?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No letter was sent by the Assistant Public Service Commissioner to any employer inciting him to reduce wages and lengthen working hours. 2, Certainly not.

#### QUESTION—DRAINAGE, HERDSMAN'S LAKE.

Mr. UNDERWOOD asked the Minister for Works: 1, What amount has been expended to date on the drainage of Herdsman's Lake? 2, What is the estimated cost of completing the work?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, £42,378. 2, £30,000. Total £72,378. This covers lining so far as information available shows it to be needed. It will vary according to the strata disclosed as the tunnel driving proceeds.

#### QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAY, ESPERANCE NORTHWARD.

##### *Shipping Facilities for Material.*

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has any steamer or ship capable of carrying locomotive trucks and other railway materials to Esperance in connection with the construction of the Esperance Northward line yet been chartered? 2, Why was the jetty not prepared for the carriage of material for the Esperance Northward line prior to, or during, the construction of the

earthworks? 3, When will the construction of the line be actively proceeded with?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No, but the matter is in train, and arrangements will be completed in ample time for requirements. 2, Because there was nothing to be gained in view of previous inability to secure rails for continuation of construction operations. 3, Railway line will begin about November.

##### *Linking with Coolgardie-Norseman Line.*

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill to provide for the construction of a railway to link up the Esperance Northward line with the Coolgardie-Norseman line?

The PREMIER replied: No.

#### QUESTION—FAIR RENTS COURT.

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill to provide for the establishing of a fair rents court?

The PREMIER replied: No.

#### QUESTION—WHEAT SCHEME, MANAGER'S SALARY.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is it correct that the salary of the manager of the State Wheat Scheme has been increased to £1,750 per year? 2, When was this increase approved? 3, From what date was the increase made retrospective?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes. 2, 15th February, 1922. 3, 1st September, 1921.

#### QUESTION—FENCING MATERIAL FOR FARMERS.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Are the Government aware that throughout the agricultural districts grass and water capable of supporting tens of thousands of sheep are going to waste, owing to the fact that the farmers cannot afford to buy fencing material? 2, Is it the intention of the Government to advance rabbit-proof netting to settlers under the provisions of the Vermin Act, 1918, as was promised when that measure was under consideration? 3, If so, when?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, The Government are aware that, owing to the very high cost of fencing wire, farmers are not carrying the total quantity of stock the country is capable of supporting. 2, Yes; as soon as wire is cheap enough to warrant the erection of fences, and provided the security is satisfactory. 3, When the present price is reduced to a reasonable figure.

### QUESTION—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT, ADVANCES FOR CLEARING.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that a large number of returned soldiers have been assisted to purchase properties at prices which, including land, buildings, stock, and machinery, have necessitated advancing them the present maximum of £2,000? 2, Have the inspectors attached to the Agricultural Bank reported that many of these properties cannot be successfully worked until further land is cleared on them, and have the inspectors recommended advances for clearing, and have such advances been refused? 3, Do the Government propose to introduce legislation to permit further clearing loans to be granted in approved cases of this nature?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No, the number is not large. 2, Inspectors have reported as stated in a few cases only. 3, The matter is receiving consideration.

### SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.55]. I move—

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m. if necessary; and if requisite from 7.30 onwards.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [4.56]: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 the figure "4" be struck out and "2" inserted in lieu.

My reason for the amendment is that country members, after long train journeys, find the late sittings a considerable strain. Moreover, metropolitan members have certain business to attend to in the city which may keep them occupied until 4.30 p.m., whereas country members, of course, cannot go back to their districts to attend to farming operations, and so they are ready to sit at 2.30 p.m. In 1918 we tried to make the sitting hour 2.30 p.m., but were not successful. It was then explained that to sit at 2.30 p.m. would deprive Ministers of the Crown of the time necessary to attend to the business in their respective offices. Yet Federal Ministers manage to do it, for the Federal Parliament meets much earlier than 4.30 p.m. If we were to start at the earlier hour we could finish at a much earlier hour than has been the practice. This would be a move in the right direction. One week, towards the end of last session, following on a long railway journey I sat here for 80 hours in four days without proper rest. It is too much to expect of any man who is conscientiously trying to do his work; in fact I am sure our work would be much better done if we were to sit earlier and rise earlier. That is why I move the amendment.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell) (on amendment) [5.0]: We have tried the experiment in this House of sitting at an earlier hour than 4.30 p.m. on more than one occasion. We have met at 11 o'clock.

Mr. Johnston: And pretty successfully.

Mr. Munsie: Yes, very successfully, and you were never here.

The PREMIER: It is very easy to say that earlier meetings are successful; we know they are not. We get through no more business.

Mr. Lutey: The Country Party members attended in the past.

The PREMIER: I do not know that they did. If we sat as the Federal Parliament sits in Melbourne, we could meet at ten o'clock in the morning, but sitting here in Perth surrounded by constituents, it is a very different matter.

Mr. J. Thomson: Why?

The PREMIER: It is a very busy time for Ministers when the House is in session, and it is made busier by Country Party members calling on Ministers every day. I see them in my office every day.

Hon. P. Collier: You will see them next week all right.

The PREMIER: Hon. members know that if they do their duty thoroughly they must study every Bill that comes forward, every notice that appears on the Agenda Paper, they must read the answers to all questions—

Hon. P. Collier: And read "Hansard" and the evidence taken by all the Royal Commissions. They will have a busy time.

The PREMIER: They must also read the reports of all Departments, and in fact there are innumerable duties to perform before they start on their work within the Chamber. I do not know that they can do all this in three days.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It takes me seven days.

The PREMIER: We all know what the system of Government is in this State. In the Imperial Parliament, for instance, each Minister has a highly paid and capable staff to attend to details. Here a Minister must do almost everything. At the present time it is our desire to do our work thoroughly and particularly to study the finances. The suggested change would prove very inconvenient to members as well as to Ministers, and I say unhesitatingly that it would be particularly inconvenient to Country Party members. I admit that some hon. members are compelled to take long train journeys, and that the hon. member must leave his constituency at 2.15 in the morning, and that on that day he sometimes has to work until 11 o'clock at night. That cannot be avoided.

Hon. P. Collier: Under present conditions he could have a sleep in the afternoon.

The PREMIER: The matter, however, is one for the House to determine. I consider that 4.30 is a convenient hour at which to

meet. We have tried the earlier hour and it has not worked satisfactorily. I hope the House will not carry the amendment.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [5.7] : I trust the amendment will not be carried. The experiment of meeting early has been made in this House more than once, and hon. members will admit that it has not had the effect of curtailing the sittings of the House. We have met at three o'clock and at two o'clock, and at whatever hour of the day it was we met, we conscientiously carried out the full length of the programme, and got home in some instances, at two or three o'clock on the following morning. The meeting at an earlier hour does not help to facilitate business; it does not speed up business in any way to meet before 4.30, and if hon. members will look at "Hansard" of the periods of the experiments of the earlier sitting hour, they will find that all the turbulence of hon. members has happened during these periods. The longer time you have, so to speak, for mere verbal play, or for the purpose of attracting the attention of constituents in distant country districts, the more likely you are to waste the time of the country. Hon. members who are here, meet, it is supposed, for deliberative purposes. They come here for the purpose of considering measures submitted to them, or amending or proposing others. But they have to recollect that government consists of two functions, the deliberative and the executive, that it does the work that the country requires, and in a young country like ours I venture to say that if there be any difference, the most important part of the work is the executive, the attention to detail in administration. May I suggest that the terrible condition in which this country finds itself, so far as the finances are concerned, is due to the fact that there is not too intimate a touch between Ministers and administrative work. I am speaking of a fact that it does not require too keen an observer to notice, namely, that this country, and indeed the whole Commonwealth, is getting more and more into the hands of the heads and sub-heads, and their still further subordinates, in the departments. We are run, not by Ministers—and I use the word "run" not in a derogatory sense—but by civil servants.

The Premier: You have had experience.

Hon. T. WALKER: I speak from experience, and I know what time is required for work which has to be done by Ministers if it must be done conscientiously. I know that Ministers cannot sit here all night and all day and then attend to matters which require a clear brain and the ascertainment of facts before coming to a decision.

Mr. Harrison: I agree with that.

Hon. T. WALKER: Then how can the hon. member accomplish what he desires by means of his amendment? If his amendment suggested meeting from 9 to 12 and from 2 to 4, so as to allow Ministers to do their own work at night—if that were practicable, I could understand the position. But if we are

to have Ministers attendant upon us here, sitting in their places all the day and all the night, how then will it be possible for them to manage the affairs of the country? I say with some fear of the future, with some dread of the result of the drift, that the more time Ministers can give to the important problems of the hour, and to the details of administration, the better it will be for all. As it is we are leaving everything to those who are the civil servants of the State. They are absolutely determining the fate of this country. They are deciding all the issues, and they are in full command of the public purse, and the way they manipulate it is to be seen in the state of our finances. We can only check that by a keener grip on the administration, by absolutely getting down to it, to use a vulgarism, in the offices of the Ministers, in carpeting where it is necessary, any misinformed or negligent officer, and in absolutely seeing that our work in all the departments is done with the least possible friction, at the least possible expense, and with an earnest desire to suit the purpose of the object in view. We cannot get that under the proposal suggested by the amendment.

Mr. Underwood: We are not getting it anyhow.

Hon. T. WALKER: What the public are suffering from is that at the present time they have no protection from the Government. The general public are at the mercy of the uncivil civil servant whether he be in the Railway Department or elsewhere.

Hon. P. Collier: Or at the Immigrants' Home.

Hon. T. WALKER: I could never have conceived, unless I had observed this, such indifference, patience and long suffering on the part of the general public. They get a sort of pity for the way in which things are managed, and a feeling of hopelessness for the position. My object in drawing attention to these facts is to point out that, if anything, the Government need more time at their offices, not only the time allowed to them by Parliament, but more time even apart from the parliamentary claims that are made upon them. There is too much of this travelling about. I am not speaking now of the Premier. There is too much tripping about hunting for elephants and things of that kind. They should stick to their offices and attend to their duties earnestly, zealously and self-denyingly. That is what is necessary to help to bring this country into a position worthy of it. I hope the hon. member will not persist in his amendment.

Mr. Latham: I hope he does.

Hon. T. WALKER: I can quite understand members who come from country districts, and are here in lodgings, wishing to have some variety of entertainment during the day. The picture shows do not quite satisfy them, and they want to come here to this comfortable club. If they attended to their duties when they got here, and came with a determination to do their duty as deliberating representatives of their constituents, they

could get through their work in reasonable time even if we met at 4.30. From the experience I have had I say that if we met at 2 o'clock we should still be going home after 11. The amendment would not save the country one iota of time or lessen the duration of Parliament. It would only enhance the labours of "Hansard," and waste a considerable amount of ink.

Mr. SIMONS (East Perth) [5.17]: I hope the amendment will not be carried. This country is more in need of administration than talk. If we started at 9 in the morning we should still go into the early hours of the following morning under our present system of party Government. If Ministers were away from their administrative functions two hours earlier each day, this would practically mean that they would be carrying out their administrative duties only for two or three hours of each forenoon during the days that Parliament was sitting at 2.30. That amount of time would be altogether inadequate. The amendment would only mean more license for talking, and we have enough of that at present. We should be adding to that of which we have too much, and taking away from that of which we have too little. I am amazed at any member of the Country Party holding up Federation as a pattern. Federation is something that we hear damned nearly every time Country Party members get up to talk about it, but when it suits them they hold up Federation as a pattern, that is, when they can find a pattern in it to suit their contention. If we are going to add to the talk of Parliament, we shall not be adding to the efficiency of the country. If we extend the hours of talking, we shall reduce the hours of administration and increase the cost of "Hansard." That, like other functions of Parliament, is altogether too costly at present.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [5.19]: I support the amendment.

Mr. SIMONS: We thought you would.

Mr. LATHAM: It is very noticeable that members who are opposing this amendment are men who have remunerative professions.

Hon. P. Collier: Is not farming remunerative?

Mr. LATHAM: Those who are opposing the amendment are the professional members of the city. They have plenty of time on their hands to go to their clubs in the evening, and I think it would be of benefit to the State if we met at 2.30. I am sure the brains of the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) would be clearer at 3 o'clock in the afternoon than at that hour in the morning. We all remember how we were brought back after the Christmas vacation into this heated Chamber. What was the result of that?

Mr. SIMONS: Heated arguments.

Mr. LATHAM: Those members who possess any intelligence at all will not, I am sure, desire to be shut up here when there is no necessity for it. I cannot see that the

administration would suffer by the amendment. Ministers would have plenty of time to look after their office work in the morning, and if necessary they could refuse to meet deputations on the three days on which Parliament would be sitting at the earlier hour.

Mr. Munsie: I know the source from which the first squeal would come.

Mr. LATHAM: It is time that country representatives in this Chamber had some opportunity of putting in their time in a more useful manner than they can do to-day.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [5.21]: I should like to reply to one or two of the remarks which have fallen from members.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot reply on the amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	28

Majority against .. 15

#### AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Chesson	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Durack	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Harrison
Mr. Latham	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Boyland	Mr. Money
Mr. Broun	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Carter	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Collier	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Davies	Mr. Simons
Mr. George	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heron	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Wilson
Mr. H. K. Maley	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Mann	(Teller.)
Mr. Marshall	

Amendment thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.27]: I move—

That on Tuesdays and Thursdays Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.28]: I have been looking carefully through the Governor's Speech, and do not see any business down for the Government. It may be that, as in other sessions,

the business of private members will be talked out again as a result of this motion. There is no business at all for the Government in the Governor's Speech. In all probability the Premier will close down before private members have had an opportunity to introduce any legislation. Never before has Parliament been placed in the same position as it is in this session. There are many reports of Royal Commissions that require to be dealt with, but probably the Government will not enable private members to discuss those reports if Government business is to have precedence on two days out of the three.

Hon. P. Collier: The trouble will be to find time to read all the reports.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We must be given time to deal with them. I must say, however, that I think the Premier has been pretty fair so far.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [5.29:]: On several occasions previously, I have referred to the business of private members being taken on Wednesdays. It would be in the best interests of the House, and of private members, particularly those who come from country districts, if private members' business were taken on Thursdays instead of on Wednesdays. Some members may desire to go to their homes for the week ends and I think hon. members will agree that Government business must be regarded as the most important to receive our consideration. That being so, members desirous of going to their homes cannot very well get away to the country over the week ends.

The Minister for Mines: Very often we finish private members' business early in the evening and hon. members could then get away.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is so, and if some arrangement were made whereby hon. members would be here for the more important business of the House, they could then, if they saw fit, go away to their own electorates towards the end of the week. I do not like going away from the House when there is important business coming forward, but there may be some business on the Notice Paper from private members which need not be considered as of vital importance, or of such importance as should necessitate hon. members remaining behind to deal with it. If we are to miss anything, I think it should be private members' proposals and not Government business. The Premier would be wise to consider an alteration in the direction I suggest.

Mr. Pickering: It might be awkward for you.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am willing to take that risk. I have heard members of the Country Party express the same view as I have given utterance to here, and for that reason I was rather surprised to hear the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) move his amendment this afternoon. There are certainly enough members to keep the business of the House going at all times.

Mr. Underwood: And they do not count.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 "Thursdays" be struck out and the word "Wednesdays" be inserted in lieu.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [5.32]: I second the amendment pro forma.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.33]: We have always made it a practice to devote Wednesdays to private members' business. I think, however, the suggestion is a good one. At any rate, I think we might give it a trial and if the proposal does not work satisfactorily, we can take an early opportunity to alter it. We devote two days to Government business and one day to the business of private members. It does not really matter which day is devoted to private members' business and, therefore, I have no objection to raise to the amendment.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [5.34]: There are many members in this House who are compelled to be here all the time and I do not know why they should be called upon to give more than ordinary assistance to those members who can go home at the week ends. The inference to be drawn from the remarks of the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock), in moving the amendment, is that private members' business is to be treated with contempt.

Mr. Willcock: I said that some members may want to get away and it was better to leave private members' business, than to leave Government business.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: This is treating private members' business with contempt.

Mr. Willcock: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not know what other inference can be drawn from the statement of the hon. member. It may be said that private members' business is not so important as Government business and, therefore, those members who draw the same allowance as we do, can get away on Thursdays and need not stay behind to listen to the business of private members. As one who has to be here all the time, I want to enter a protest against the amendment. I protest as the representative of an electorate to which it is impossible for me to get at week ends. I claim that private members are entitled to full consideration.

The Minister for Agriculture: You can go to your electorate during the week ends and get back again.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: At one time, I had a free passage once a year to my electorate, but the Government, on the score of economy, now charge me 8s. a day.

The Minister for Mines: That is only for your food.

Hon. P. Collier: Does not the free pass apply to the aeroplanes?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I protest against the suggested alteration, which simply means that

this House will treat the business of private members, if not with contempt, at least with less consideration than is shown to the business of the Government. I claim that the business of private members should not be regarded as less important than Government business.

The Premier: Members do nothing of the sort.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Members of Parliament should be able to spend three nights a week for five months of the year in attending to their duties.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [5.38]: I oppose the amendment. There is one aspect that makes me doubtful about agreeing to the alteration. I am afraid that if the suggestion by the member for Geraldton be given a trial, we will find Ministers here on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and probably only one Minister in his place on Thursdays.

The Premier: Nothing of the sort.

The Minister for Mines: No, of course not.

Mr. MUNSIE: I know that Ministers through the whole of last session, or the whole of the last Parliament, were very often tripping around the country during week ends. If we endeavoured to get them to go to places we wanted them to visit, their excuse was that they could not make the journey on account of their Parliamentary duties on Thursdays. We will probably have private members attempting to introduce matters before this Chamber with one Minister on the floor of the House. I oppose the amendment because I think it is best that private members' business should be taken in the middle of the week. I do not think the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) wished to cast any slur upon private members and the business they bring forward.

The Premier: I do not think you are entitled to say that Ministers will not be here on Thursdays.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Seaddan—Albany) [5.40]: I do not think any harm can arise from adopting the suggestion made by the member for Geraldton. If it is found that such an arrangement suits hon. members, they will receive every consideration in connection with matters they bring forward. If not, the matter can be reconsidered. There seems to be a difference of opinion as to whether Wednesday or Thursday is the better day for private members' business, and that being so, why should we not try the proposal by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock), and then members will be able to suit themselves. It matters not to the Government whether private members' business is taken on Wednesdays or Thursdays.

Mr. Underwood: If Wednesday suits hon. members, why should we alter it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is a difference of opinion on that point. Unless we try the Thursday sittings for private members' business, we cannot say which day will suit us better. I do not know that the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) is entitled to suggest that, because of the alteration of the day on which private members' business will be dealt with, less interest will be taken in their business.

Mr. Underwood: The member for Geraldton said so.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He said that some members may find the business set down for consideration on private members' day is not sufficiently important to warrant them neglecting the duties to their constituents within the boundaries of their constituencies, and, therefore, they will be able to catch either the afternoon or early evening train to the country. If the arrangement suggested by the member for Geraldton does not prove to be satisfactory, we can revert to Wednesday sittings for private members' business.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.42]: I oppose the change for the reasons given by the member for Geraldton.

The Premier: I thought you would do so.

Mr. PICKERING: The matters brought forward by private members are very often of considerable importance to the State. Those proposals, however, may be in opposition to the opinion of the Government and if the alteration be agreed to, matters of vital importance to the country may be jeopardised because members likely to support the motions, will not be in attendance. It has always been found satisfactory to have private members' business dealt with on Wednesdays, and I have not heard any argument advanced to warrant the alteration suggested.

Hon. P. Collier: What about going through the country?

Mr. PICKERING: I agree with the member for Pilbara that we should be prepared to give three nights a week to the business for which we are paid. It is not fair that members should study their own convenience.

Member: What about when the annual shows in the country come along?

Mr. PICKERING: That is only once a year.

The Premier: Why do you say that members do not take an interest in the work of the public? They are here on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Mr. PICKERING: It was not necessary for me to say so, for that had already been said by the member for Geraldton. There was only one possible inference to be drawn from that member's remarks and members would be wisely advised to retain the day which has always been set apart for private members' business.

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



## COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motion by the Premier, sessional committees were appointed as follows:—

Library: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Simons, and Mr. J. MacCallum Smith.

Standing Orders: Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Durack, Mr. Money, and Hon. T. Walker.

House: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Mullany, Mr. O'Loughlen, and Mr. Teesdale.

Printing: Mr. Speaker, Mr. O'Loughlen, and Mr. J. MacCallum Smith.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £1,763,950.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.46]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committee of Supply and Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day, and to enable the business aforesaid to be entered upon and dealt with before the Address-in-reply is adopted.

Question put and passed.

## Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

## In Committee of Supply.

The House having resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. Stubbs in the Chair,

The PREMIER and TREASURER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.49]: I move—

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the service of the year ending the 30th June, 1923, a sum not exceeding £1,763,950.

I am asking for the usual authority to cover the expenditure for two months. When I introduced the Budget last year, I anticipated that there would be a deficit of £51,728 for the year. The actual deficit was £732,135, which exceeded the estimate by £160,407. I expected to get rather more than £100,000 from liquor licenses, but the Bill was referred to a select committee which was eventually turned into a Royal Commission, so that this money was not available. The deficit is largely due to the loss on business undertakings. The loss last year was £565,000. It is very difficult to make these undertakings earn sufficient to cover working expenses, due, of course, to the increased price of commodities and to increased costs generally.

Mr. Underwood: Due to waste.

The PREMIER: The hon. member ought to know something about that because he was a Minister for a long time. I do not know that it is due to waste so much as to increased costs.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I thought prices were coming down.

The PREMIER: They are now, but they have been very high. The deficit is due to the loss on the business undertakings. It has been said that Ministers do not give sufficient time to these departments. Even the member for Pilbara could not manage the Railway Department in all its ramifications. I told the House last year that we could exercise very little control over the expenditure for hospitals, medical and health, police and education and that these free services to the people would absorb every penny of taxation that we could obtain. The net expenditure under these headings totals £1,040,000. These are free services from which we get no return.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It has been so for all time.

The PREMIER: No it has not. The expenditure under these headings has increased tremendously due to automatic advances in wages and salaries to officials and to the increased cost of commodities.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And you have had increased taxation.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member wishes to oppose this expenditure, the present is not the time to do it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am not going to do so, but I say your contention is no excuse.

The PREMIER: From taxation we received £881,000 and we expended £1,040,000 on the free services I have enumerated. If these two items are to balance there must be more taxation or less expense.

Mr. Underwood: You are going to continue as at present.

The PREMIER: The hon. member continued such expenditure for a good number of years. Would he destroy the education system of the State? Would he cut out hospitals or the Charities Department? Would he say there should be no Medical Department?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There was no £700,000 deficit in his day.

Mr. Underwood: No.

The PREMIER: The deficit had its beginning in those days because it was then that the automatic increases were started. The member for North-East Fremantle was responsible for starting a lot of this expenditure. I would like to know where money can be saved in connection with these activities. The estimated deficit would have been realised within a very few pounds if the Licensing Bill had become law.

Mr. Underwood: If you had got more taxation, you would have spent more money.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is the trouble. The more taxation they get, the heavier is their expenditure.

The PREMIER: The hon. member cannot honestly say that. The departments were never more economically managed than they are at present.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: One would not expect you to say otherwise.

Hon. P. Collier: We can only judge by results. The departments may be economically managed, but the results do not indicate it.

The PREMIER: That is entirely due to the expenditure of borrowed money on investments which are not returning sufficient to pay their way. At one time the business undertakings did pay their way, but for years they have not done so. If the ledger is to be balanced, these concerns must be made to pay their way. I do not know whether members of the Opposition think we might cut down the expenditure on mining and on the development of the country generally.

Mr. Underwood: Do you think we should balance the ledger?

The PREMIER: Certainly.

Mr. Underwood: Give us some idea when you are going to do it.

The PREMIER: These concerns must be made to pay their way.

Hon. P. Collier: You mean the business undertakings.

The PREMIER: Yes. It must be remembered that the railways, which were responsible for a large portion of the loss, are managed by a Commissioner under an Act of Parliament which does not allow us much opportunity for interference. The expenditure as a whole for the year was fairly closely estimated. The estimate was £7,621,590, and the actual expenditure exceeded that sum by £17,652. I do not maintain that the present position is satisfactory, but I can say that it is well understood by members. We must increase the trade of the railways. We must increase our development, production and activity. This is gradually being done, but the Commissioner of Railways has a hard row to hoe. On the gold-fields he has a great mileage of railways catering for a comparatively small population. The timber industry has been almost dead during the last few months. Sawmills have been closed down and we have facilities there which are not being used. The railways will always present a difficulty, because of the uncertainty. We cannot afford to go on year after year losing these sums on our railways. The railways must pay their way. Very soon members will have an opportunity to discuss the Estimates for the present financial year and, meanwhile, I hope they will support the passing of this Supply Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [6.1]: I rather dislike commencing the session by raising any objection whatever to the modest requests put forward by the Premier. It has been the practice during past years to complain of the fact that a considerable portion of the year's expenditure has been incurred before this House or Parliament has had an opportunity of dealing with it. We

are commencing this financial year in the same old way. Here we are in August, and the Premier comes down asking for Supply based upon the expenditure of last year, I take it.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We have commenced this financial year with the record deficit for July of £211,000. I know there are explanations for that deficit. No Treasurer is ever found wanting in explanations. But we have a deficit of £211,000 for this July as against £177,000 for July of last year, and as against £106,000 deficit for July of the year before last. It is evident we are starting off on the same old lines.

Mr. Underwood: Only more so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Perhaps it is useless for me to talk, but it does seem that unless this Committee takes the matter in hand and reduces the amount asked for by the Government no serious effort will be made to cope with the financial position of the State. The Premier tells us how the shortage has occurred: it is due largely to the loss on business undertakings, amounting to something over half a million pounds. But the business undertakings, or the administration controlling them, must be regarded as a function of government. It is no explanation for a Minister to say, as the Premier in effect desires to say, that the Government are not responsible for the financial position, because that position is due largely or almost entirely to the loss on the business undertakings.

The Premier: Is not that a fact?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The loss is there, no doubt. But Ministers are in charge of the business undertakings. If those undertakings are inefficiently managed, or controlled, if there is a want of economy in their conduct, surely Ministers have to accept the responsibility for that. The Premier puts forward the proposition that the business undertakings are something over which Ministers have no control whatever. There it is. We have an annual loss on the Railway Department, or on a business undertaking, and the Premier simply says, "The Government are not responsible."

The Premier: We could put up railway freights.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I venture to say that the Government cannot put up freights very much, because they have exhausted the possibilities in that direction.

The Premier: What else can you do?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not wish to enter into a discussion upon the Railway Department.

The Premier: You had better not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: However, I may say that the gentleman in whom the Premier had confidence enough to appoint him a Royal Commissioner to inquire into the Railway Department has indicated some directions in which action might be taken, at any rate. But if the Government put up freights to an abnormal extent, they lose traffic instead of securing revenue.

The Premier: Of course.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the position now. I noticed the other day a newspaper report of a statement made by the president of the Builders' and Contractors' Association to the effect that building had entirely ceased on land adjacent to our railways. Wherever there was tramway extension, or a possibility of it, he said, building was in progress; but generally along our railway system building had entirely ceased because of the fact that the people concerned could not afford to pay the fares asked by the Railway Department. The same thing applies to trade. However, there is the position. We have now had six years of the present Administration, and after those six years of opportunity to look into things the Government can do no better than come here and ask for Supply based upon the old condition of things, and start off the financial year with a deficit of £211,000 for July. The fact of that deficit would seem to indicate that whilst efforts were made to gather in every possible pound of revenue before the close of the financial year, accounts owing by the departments were left outstanding. Now the Government are asking for expenditure of loan funds to the extent of £608,000. If that is the proportion of the expenditure of loan funds for the year, it means a total of £3,600,000 for the 12 months. Has the Premier included in this amount of £608,000 of loan funds any moneys which it is proposed to expend under the new arrangement with the Imperial Government?

The Premier: No. It cannot come into that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In that case we have a proposal to spend the extraordinary amount of £3,600,000 out of loan funds for a year, and that amount the Premier says is entirely exclusive of any loan expenditure on immigration settlement. Added to that amount of £3,600,000 there will be two millions under the settlement scheme, which means a total of £5,600,000 loan expenditure for the year. It even exceeds last year's expenditure. I think the amount voted by Parliament last year was three and a half millions.

The Premier: What is asked for here is one-sixth of the vote of last year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know what the loan expenditure has been for the past year. No figures have yet been published regarding that. I know that the loan expenditure for the previous year was £2,500,000. For last year Parliament voted £3,500,000. I do not know whether the Premier has figures showing what the actual loan expenditure for last year was. The hon. gentleman says, "Would you have no education facilities, no Charities Department and other departments which incur considerable expenditure?" But he knows perfectly well that this State had an Education Department and a Charities Department and all those other spending departments in years gone by when the State was able to get through financially, or able to get through with a deficit not

amounting to one half of what the deficit has been latterly.

The Premier: But you had not the State Children Department.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, we had. All that expenditure has obtained all along in this State.

The Premier: But see how your Minister for Education improved the school system.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The present Minister for Education has not improved the system, although he has increased the expenditure enormously. That is the difference between the present Minister for Education and my colleague who administered the Education Department some years ago. He improved the system without heaping up the expenditure in the way it is heaped up to-day. The Premier says the departments were never more economically administered than they are at the present time. I should like to see the results of a thorough inquiry into all the departments. We have had a searching investigation made into one big spending department, and I venture to say that the contents of that Royal Commissioner's report have opened the eyes of the people of this country. I believe that I shall not be going too far when I say that if a similarly searching inquiry were made into other departments, say the Public Works Department, though I do not wish to single out that department for particular mention, the result would be to show that if inefficiency and lack of economical management were remedied this State could immediately wipe out its annual deficit. I believe that the shortage for the year of £700,000 is due to want of economical administration in our various departments. How can the Premier say that the departments are economically administered? In every one of them year by year for the past six years an enormous increase has been shown, and this notwithstanding the fact that in some of the departments there has not been any activity to speak of. Take the Public Works Department. Latterly there has been neither railway construction nor harbour improvement of any magnitude. Nor has there been anything material in the way of water supply works, though that is a subject which concerns another department. At all events, the Public Works Department have been very slack of recent years. Unfortunately, however, the departmental expenditure all along the line has increased. One result of the inquiry into the operations of the Railway Department should be to bring it home to the Premier that the economical administration of the departments has not reached bedrock. Statements of that kind are calculated to make the responsible officers in charge of the various departments feel quite secure and quite comfortable. I know of nothing which is more calculated than such statements are to make the responsible officers feel perfectly at their ease. After all, it is these officers who are responsible for the efficient and economical administration of the departments. I am not saying that in this matter Ministers alone are to blame. In many

respects the efficient and economical administration of departments is beyond their powers, outside their scope of operations.

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

Hon. P. COLLIER: I shall not pursue the question of the financial position of the State further at this stage, as there will be an opportunity to deal with it more extensively later in the session. There are one or two matters which require consideration before Supply is granted to the Government. I would like to remind some hon. members that this will, perhaps, be the only effective opportunity of dealing with the now famous, or shall I say notorious, Como tramway extension.

The Minister for Mines: Why introduce that discordant note?

Mr. Clydesdale: Leave that matter to me.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I merely suggest to hon. members that when we grant Supply, we will have voted the Minister the necessary funds required for the construction of that tramway. I do not know whether that will preclude us from dealing with the matter at a subsequent stage, but, at any rate, members should recognise that they will be voting the money necessary for that extension. To-day the Premier laid on the Table of the House the report of the Royal Commission on the Waroona-Lake Clifton railway. I am sorry the report was not made available on Thursday last, because I desired to look into the matter. Possibly, I might wish to make some comments on the question involved, during the course of the debate on the Address-in-reply. I would draw the attention of the Premier to the fact that the evidence taken by the Royal Commission has not been printed, and consequently has not been supplied to the House with the report. The report is comparatively a small one. I do not think there were more than 13 witnesses examined, but the subject matter of their evidence was of considerable importance, of such importance, in fact, as to form the subject matter of a notion of no-confidence against the Government in this Chamber. I think members should be in possession of the whole of the evidence given before the Royal Commission. I do not know who is responsible for giving the instructions that prevent the printing of such evidence. I think that in some quarters there is a desire to withhold the printing of the evidence given before some Royal Commissions. I do not wish to draw comparisons, but the evidence taken by the Hospitals Commission, and some others, which was fairly voluminous, has been printed and will be available to members. I hope the Premier will see that the evidence taken by the Royal Commission on the Waroona-Lake Clifton railway will also be printed and made available to the House. I would like to know, also, possibly from the Minister for Works, if the amount claimed by the company in connection with the purchase of the Lake Clifton railway has been paid over.

The Premier: It has been paid.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I understood from a paragraph appearing in the newspapers, that the amount had been paid. I want to know what the amount was, and also whether it represented the full claim made by this particular company. When the matter was before the House on the former occasion, the file was laid on the Table of the House, and it was disclosed therein that there was a wide margin between the amount claimed by the company for the purchase of the railway and the amount the officers of the Works Department, who were handling the question, considered the company were entitled to secure.

The Premier: I will supply the information.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think the difference was some £10,000 or £12,000. Before concluding, there is another matter of considerable importance I wish to deal with. I refer to the unemployment situation in Western Australia at the present time. I have no desire to pursue any course which could be regarded as harassing to anyone, but the position of men, not only in the city but throughout the State, who may number thousands is very desperate. The difficulty is not confined to the metropolitan area, as could easily be assumed by those who live in the city and have no knowledge of the conditions in the different parts of the State; but those of us who have travelled the country districts and the goldfields during the past month or two, know that practically every town of any size has its proportion of unemployed. I am aware that a considerable number of men have been sent out of the city during the past six or seven weeks and that they have gone to work in the country districts. Notwithstanding that fact, we still have a large number of men in the city who are unable to find employment in any direction whatever. The situation perhaps can best be gathered from a reference to the position of returned soldiers. During the past few weeks those associated with the Returned Soldiers' Association, in an endeavour to find work for the men, have had many meetings; there have been deputations to the Acting Premier prior to the return of the Premier, and also several deputations to the Premier himself. Some of the headlines which have appeared in the newspapers with reference to the unemployed trouble among returned soldiers, are instructive. A little more than a week ago it was claimed by one responsible officer that we had in Perth alone something like 900 returned soldiers seeking employment. The headings in connection with that matter ran as follows: "A brooding bitterness; A deputation to the Premier; Warning by General Hobbs." This is what General Hobbs said—

The position had reached an acute stage. There was a grave risk of serious trouble. Their patience was at breaking point. He feared they would not wait any longer. A large number had wives and children who

were actually hungry. Immediate action was necessary as the men were right up against it.

If those comments had been made by men associated with Trades Hall or, as it is sometimes referred to, "Beaufort-street," we should be immediately told that we were repeating the Bolshevik statements said to be characteristic of the men associated with that institution. The comments I have quoted are the utterances of General Hobbs, who said that the difficulty had reached an acute stage and there was a grave risk of serious trouble. It must appeal to everyone when we find there are men with wives and families in the city and in various parts of the State who are actually going hungry, notwithstanding the fact that no Government will see men, women or children starve. While we know that they will be able to obtain assistance from the Charities Department, we know that the allowance made by that or any other Government institution is such that it still leaves them hungry to a certain degree. The responsibility rests upon the Government in the first place, and upon Parliament in the second place, to see that everything is done immediately to find work for men who are in this unfortunate position. When the Premier arrived at Fremantle he granted an interview to newspaper reporters—I think he was actually on board at the time—and he is reported as having said, "There must be work for all or there cannot be an immigration policy." That goes without saying. The Premier also said, "I will provide work for all as soon as I land." I do not wish to place a literal interpretation upon the words of the Premier. I do not wish to infer that the provision of work should have taken place the next day, when he landed from the mail boat. I know that the Premier has only been back for a fortnight and that fact must be taken into consideration. At the same time, during the past two weeks, so far as my information goes, work has been found for very few men within the metropolitan area. I am told that scarcely any have been placed through the State Labour Bureau.

The Premier: There have been men placed by the bureau.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I referred to the past fortnight.

The Premier: I think they have been placed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: My information is that work has been found for very few through the labour bureau. I know that some men were sent to Lake Grace and other parts of the State prior to that period, but, notwithstanding what the Government have done, the position is still acute. Apart from the question of returned soldiers, numbering some 500, together with the women and children dependent upon them, there are between 500 and 600 men in the city who are unable to secure employment. It is no use saying that the Government cannot start works in order to absorb these men. It may be that the

Government cannot do so, but certainly the only power in the State to relieve the position is the Government, either by commencing work which will give direct employment or by the pursuit of a policy which will result in providing employment in industries generally. On the goldfields, as the Minister for Mines is aware, the position is difficult owing to the closing down of one particular mine and the reduction of bands on another mine. Owing to these two circumstances, some 400 men are out of work in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder district and have been so for the past few weeks. The position of those men is much more difficult than that of those in the metropolitan area, because the men in and around Perth have opportunities for finding employment in more than one direction but the men cut off from the rest of the State, such as those in Boulder and Kalgoorlie, have no such opportunity. There is no agricultural industry within easy reach; indeed there are no other industries but that of mining. The men are helpless in the matter of finding work for themselves, and I am aware that there are difficulties awaiting any Government in their desire to provide work on the goldfields, because no direct employment by the Government can be given the men up there, there is no work in which the Government can directly employ them; nor of course can the Government exercise any influence in the direction of private employment. I know that the Minister for Mines has in hand the question of giving a considerable amount of assistance under the Mines Development Vote not only in Boulder and Kalgoorlie, but in some of the outlying districts as well, notably at St. Ives. But the investigation necessary before action can be taken involves considerable time, and the result is the men are idle so much longer. It is imperative that the Government take the strongest possible measures to absorb the unemployed. The Premier knows that so long as we have a considerable number of men out of work, so long will that fact in itself be an obstacle to the success of an immigration policy. There may be causes for it, but I am not quite able to understand why it is that the overseas arrivals are able to be absorbed almost immediately they land in the State whilst week after week large numbers of our citizens find themselves out of work.

The Premier: The new arrivals go to the country.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that, but I know also that there are in the city, and have been for weeks past, many men also willing to go to the country, but who, so far, have not been found work in country districts. There is something wrong in the system which allows perhaps a thousand or two of our citizens to remain out of work for some months whilst new arrivals are found employment immediately they land.

Mr. Teesdale: Most of the local unemployed are married, and so will not go into the country.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But a proportion of the new arrivals are married men also; and although the keeping of two homes would militate against his financial position, still it is probably easier for the local married man with an established home in which to leave his wife and family, to go to the country, than for the married man from overseas who is without a home of any sort in the State.

The Minister for Mines: The new arrivals go into the country with the definite purpose of remaining there, whereas the man from the city proposes to return as soon as possible.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The work of finding employment for the new arrival is being carried out by the New Settlers' League, a band of men doing excellent work. Were it not for the assistance rendered by that organization in finding employment for the new arrivals, I do not know what would have happened during the past 12 months.

Mr. Mann: They are doing the work at the request of the Government.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course, they would not be permitted to do it without the consent of the Government. I do not insinuate that they have butted in. As a matter of fact, during the past six months the work as assumed much larger proportions than as ever expected by the league when they undertook it, notwithstanding which they are still carrying on their good work. The fact remains that shiploads of immigrants arriving week after week are found employment within a few days of their landing, while a large number of citizens are left to clamour to the Government Labour Bureau for employment. Why is it so? Is it that the farmers give preference to our new settlers because they represent so much cheap labour?

The Premier: No.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know. It may be that the local men wanting employment are asking £2 weekly, whereas the new arrivals are content with something less. The fact that the farmers prefer the new arrivals is in itself evidence that they are relatively cheaper labour.

Mr. Mann: That is not so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then why is it? Why does the farmer employ the new arrival?

The Minister for Mines: Because we have requested him to give the new arrival a chance to acquire experience.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then he is doing it for patriotic purposes! There was not much patriotism about the case of which I heard last week: a farmer near Wagin was taking a married couple at £2 per week and find themselves, providing their own bedding, cooking utensils and everything else.

The Minister for Mines: That is an isolated case.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope it is. It is no reflection on the farmers to say they are not employing men purely for patriotic reasons.

The Minister for Mines: I do not say so;

I say we urged them to find work for the new arrivals in order that they might gain experience.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is a consideration, certainly, but if it were not a profitable business proposition the farmer would not employ them. Every man will always keep in mind the business aspect of such an engagement. The farmer is not going to pay a higher wage than he need do, merely because he is moved by patriotic impulses to educate the new arrival in the mysteries of farming. Of course, in every walk of life some men would go out of their way to assist new arrivals; but, taking them by and large, it will be found that employers of labour employ the men who will give the best results for the wage paid. The hon. member interjected that the new arrivals were going into the country, the inference being that our own people decline to do so.

The Minister for Mines: Not always without reason.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know about their going into the country, but it appears to me the unemployment of some of our men is due to their having been pushed out, and that cheaper labour from overseas has taken their places.

The Minister for Mines: You cannot do that in the city, where all are working under awards or agreements.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But I am talking about country work. Quite a number of the unemployed in the city have come from the country.

The Premier: And have given up Government jobs to come here.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier would not assert that any considerable number of the men out of work have done that?

The Premier: No, I do not say so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He would not assert that the men out of work are not genuinely unemployed?

The Minister for Mines: Only a few isolated cases, like that of yours from Wagin.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I will give you another presently, in which the wage was only 30s. weekly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will not assert that the farmers are taking advantage of the new arrivals and employing them at a wage lower than they ought to pay. On the whole I suppose they are paying what they consider to be a fair thing for the services rendered. On the point of the number in the city, I have here the report of an exclusive interview published in the columns of that powerful and influential journal with which my colleague is associated. The interview was given by Mr. East, the secretary of the New Settlers' League who was dealing with immigration generally. He was asked, "Do you find that immigrants stay at their posts in country districts," and he replied, "I should say that about 20 per cent. come back and help to swell the ranks of the unemployed." That is a serious statement. If they are coming back to the city to the extent of 20 per cent. to swell the ranks of the

unemployed, undeniably there is something wrong. It is a very large percentage and there must be something wrong at this end or else in the selection at the other end. I suppose Mr. East knew what he was talking about. There is no man in this State, not even in the Government service, who is so closely in touch with employment in the agricultural districts or with the arrival and placing of immigrants as Mr. East.

Mr. Mann: They go out again, though.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They have to go out again or remain unemployed here.

Mr. Mann: A second and even a third position has been found for some of them, but they have gone out again.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Mr. East says they come back and help to swell the ranks of the unemployed.

Mr. Mann: There might be something wrong with the first position given to them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When a man loses his position in a country district, perhaps there is no alternative to returning to the city. Perhaps he thinks that by so doing he will the quicker obtain other employment in the country. Probably such a man has no intention of remaining in the city. However, that is the position. There are men in large numbers out of work. The Premier said he would find work for them as soon as he landed. I will not say that statement is covered by a fortnight or even a little longer. I know very well that no one is more anxious than the Premier to find work if it can be found, but there is a tendency to say there is one class of work in the country and that if a man does not accept it, no other is offering. I realise that the need of this State is work in the country. We must concentrate on this in future, but to say that no work shall be started save work connected with land settlement is tantamount to stating that a considerable number of men accustomed to work peculiar to the city must for all time remain out of work. Many men are not fit for work in the country. I believe that is the trouble with a fair proportion of those who find themselves out of work at the present time.

The Premier: There are no houses for them in the country towns. That is one of the troubles.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The work is not offering in the country towns, but I admit that such men would be nearer to work and more in touch with the opportunities to find work in the surrounding districts if more houses were available for them in country towns. I hope the Minister for Mines will make every effort to place the unemployed of the goldfields. They have been very patient. Until Saturday last they received no assistance by way of sustenance for the four weeks they were idle.

The Minister for Mines: They were thrown out of work very suddenly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, 140 of them were thrown out of work in one day. It came like a thunder clap. Forty more were put off from another mine and quite unex-

pectedly thrown on the unemployed market and this made the position there more difficult. I hope the Premier will give liberal powers to the goldfields inspector who will receive and deal with applications for assistance under the mining development vote, so that as many men as possible might be employed.

The Minister for Mines: We cannot force them to take assistance, but where they desire it and there is a reasonable prospect of success, they will get it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. Members should note the difference in the class of people who carry on the mining industry and those in the agricultural districts. The trouble confronting the Minister for Mines is that, while he is offering financial assistance, the men of the goldfields will not accept it, and he is not in a position to force them to do so. Just imagine him going to the farming districts, offering assistance, and being unable to find any of those represented by our friends of the Country Party willing to accept Government funds!

The Minister for Works: You would put them in a glass case.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The men on the goldfields know they will have to repay their money.

Mr. Pickering: But will they do so?

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the reason they do not accept assistance. Every man who accepts a loan from the Government does so with the honest and sincere intention of repaying it, but what happens to loans in the agricultural districts was illustrated by the member for Pingelly (Mr. Hickmott) who told us that when farmers received financial notices to pay outstanding accounts, they papered the walls of their houses with them. The situation on the goldfields is known to the Premier and his Ministers, and I urge them to make special efforts to find work for these men, not only in the interests of the men and their families who have been suffering for weeks past, but in the interest of the scheme upon which we are about to embark. Even though we are a long way from the old world centres of population the conditions of work, employment, and wages obtaining here are known there, and it would be a very bad initiation for a policy of immigration and land settlement if we had to admit to people in the old country that we were unable to find work for our own people.

Mr. Pickering: Do not you think this immigration scheme will make work for our own people?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not wish to enter upon that aspect of the question. I intend to refer to it to-morrow. Still, I hope the hon. member does not take it that because there are unemployed in the State, I am arguing against the policy of immigration.

Mr. Pickering: Not at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know perfectly well that with the proper organisation and a policy which will lead to the developmen-

f the country it is not only possible, but quite probable that the introduction of numbers of immigrants will result, not in increasing the number of people out of work, but in abolishing unemployment entirely. It will not be possible to achieve this result, however, if we continue to say we are unable to find work for our own people.

Mr. Harrison: Who is saying that?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not saying it, but I am speaking of results. It is not so much what is said; it is a question of actual results. I do not want anyone to get on the house tops and tell me this has not been said. I have only to walk around the city, go to the goldfields, to Collie, to Bunbury, or any other town, to be confronted with evidence that large numbers of men are out of work. I would not be so unkind as to say that there are some employers who like to see an army of several hundreds of unemployed. It is not unknown in the makeup of employers in this State, as elsewhere, that some are pleased to find men clamouring for work all the time. It is a guarantee to them of an abundant supply of labour and possibly at cheaper rates than they would otherwise have to pay.

Mr. Mann: They have to work under awards. How could it be at cheaper rates?

Mr. Munsie: They are trying to smash awards every day.

Hon. P. COLLIER: An award was delivered on the goldfields, but the employers are not compelled to work under it. They tell the men off until such time as the award rates are lowered. If they see an army of unemployed in Kalgoorlie and Boulder week after week and month after month it is their opportunity to get in effective propaganda work and say, "It is your own fault. Had you been reasonable when you went to the Arbitration Court and not asked such high wages, had the award been lower by a couple of shillings a day, you would all be employed." That is an attitude which employers have adopted. If the court delivers an award which is considered by the employers to be too high they are able to say, "If we keep a few hundred men out of work for the next 12 months they will not be determined or militant in fighting for a high rate when the award expires." I know that this is correct. When one goes to the goldfields he hears on all hands from those responsible for putting the men off that it is their own fault they are out of work, and that they should have been more reasonable. It is always a question of being reasonable when men are asked to accept lower wages. It is not because the mines are not paying that they cannot be profitably worked under the award that so many of them have been closed down. It is not that the regular wage is so high as to render the working of the mines unpayable. The employers are pursuing what they conceive to be sound business lines. They say, "We have so many hundred thousand tons of ore of a certain value. We are going to put off the men and leave the ore to remain for a year or two

in the hope that wages and the general costs of mining will come down." They are hoping to make a greater profit from the mining of these ore bodies two years hence than they could possibly make to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Minister for Works when giving evidence before the Forests Commission said wages did not affect the position.

The Minister for Works: The engineers nearly stopped the whole of the sawmills a little while ago.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but when the position was represented to them, it was quickly adjusted. So far as I know, that incident never reached serious proportions. I ask the Premier and the Government to see that the men who are now looking for work, who are physically able to work, and are willing to do anything in reason, and do anything at reasonable rates of wages, are given an opportunity to get work.

The Premier: There is a lot of work under way now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am glad to hear that. Similar statements, however, have been made for the past month or two.

The Minister for Works: We have put on a tremendous number of men, and will be putting on more directly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that many men have been employed, but a larger number than have been employed are still waiting for employment.

The Premier: We have already absorbed a large number.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I suppose the Premier will not dispute the statement made by General Hobbs and the officials of the Returned Soldiers' Association.

Mr. Teesdale: We are now waiting for the money with which to get along.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Probably, if we had that money, we could absorb all the unemployed and all those who come here as well.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [8.17]: It is right that the Leader of the Opposition, and other representatives of the goldfields, should know what is being done in the mining industry to meet the difficulty which suddenly arose through one of the mines closing down, and through other mines reducing the number of men employed. The Leader of the Opposition will admit we could not have foreseen the difficulty which arose in the Kalgoorlie mining district, but when we did see it we hastened to meet it. As soon as my attention was drawn to the matter I went up to Kalgoorlie and met representatives of the different bodies concerned. My object was to find out at first hand what the position was, and what the suggestions were for solving the problem. It was suggested by the representatives I met that the Government should endeavour to absorb the unemployed miners on the goldfields, because of the developments that might occur at any time, seeing that a fair percentage of these men were trained in



the industry. Many of the proposals submitted were impracticable, and several people put forward suggestions which showed that they were chiefly thinking of themselves. It was, therefore, not a question with them of absorbing the unemployed. Although many of the propositions looked well on paper, upon examination they did not tend to solve the difficulty. At all events, I undertook to send up an officer who would make inquiries in the adjacent mining districts as to the possibility of speeding up development work. For the last eight or nine years there has been very little mining capital available for development work. All the mines have been struggling along, and, in common with other industries, suffered from the high cost of material and the high cost of production, as well as from taxation. As far as possible they have avoided doing development work at a heavy capital cost, in the hope that costs would come down and they would be able to get the necessary work done at rates below those which existed at the time. Many of the mines have been taking the gold out of the lodes as far as they could, merely to pay their way. If there was a surplus, then the money was sometimes spent on development work. Many of our mining districts have been closed down because these were the lines upon which they had been worked. On behalf of the Government I offered to provide the money necessary to enable many of our mines, even on the Golden Mile, to speed up development work. I have offered to do it in other districts where there is evidence of the possibility of a return. It was no use our saying, merely because a mine owner imagined that he held a bonanza, that we would find the money for developing it without questioning the value of the show. Where we are satisfied that there is reason to believe the work is worth doing, we will take the place of those who have previously invested in mining to as great an extent as possible in carrying out this work. In Kalgoorlie they told us they did not want our money. They had no desire to carry on development work at present costs. They said if it could not be done at less cost, it was not worth doing at all. There may be something in that contention. I do not, however, propose to find money without its being fully understood that it is in the nature of a loan or a subsidy, and must be repaid. I am not entitled, as a Minister of the Crown, to impose my will upon any person to the extent of saying he must take the money or there will be trouble. I have accordingly sent an officer up to the other mining districts that are anxious to carry on development work but cannot do so for the lack of funds. This scheme promises to be successful. The State battery at St. Ives has been in operation continuously since it was established, with the exception of some six weeks. Apparently the mine owners were not anxious to do too much work towards the end of the financial year because of the effect upon their income tax returns, and we had to close up the battery for a time. Although the Treasury may lose a little by that means,

it is possible the money so paid will go into development work. The officer in question has reported to me in favourable terms in respect to finding the money to enable these people to prove their lodes at greater depth and test values by cross cutting or driving. It is worth our while proving the field, and it is better to do so at an early date than that there should be any delay in finding out what it is worth. This work will mean that double the number of men will be employed on the field, and the Treasurer has approved of the money being furnished. Another mine has applied for financial assistance, and is prepared to do development work if we will assist in providing the necessary plant. One of the difficulties is that without certain machinery the cost per foot of sinking is very heavy. If the work had to be done by hand labour, it would be heavier still. The proposition will have to be considered, and I am having the mine sampled now. Another mine is asking for assistance in order to sink a shaft 100 feet and to drive along the lode. This mine is held by a local syndicate of business men, who have put all their business profits into the mine. We are now arranging to assist them in order to prove the lode from which magnificent samples have already been dollied. I have the approval of the Treasurer also in this respect. The inspector went to Mt. Monger yesterday, and I shall probably get a report from him to-morrow. We propose further to send to Ora Banda and other places. Where there are prospects of success we shall not be backward in rendering assistance, provided the people concerned have faith in themselves and we think we are justified in giving that help. I assure the Leader of the Opposition that we are not wasting time. As soon as we get report from the inspector we make the necessary provision for absorbing as many men as possible without delay.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [8-25]: The Public Works Department, in the interests of economy has had its staff very much depleted during the last few years. What with those officers we found we could do without, and those who let us for better positions, our staff is not as large as we would like for tackling such an emergency as has now arisen. The officers of the department are, however, dealing with the question now and we shall be able to overcome the difficulty. We must have patience. We cannot find employment for 2,000 men in five minutes. We have to get the necessary plant together, tents, etc., and also to find the men to lead and boss the work. We are doing this now. A good deal of work was put in hand before the Premier returned, but since his return we have absorbed a further large number of men. In taking on men we have to see that they are suitable for the work that is required of them. It is not every man who can do the manual labour required in connection with railway and road construction. We must choose our men for that particular work, just as a tradesman chooses the tools that he intends to use on a particular

ob. Those who are not physically fit, and whose training is not suitable, cannot be expected to stand up to those who are equipped for such work. We are putting on a considerable number of men. We are making roads in different parts of the State that have been needed for years, but which it would have been unwise to put in hand before because of the financial position. We are also putting in a drainage scheme in Perth and others in the South-West where such are required. Some members may say that here are many railways which have been authorised for a long while, and ask why we have not started them. It would not have been wise to have begun their construction before. Members would have condemned us had we done so. It is only within the last few weeks that it has been possible for us to purchase rails at anything like a price at which it would have been wise for us to buy. We could not get rails under £22 per ton, and on our light railways we require 80 tons to the mile. At that price for rails we should have been paying as much for them as formerly we were paying for the railway complete. During the last few weeks we have been able to give an order for over 100 miles of rails, which will be delivered here, I hope, by Christmas. In view of the altered circumstances we have started some of the authorised railways, and are getting on with the earthworks and sleepers and making arrangements for our bridge timber, so that no time may be lost in going ahead. The order we have placed runs into over 8,000 tons of rails, which will cost £12 2s. 5d. per ton into stores, Fremantle, representing a saving of £10 per ton. Members will see it would have been unwise for us to have bought them until the price came down. They are being made in England.

Mr. Wilson: I hope they are not German rails.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There can be no possibility of that.

Mr. Simons: Could you not have got them from Newcastle?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member cannot have read the newspapers.

Mr. Simons: I do not believe in newspapers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That probably accounts for the perennial smile on his face; he does not read anything to frown over. The hon. member may not know that the Newcastle steel works are shut down because they cannot at present compete with the manufacturers in the old world.

Mr. Munzie: That is what they say, but they will not produce their books to prove it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Newcastle steel works cannot supply the rails at present rates, and therefore I get them from the Old Country. As soon as Newcastle can supply rails we shall be prepared to buy there, because we shall need many thousands of tons.

Mr. Pickering: What duty are you paying on those imported rails?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: About £2 5s. per ton, and we are not paying it with a willing mind. That duty represents extortion and robbery on the part of the Federal authorities. They get our loan money and use it as revenue. Look upon it as finance which, if done in commercial circles, would land those practising it in

gaol. I am quite satisfied hon. members will be with me so far as the purchase of rails is concerned. Most members have an idea that improvements can be effected here, there, and everywhere. Let me assure the Committee that the Government have a sincere intention to deal with the trouble now existing as it should be dealt with, to grip it and remedy it. But the only work that could be done at, for instance, Collie just now would mean a waste of 50 per cent. of the money expended. The men at Collie make much money, and do not conserve it; and when a time of shortage comes they are in trouble. The roads with which we are dealing in the South-West are roads which should have been made long ago. It has not been possible to tackle them until now, when the Premier is back again and can liberate the sovereigns. I am doing my very best to provide employment. The drainage to be done in the city will afford a considerable measure of relief.

Hon. P. Collier: Speak that lowly, about spending money in the city, so that it will not be heard on the cross benches.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have started the Dwarda-Narrogin line at both ends, and I only regret that we cannot start it in the middle as well. The Nyabing-Pingrup railway, which has been so to speak in the air for nine or ten years, we have also started. Then there is that railway over which the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) has gone almost bald-headed, the Esperance Northwards Railway; we have 50,000 sleepers on the spot, and we are getting on with repairs to the jetty, which could not be done before. I assure the Committee that work is going on. We have had to put on in connection with public works some hundreds of men during the past few weeks, and as the days go on we shall put on more men yet. If the Premier can find the money, I can find the work and will see that it is done.

Mr. Pickering: Do not forget the Margaret River railway while you are about it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member cannot have been in his constituency lately, or he would know that the Margaret River railway is going ahead by leaps and bounds. Had it not been for the hon. member's persistency, he would have had the big jetty at Busselton, £15,000 worth of work, going on as well; but that is now cancelled.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [8-35]: In discussing Supply for the two months of July and August, the Committee has got on the question of unemployment and work that can be done at once. There seems to be some difficulty in finding work immediately. Now to my mind the question of roads in districts where the settlers have to make their living to-day and supply the sinews of war for further development is one of more urgency than new railways or new roads. We have running parallel with our railways scores of miles of roads which are far away from road making material. Sooner or later, soon I hope, the material will have to be hauled to those roads by the railways. There are scores of thousands of tons of good road making material, gravel, alongside the railways some miles away; and if employment is wanted that gravel could be loaded into trucks at all seasons of the year, and particularly at the

present time, when railway traffic is slack on account of the slump in the timber industry. Trucks are idle and men are idle, and this is a national matter. Our roads are as much a national concern as our railways are; and yet we talk of making new railways when our existing railways are not complete, lacking feeder roads. Would it not be better to complete those things which we have commenced, before commencing other things? The adoption of the course I have suggested would absorb scores of men now looking for employment. It is not particularly skilled work to fill gravel into a truck. As regards men having to go from the city into the country to obtain work, I remember moving my quarters ten thousand miles to look for employment. Many people are doing the same thing now. Therefore, men ought to be content to leave the city and go 100 or 125 miles into the country to obtain work. Men went hundreds of miles into the never-never to search for gold. I am tired of the talk about leaving the city. If men really want employment, they will leave the city to get it. The supply of road making material is a matter of national concern. The trucks are idle, and the engines are idle, and the people in the timber districts are idle, all on account of the slump in the timber industry. There are men idle on Bunbury jetty for the lack of shipping, just as at Fremantle. Employment is needed in the South-West just as it is in the metropolitan area. I know the Minister for Works is anxious that this work should be done, and it can be done at any period of the year. I hope the Premier and the Minister for Railways and the Minister for Works will make up their minds as one man that that work shall be done as a national matter.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8-41]: The member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) has again placed before the Committee a suggestion which I think he has given us every session since he has been here. Undoubtedly his proposal, if it could be carried into effect, would be beneficial to the State. But as regards his statement that everything is idle—

Mr. Money: I did not say that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member said that railway trucks are idle, and that locomotives are idle.

Mr. Money: But I did not say that everything was idle. I said there were idle trucks.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is a pity that the hon. member could not make the deficit idle. That is working day and night, continually rising. It would be a good thing if he could cause that to climb down.

Mr. Money: Do not you think that if our roads are made it will help in that direction?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not too sure. I am pleased to see the Premier back looking so well, and I trust he enjoyed himself while in England. Long before he went I impressed upon him the necessity for his visiting the Old Country. Every man who holds the position of Premier in an Australian State and has not visited the old land should do so at the earliest possible opportunity. Such a visit tends to broaden one's views very considerably. All who have heard the Premier speak since his return must agree that his trip has improved him very much. However, I am greatly disappointed to hear the

Premier's statement regarding Supply. Many people in this State—one hears it almost daily in the train—are anxious to know the result of the Premier's visit to England.

The Minister for Railways: Why do they not read the papers then?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Because in the Press one gets a statement from the Premier one day saying one thing, and a statement from another Minister the next day saying something else. Even to-night the Premier told us that he could not use the money he had obtained in the Old Country except for land settlement.

The Premier: I told you nothing of the sort.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Last night we were told by the Minister for Education that we could use that money anywhere. Very few people in this State to-day know—I do not know myself—what has been the actual result of the Premier's visit. We are told he has a promise of six millions sterling. That six millions we are told is to be lent to him conditionally on his bringing 75,000 people to Western Australia. A statement to that effect appeared in the Press some little time before the Premier's return. We do not know on what conditions that money has been lent, nor do we know what price the Premier has to pay for it. We do not know whether a certain period is allowed in which to receive the people who come here, or anything else. No one knows when the money will be available, and people generally are anxious to know what is the position. To-day was the first opportunity afforded the Premier of giving the House and the country information on these points, but he has not seen fit to do so.

Hon. P. Collier: He has agreed to speak first to-morrow.

The Premier: No fear, I have not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I want to know what the position really is. In discussing the matter with an hon. member to-day, I remarked that as we would have the Supply Bill before us to-day, the Premier would probably enlighten us on that occasion. We have been told nothing. I have known the Premier during the past 17 or 18 years; on no former occasion have I seen the Premier so uneasy when introducing a Supply Bill. He was really ashamed of it.

The Premier: I was not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He simply told us that he expected to get £100,000 from the liquor trade and referred to some taxation. He should have kept the State Taxation Department to himself and not allowed the Commonwealth to get hold of it.

The Premier: The House knew all about that matter and you voted for it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No I did not.

The Premier: Yes, you did.

Hon. T. Walker: I spoke strongly against it and voted against it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes; there were four of us who voted against it. The Premier said when speaking about the public utilities as they affected the financial position, that they had again shown a deficiency and that really the whole of the deficit was principally due to Public utilities. The Premier, however, did not tell the Committee that the State trading concern contributed £66,741 more to consolidated revenue than they did last year, or £25,500 more than the estimate. In that item alone, there is a

quarter of the licensing fees he complains of having lost.

The Premier: What about the £78,000 for interest in connection with the Wyndham Meat Works?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Let me tell the Premier that although the Wyndham works cost £78,000 for interest, the other concerns showed a profit of £74,000 towards that interest bill.

The Premier: I do not deny that; but the interest bill more than balances it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What about other freezing works in the different parts of Australia and in different parts of Western Australia?

The Premier: Oh, I know.

Mr. Willcock: They are all losing.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier must know that with the Wyndham works thrown in, they are only £4,000 to the bad. That is not a very big item in building up the deficit.

The Premier: I did not refer to the State trading concerns.

The Minister for Mines: He was referring to the business undertakings.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is just as well that I should remind hon. members of the position of the State trading concerns.

Mr. Munsie: If hon. members read the "West Australian" only, they, in common with other people, will believe that the deficit is due to the State trading concerns.

The Premier: Not at all.

Hon. T. Walker: They have always done that.

Mr. Munsie: They are always saying: Sell the trading concerns and do away with the deficit.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier asked hon. members to make any suggestions they desired regarding economies to be effected. I ask the Premier to make a start by economising in his own department. I prophesied in this House some two years ago that immediately a permanent secretary to the Premier's Department was appointed, it would lead to the building up of a large department. On that occasion the Premier said that there would be no alteration. We find that last year the Premier's Department expended £119,625, whereas two years ago the expenditure had only amounted to £64,600.

The Premier: The printing office has come in since then.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No fear.

The Premier: Yes it has.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I looked up the Estimates on that point to make sure, so I know that what I state is correct. In my opinion, there is no necessity for a Premier's Department or a permanent secretary for the Premier's Department. Every Premier who takes over the office should have a free hand in appointing his own secretary if necessary. Owing to the alterations which have been made, that is a matter of impossibility for the future, because the secretary of the department now comes under the Public Service Act as secretary to the Premier. As is usual when there is a permanent head appointed to a department, there is a tendency to increase the number of sub-departments, and that is what has occurred in connection with the Premier's Department.

The Premier: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, it has. The Premier asked for suggestions and I give him one; let him start in his own office.

The Premier: You are quite wrong.

The Minister for Mines: There are other States where there are no Premier's Departments, but they have the same number of officers. It makes no difference.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It does make a difference because there are not so many sub-departments created. In the building up of departments, new subheads come along who were not wanted previously. Regarding immigration, as hon. members are aware, I have been a great supporter of immigration for Western Australia. I realise that the future prosperity of the State will depend upon a large increase in population. Action that has taken place of late will, however, kill immigration in any part of the world?

The Premier: What do you mean?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I will tell you.

The Premier: We cannot help private people putting off men.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Let us see about that: We have three types of immigrants who come to Western Australia. The first type is the man who pays his own fare.

Hon. P. Collier: And he is the man who is absolutely neglected.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The second type is the assisted immigrant and the third type, the nominated immigrant. The Government will take no notice of any type other than the assisted immigrant.

Hon. P. Collier: That is so.

The Premier: You are quite wrong.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not wrong; I will give the Premier one instance. Last year a fine strapping young man came out. He had paid his own fare to Western Australia. He said he had obtained a position to go clearing in the Lake Grace district. He expected his wife to arrive shortly and thought it was inadvisable to go up to Lake Grace in the circumstances. He got another position but, unfortunately, it did not eventuate. He made inquiries to procure other work. He thought that, seeing that the shipful of immigrants which had come in had been provided for, there might be an opportunity to get a position before the next lot of immigrants arrived. He found that employment was fixed only for those who were coming at the later date.

The Premier: There is plenty of work.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I wish there were; the Premier knows that as well as I do. I know of another case. A fine young couple arrived in Western Australia. They were nominated immigrants. They went to the New Settlers' League and to the Immigration Department, but neither body would interest itself on their behalf.

Mr. Mann: In the case of a nominated immigrant, does not the person nominating undertake the responsibility to place the immigrant?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Of course that is so, but if all the jobs are taken, how can that individual secure a job for the immigrant?

Mr. Mann: But he undertakes that responsibility.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That young man came here with a view to taking up land. I knew his brother-in-law who told me of his position. On the following Monday morning I went to the Labour Bureau. I found there was one job there for a man and his wife. The man was to do clearing and work about the farm, and the wife was to cook for the men on the farm. The wages amounted to two guineas a week for the two of them. I sent a message to the immigrant, but he was away and eventually he got a job for himself and wife at 30s. a week.

The Minister for Mines: And keep?

Hon. P. Collier: Well, what do you think?

The Minister for Mines: When you spoke of the case where two guineas and keep was paid, the member for North-East Fremantle said he knew of a better instance. I was watching for this one.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The wife could get a position as cook for 30s. a week in Perth, and people would be glad to get her services. I gave an instance in reply to the Colonial Secretary who attacked me in the Press, when motor tractor drivers, with thorough experience, were asked for, the wages being 25s. and keep. I ask hon. members in all seriousness whether that is a fair wage to offer any man who comes here from the Old Country? People in England can get more than that under the Unemployment Pension Fund, and yet we ask these people to come out at the rate of 25,000 a year and treat them in that manner!

The Premier: We do not treat the people like that. I can give you individual cases where men have treated employers very badly.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I can give the Premier much worse cases than those I have cited. I can quote a case that will make the Premier's heart bleed. I will not stand by and allow my countrymen to come here and be starved, as some have been since their arrival. I have been giving actual facts. We had the Colonial Secretary trying to tell us that an English farmer takes 12 months to learn how to farm in Western Australia. Fancy suggesting it takes 12 months to learn to milk cows, a thing these men have been doing since boyhood!

Hon. P. Collier: They must be different cows.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If we want Western Australia populated, we will have to treat fairly those people who come here, and give them proper conditions. We will have to see that they are treated as human beings and unless that is done, we will not get 25,000 nor yet 5,000 people.

The Minister for Mines: You will not be able to stop that. Don't you worry.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Only the other day a person showed me a newspaper cutting from England containing news that had come from Western Australia.

Mr. Maley: That has been going on for years.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The information is now going from sources that carry weight.

The Minister for Mines: It has always been part of the game. Such news got through when I was there and it always will.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: During my 30 years residence in Western Australia I have never known such hardships to be experienced by new arrivals. Just listen to this: A young lad came out to Western Australia. Unfortunately, he was physically weak. He had no right to be sent out to this State. He was sent to the country and the Immigration Department did their best for him. He admits that. Every job he got, he lost. He was 18 years of age and an orphan. He came down to Fremantle penniless. He knocked at the door of the Immigrants' Home and asked for admittance as he had no money. He was refused admission and he spent the night on the sands. That was in Western Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the red tape about that home.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: And this lad told me he was not the only one, that there was also a woman who was treated in the same way that night.

The Minister for Mines: Do you mean to say you have never had requests for assistance from unworthy men?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But this man was not unworthy.

The Minister for Mines: How were they to know that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He had been through their home. He was doing his best. He has a good heart, and to-day on his own initiative he is able to eke out a living.

The Minister for Mines: Only the other day I paid a man 10s. to cut 2s. worth of wood.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But this young fellow was trying. If these statements go back to the old country they will bring discredit on the State.

The Premier: "Hansard" will certainly go there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister for Mines said that the Government have urged the farmers to find work for these men so that they may gain experience. That is a very good idea, but I warrant the Minister does not desire that the farmers should find work for the new arrivals for only a few weeks; he desires that the new arrivals should be taught the different conditions out here, the different classes of soil and how best they are to be worked. In point of fact, the farmers keep the new arrivals for a few weeks only, until later arrivals come, who are then put on at reduced wages. Recently a deputation from the British Empire League pointed out to the Colonial Secretary the difficulties encountered by the new arrivals

in securing employment in the country. Among other instances given was that of a man engaged to go into the country at 25s. or 30s. per week. After a fortnight his employer said to him, "I suppose you know the conditions on which you have been sent here?" The man answered "Yes," 30s. a week and found. "Oh, no," said the farmer, "it is 5s. per week."

The Colonial Secretary: That is not correct. In the first place it was not a farmer at all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Colonial Secretary was asked to look into it, but he has not yet furnished any reply. Despite these cruel instances we are asked to write to the old country and recommend our friends to come here.

The Minister for Mines: To the best country on earth.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not going to say that.

Mr. Simons: It is, absolutely.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This country has been very good to some of us—to the Minister and to me—but not all have been so fortunate. We have to look at the position from the point of view of those who have not been so well treated.

The Minister for Mines: We have all had bad times, but we ought not to cry about it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not many years ago the hon. member would have risen in his place and cried out in his wrath about people being treated in the manner I have described. This is no laughing matter with me. I want to see the people coming here, but I want to see them well treated when they do come. I want them to come from home to home, to realise that Western Australia is British territory and that they have come to people much the same as those they left in England.

Mr. Mann: Do you not think they are being well treated?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some are, some are not. I ask the hon. member, is an experienced man being well treated when he is offered 25s. a week and keep?

Mr. Mann: They are not experienced when first they arrive.

Mr. Teesdale: Some of them are.

Mr. Money: They cannot clear, neither can they fence.

Mr. Teesdale: Yes, they can.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Let not the hon. member run away with the idea that I think every one of them is a farmer. It is not so.

Mr. Mann: In any event they all have to put in one year at training.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Would the hon. member tell me that driving horses in Western Australia is different from driving horses in England? Some of the immigrants require a good deal of training, but not those who have been all their lives on the land.

Mr. Teesdale: They have not wooden heads anyhow.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have in Western Australia prosperous men who had never

been on a farm until they came here. It did not take them 12 months to learn the work.

Mr. Latham: That cannot be said of many of them.

Hon. P. Collier: I picked it up in a few weeks.

Mr. Clydesdale: And you soon dropped it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It amuses me, the suggestion that they must become acclimatised. For the last 35 years I have never had a day's illness. No acclimatisation is necessary in Western Australia. It is the desire of the people of Western Australia that those who come here should be treated fairly well. The Government are in a position to control this matter, whereas hon. members are not. It is necessary that those who have control should see that fair play is meted out to the new arrivals. If that is done the people in the old land will be duly notified, whereupon our greatest difficulty will be, not in getting people to come, but in restricting their numbers. The Premier is asking for a very large amount of money.

The Premier: As ever, it is merely a division of the previous year.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: With the additional two millions, it means about twelve and a-half millions in all.

The Premier: No, not at all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We must be cautious. Western Australia has been going through a very bad period, some of it due to bad government.

Hon. P. Collier: Nearly all of it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have built up a deficit of nearly six millions. Do not let us, for want of caution, rush in to carry out certain undertakings which may land us in the Bankruptcy Court. We are not in a position to gamble, we cannot afford to—

The Premier: Oh, let us stop it all and drop dead!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is all very well for the Premier.

The Minister for Agriculture: You two will fall out presently.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, never. We get on very well together, but so many young colts behind the Premier urge him to kick over the traces. It is necessary that we should be exceedingly cautious just now. We desire to see the State develop under such conditions as will assure progress. Unless we use extreme caution the rush will be so great that in all probability we shall be landed in disaster. While we desire to open up our lands, we must consider very carefully the organisation. We must see that no money is wasted because we have to pay approximately 6 per cent. for it, added to other charges, and the man who engages in this undertaking will be burdened for at least 30 years with this high rate of interest. If he does not prove successful, the responsibility will fall upon the State. It is the duty of members to endeavour to impress on the Premier that caution is necessary in the efforts to retrieve the State from its unfortunate position.

The Premier: I know that too well.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [9.17]: With other members on this side of the House, I am reluctant to vote the amount asked for. Reference has been made to the deficit, and I wish to stress the fact that the position of the State is the same as that of an individual. If an individual kept on going back year after year, as the State has done, there could be no other end for him but the bankruptcy court. I recognise that the question of unemployment is bound up with that of immigration. Had there been no immigration during the past 12 months, a considerably greater number of our own men would have been in work. Work which would otherwise have been done by citizens of Western Australia has been taken by people from overseas, and at considerably lower rates than would have been paid to our own people.

The Premier: You are quite wrong with regard to most of the work.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am only speaking from observation and knowledge of people who usually do this class of work. I know men who have done clearing and other farm work for years who cannot get a job at the rate they could command some years ago.

The Minister for Works: What rate do you expect them to get?

Mr. WILLCOCK: I expect them to get more than 25s. a week. Everyone realises that 25s. a week is the ruling rate to-day.

The Minister for Works: If they got 15s. a day, would that be good enough?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes.

The Minister for Works: Well they have knocked off work at Lake Grace because they cannot get £1 or 25s. a day.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I know that men who have been employed in agricultural avocations for three or four years cannot get a job at ploughing or seeding because cheap immigrant labour is available at the ruling rate of 25s. a week. The ruling rate of wage has dropped considerably since the immigration policy was put into operation, and it now stands at 25s. a week. This country will not prosper if the ruling rate is kept so low as that. People can obtain more than that in England for similar work, and there is no necessity to go to the expense of bringing them 10,000 miles to work for lower wages than they can obtain in England. I have not heard anyone deny that the ruling rate of wages for immigrants is 25s. a week.

The Premier: I do not know of one case, but I cannot deny it.

The Minister for Mines: Why do not you say that such a man gets his keep as well? That is given in.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, I concede that.

Mr. Latham: Many of them are getting £2 to £2 10s. a week.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I do not know of any.

The Minister for Agriculture: You do not mean to say they are engaged as ploughmen.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I say that a considerable number of men who engaged in agricul-

tural labour for some years cannot get work because the immigrants have taken their places.

The Minister for Mines: If our immigration policy is to be a success, we must get the farming community in sympathy with it.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I want to get everyone in sympathy with it. Any man who takes a broad outlook of this State realises that we must have immigration if we wish to progress at all. I have not said anything against the immigration policy, but the Government cannot expect active assistance in the furtherance of that policy from people who are put out of work and kept out of work while newcomers take their jobs.

Mr. Mann: You admit that these people must go on to farms in order to gain experience.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I know there are men travelling around the country looking for work. There are unemployed almost everywhere tramping around with swags on their backs ready to take any work which will give them reasonable remuneration. I do not blame these men for not taking jobs which they know will return only £1 a week. It has come to a poor pass if we can afford to pay only £1 for a week's work.

The Minister for Agriculture: Clearing operations are no different from what they were years ago, and the rates have gone up considerably.

Mr. WILLCOCK: There are plenty of men who cannot get clearing work at remunerative rates.

The Premier: If we offered £20 an acre for clearing, you would still say there were men who could not make a fair wage.

Mr. WILLCOCK: According to the Press, the Minister for Agriculture went to Mullewa and settled an unemployed difficulty there; but all he did was to offer men clearing work at unremunerative rates.

The Minister for Agriculture: You can take a horse to water but you cannot make him drink.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Minister might tell a man that he could make money at certain work, and when that man tried he might find that he could not.

The Minister for Agriculture: But they never tried.

Mr. WILLCOCK: There is no necessity for an experienced man to actually try; he can tell by the look of the job how much he can make out of it.

The Minister for Agriculture: They want to double the ruling rate.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Everyone knows that clearing is being taken at a rate which is absolutely unremunerative.

Mr. Harrison: What is a good rate for clearing?

Mr. WILLCOCK: It depends on the timber.

Mr. Latham: You are dealing with the South-West now.

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, I am speaking generally. The Premier told me I was mad

when I said it would cost £30 an acre to clear some of the South-West land.

Mr. Munsie: They have paid £28 an acre quite recently, anyhow.

The Premier: That was day labour.

Mr. Munsie: No, it was not.

The Premier: It was.

Mr. Munsie: Then your departmental officers must tell lies.

Mr. WILLCOCK: These men going around the country looking for employment are not the thriftless and unemployable as some say they are.

The Premier: You have no right to say that has been said.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is usual for some people to dismiss this question with a wave of the hand and the statement that these men are unemployable. I have met men carrying their swags and in their swags a bank book, and the bank book has shown that they have been gradually drawing on their accounts for sustenance. These are not the men to refuse remunerative employment. What has happened with regard to the Savings Bank deposits during the last 12 months? The Savings Bank deposits show—

The Premier: That they must have had good jobs once.

Mr. WILLCOCK: During the last 12 months withdrawals from the Government Savings Bank have exceeded deposits by £300,000.

The Premier: And £277,000 of that was taken out for loans to the Federal Government.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The same conditions have applied during the last four or five years, during which time war and peace loans have been floated, and the average would be about the same for each year. Does the Premier mean to say that he knows how much of the money taken from the Savings Bank goes into a war loan?

The Premier: We do know.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I doubt it. Similar conditions have obtained during the last few years. If anything, there was greater incentive for patriotic people to put their money into loans three or four years ago than there is now. Our Savings Bank figures this year are worse than they have been in any year in the history of the bank. The Commonwealth Bank deposits show an excess over withdrawals of about £70,000, but that is largely accounted for by the boom in the timber industry during the early part of last year. The Savings Bank figures afford a good indication of the position of the poorer class of work people, and there is no gainsaying that their position has depreciated to the extent of £300,000 in the last 12 months.

The Premier: They have put it into war loans.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I maintain that this huge sum of money has been withdrawn by people unable to find employment, some of whom have been characterised as thriftless and unwilling to save money when they were

earning. It cannot be denied that there is unemployment, and that unemployment means retrogression and stagnation. When the Premier leaned over the side of the mail boat and said, "All right, I am back. There will be jobs for everyone to-morrow," many people believed it. They thought that the Premier had come back with six millions of money in a little bag and that he would distribute it in a few days. So powerful was the propaganda work on behalf of the Premier when in England that it was thought unemployment would cease immediately he returned.

The Minister for Mines: It has disappeared.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I wish it had. A considerable amount of unemployment exists to-day. After he had been back a fortnight the Premier slightly modified his previous assertion that he would find work for all. He said he could find work for 300, as against the four or five thousand workless people, and do this in a week. But out of the 300 only about 15 men have been employed. Truly, the mountain has laboured and brought forth a mole-hill. I was informed to-day that 60 out of the men engaged on relaying were to be put off to-morrow.

The Minister for Mines: Who told you that?

Mr. WILLCOCK: One of the men working on the job.

The Minister for Mines: I suppose he deserved it. Only this afternoon I arranged to put on an additional 20.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Perhaps the previous instructions of the Minister were cancelled.

The Minister for Mines: No such instructions were issued.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The unemployment question is a serious one. Amongst the working people there is a tacit disapproval of the immigration policy. I do not want that to continue. If work cannot be found for the unemployed, that tacit disapproval will develop into active opposition. Members of the Government should do all they can to find employment, and relieve the position that has existed for the past six months. If the situation had only hobbled up suddenly, as we are told it did in Kalgoorlie, there would not be much to growl about, but everyone knew six months ago that there would be unemployment at this particular time of the year. No steps, however, were taken until the trouble was upon us. If the difficulty had been faced at the right time, the alleviation measures would not have required all the organisation which the Minister for Works has talked about.

The Minister for Mines: And you would put the Government out in consequence?

Mr. WILLCOCK: When a Government know months in advance that a serious position of this sort will arise and refrain from doing anything, I will assist to put them out.

The Minister for Mines: The Theodore Government were in the same position.



Mr. Munsie: Queensland has less unemployment than any other State of the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Mines: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. Munsie: Knibbs' figures prove it.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I trust the efforts of Ministers to cope with the situation will be more successful than they have been during the last few weeks. Unless there is a speeding up of employment immediately, active opposition is bound to make itself apparent.

Mr. Harrison: The position was accentuated by the late rains in the country.

Mr. WILLCOCK: There are many causes for it. The Government have a certain responsibility in the matter, but have not shouldered it as they should have done. I trust the publicity given to the matter will result in a speeding up of all the departments, so that men will not have to walk round the city, or be obliged to draw money out of the savings bank in dribs and drabs in order to supply themselves with sustenance until they turn the corner.

Mr. CARTER (Leederville) [9.34]: The Leader of the Opposition followed, more or less, the conventional path in the course of his speech until he came to the question of immigration and unemployment. From that on the debate has developed along these lines only, and the subject before the House has hardly been discussed at all. One or two things have been said to-night which it is my duty to correct if possible. In effect, we have done a little washing of dirty linen. We have referred to immigration in such a way that, if one or two of the speeches were taken as they have been delivered and published in the papers on the other side of the world, a very bad advertisement for the State would be the result. I believe the speeches were made in good faith, and have been uttered with the idea of ultimately helping the Government. It is a deplorable fact that some of our immigrants are not up to expectations from the physical point of view, and are falling back upon the labour market. This has tended to accentuate our difficulties. If one sees a spanking horse going along the street one may regard it for a moment as it passes, and think what a beautiful animal it is. If it is followed by a tottering old cab horse, which drops dead before one's eyes, one immediately joins in the crowd and stares at it. We have had one or two immigrants who have failed, and who have been down and out, as the member for North-East Fremantle has stated. On the other hand, I have met many men who are entirely satisfied with their lot. They have come to this country and found it better than anything they have ever seen. They are enjoying conditions such as they could never have enjoyed in England. The member for Geraldton said that many of them were better off in England, and could do better there than in Western Australia. We have been told that there are two millions of unemployed in the Old Country, and that people are facing severe difficulties there. It

does not seem to be on all fours with the facts for the member for Geraldton to say that these men, who, after all, are only going through a probationary period of training, are in a worse position than before they came to this State. I am sure the member for Perth, who is an experienced farmer, and assists the Government in the matter of placing immigrants through the Ugly Men's Association, will support me in that view. No matter how experienced an English farmer may be when he comes here, he must go through a probationary period. The conditions and the climate are dissimilar to those he was previously acquainted with. There is something about our climate which people require to get used to. It is so long since the member for North-East Fremantle lived in the Old Country that, no doubt, he has forgotten his experiences there.

Hon. P. Collier: He was there three years ago.

Mr. CARTER: He did not stay there long.

Hon. P. Collier: Quite long enough.

Mr. CARTER: Not long enough for his blood to get thick. We have had so many successes that we should advertise them. In America the great slogan is "Nothing succeeds like success." If we placed the best of our goods before the public, we should have a better chance of succeeding. With regard to the rates of wages offered, the member for North-East Fremantle has cited cases of men receiving as little as 25s. per week and their keep. There are many instances of men who have failed and floated back into the labour market in some mysterious way—there has been a great influx to the city since help was meted out to the unemployed—men who were engaged in clearing contracts for which they were not physically fitted, or who returned to the city because they did not like the arduous nature of their task. The member for York interjected that clearing rates had risen 25 per cent. in the past year or so.

Mr. Munsie: That is not so.

Mr. CARTER: That hon. member is an experienced farmer.

Mr. Munsie: The rates have not risen 25 per cent.

Mr. CARTER: I merely quote the figures given by the member for York. Men can make a good living out of clearing if they will put their backs into the work and be industrious.

Mr. Latham: The rates have risen from 25s. to 35s., the highest.

Mr. CARTER: One of the things that the Government would do well to consider is the necessity for employing men on works of a reproductive nature. During the past few weeks the Government have spent large sums of money on non-productive works. Later on I shall have an opportunity of discussing the Como tramway. It was my privilege to lead a deputation to the Minister for Works consisting of members of the Perth City Council and other local bodies interested in the development of the city in the matter of deep drains. The deputation placed before the

Minister a scheme for the construction of deep drains in various parts of the suburbs of Perth. He received the deputation with his usual courtesy, and gave its requests every consideration. Whilst we were in the office he rang up the Acting Premier, and pointed out that the departmental estimate for the construction of main drains in North Perth, and Leederville would mean an expenditure of something like £22,000. The deputation offered to place at the disposal of their works committee a sum of from £10,000 to £15,000 for the building of feeder drains. I quote these figures to show that the deputation had made a concrete offer in connection with work of a reproductive nature, which would have meant the immediate employment of about 130 men.

The Minister for Mines: Our experience is that schemes of that sort will not pay interest on the capital involved.

Mr. CARTER: A scheme of this description will undoubtedly be reproductive because of the consequent improvement in public health in the districts concerned. I also claim that it would pay interest on the capital outlay.

The Minister for Mines: It will not.

Mr. CARTER: The Minister for Works should be in a position to give that statement a denial. These feeder drains cannot be commenced until the main drains are started.

The Minister for Works: The work is in hand.

Mr. CARTER: How long is it since the work was put in hand?

The Minister for Works: The end of last week.

Mr. CARTER: That is the statement I wanted, and I am very glad to have it. I can only commend the Minister for his prompt action.

The Minister for Works: The City Council are quite satisfied, so you ought to be.

Mr. CARTER: I am very well satisfied with what the Minister has told me. I plead to-night for a doctrine of optimism. The Premier has been charged with over-optimism, but the results of his mission have proved that his optimism was not misplaced. I hope hon. members will see that the Government are helped not only by our actions in this House, but also by our words and actions outside the Chamber.

The PREMIER and TREASURER (Hon Sir James Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [9.48]: With regard to the unfortunate matter of unemployment, I have to point out that 2,000 men were put off the timber mills, and quite suddenly, too, I understand. That is information which I had from the Saw-millers' Association a few days ago.

Hon. P. Collier: Ask your Minister for Works whether that information is correct. The figure is absurd.

The PREMIER: I suppose that figure means not only the men actually employed on the sawmills, but includes also the men employed in timber yards and joinery shops in the metropolitan area. However, I will

get the figure confirmed. The mining industry put off a large number of men. The Railway Department were compelled to put off a considerable number, as the result of the shortage of timber traffic. Again, a great many men are kept out of employment because there are not enough bricklayers to put up the walls of buildings. People who are prepared to put money into buildings cannot get the necessary number of bricklayers. I understand an attempt is now being made to get bricklayers who left for the East to return. There are many necessary works, and arrangements are being made to carry out these necessary works. During the next few days the Minister for Works will be able to absorb all the men unemployed in the metropolitan area. There may be men unemployed about the country, but I know there cannot be many. There is a great deal of work to be done in the country. Last week the Agricultural Bank authorised the expenditure of £28,000 in labour.

Hon. P. Collier: And there have not been 28 men picked up at the Labour Bureau during the last fortnight.

The PREMIER: All this work has been authorised. This week, I suppose, another £28,000 worth of work will be authorised. I know that a great many men in Perth will not leave their homes here and go into the country to work, but I also know that there are in Perth a great many men who ought to be in the country, who swell the ranks of the unemployed here, and who are competing with the men whose homes are in Perth. It is not a fair thing that men whose homes are here should be kept out of employment by men whose homes are not here, and who have not been employed here. I do not want to discuss the matter further, because I consider that it can be dealt with better on the Address-in-reply. I only wish to add that the amounts for which the Bill asks represent the corresponding proportions of the amounts voted last year.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [9.52]: I take it that the Premier has not closed the debate.

The Premier: I thought I was doing so.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not wish to take advantage, but I happened to be called out. To me it seems peculiar that members should rise here to make definite statements on slender authority, as the member for Leederville (Mr. Carter) did to-night. He asserted that two practical men, the member for York (Mr. Latham) and the member for Perth (Mr. Mann), had stated that clearing was being paid for now at 25 per cent. increase on the figure of two or three years ago.

Mr. Carter: They did make that statement.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not say they did not make it. But the hon. member jumps at the conclusion that the statement is perfectly correct, simply because those hon. members made it. Just a minute before, the Minister for Agriculture stated definitely that the men

ought to make good money at clearing now, because they did make it four or five years ago and the Agricultural Bank rate for clearing had not been altered for the last five years.

The Minister for Agriculture: I did not make that statement.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes; by way of interjection while the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) was speaking.

The Minister for Agriculture: I said rates had advanced considerably. You could not have been listening.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Minister said that rates had been considerably advanced for cutting down.

The Minister for Agriculture: I did not say anything about cutting down.

Mr. MUNSIE: Let the Minister get the returns year by year, and he will find that there has not been an increase of more than 2s. 6d.

Mr. Latham: That is all nonsense.

Mr. MUNSIE: Let the hon. member produce the evidence as to what rates the bank is paying.

Mr. Latham: I will produce the figures to-morrow.

Mr. MUNSIE: I hope the hon. member will do so. I hope also that the result will be to make the Government pay increased rates. Why are the Government not offering an increased rate now to the men seeking work? They have sent 300 men from Perth during the last six weeks to do clearing at the old Agricultural Bank rate.

The Premier: Oh, no!

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, and in many cases at worse rates. The Premier does not know, because no men have been sent out clearing since his return.

The Premier: That is so, but I know what the rates are.

Mr. MUNSIE: Almost immediately upon his return the Premier promised that 300 men were to be sent by last Saturday. Not a man was sent during last week. On the notice board of the Labour Bureau there were only two notices, calling for two youths at 10s. a week and keep. We were told definitely that last Saturday 300 men would be wanted. Men went to the bureau on Saturday, and were told to come again on Monday. They came on Monday, and were told they might be wanted on Tuesday. On Tuesday it was found that 30 men were wanted, as against the 300 who, the Premier had promised, would be absorbed by last Saturday. To-day 30 men are wanted, but it is not yet known when they are to be employed. As a matter of fact the head of the department concerned, Mr. Lawson, the Engineer for Metropolitan Water Supply, when the men went to see him, told them that, so far as he knew, there was no use in their coming to see him until next Saturday, and that probably the work would be available on Monday next. There is another phase of this clearing business that I want to emphasise. It is all very well for the member for Leeder-

ville to say he is sorry certain statements were made in this Chamber, because if they were published verbatim in the Old Country the effect would be detrimental to the immigration policy. I do not know what statements he is referring to, but I think that up to date no member has risen in this Chamber to make incorrect statements. If telling the truth will prevent people from coming out to Australia, it cannot be helped. I will tell the truth, no matter how bad it is or how good it is.

The Minister for Railways: Tell the whole of it.

Mr. MUNSIE: Certainly, but I am not going to be stopped from telling the truth. If nobody tells the bad points, how are unfortunates to know the truth? Three hundred men have been sent to Lake Grace to do clearing. Every man who knows anything whatever about clearing knows positively that while one is cutting down and ringing one barely makes tucker. If a man makes any money at all out of a clearing contract, he makes it out of the burning off. There is no question about that.

Mr. Harrison: His burning off depends on his cutting down.

Mr. MUNSIE: To a great extent, but I think the member for Avon, Mr. Harrison, will admit—

Mr. Underwood: That he may make a mistake, too.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, and that one may make a bad burn. What is happening with the 300 men sent from Perth to Lake Grace? The men have been sent there to do what? Clearing? Nothing of the kind.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes. Some of them will clear right out. They can take cutting down or burning, or the whole job.

Mr. MUNSIE: How long is it since that alteration was made?

The Minister for Agriculture: It has been that way from the start. You do not know anything about it.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Minister says that that has been in operation from the start. I went with two deputations to his acting chief, Mr. Colebatch, I have also been on deputations to Mr. Hitchins, the head of the Labour Bureau.

The Minister for Agriculture: You were not on the denutation that came to see me about the matter.

Mr. MUNSIE: Being at Kalgoorlie at that time, I was not on the denutation to which the Minister alludes, but I know the facts. Both Mr. Colebatch and Mr. Hitchins have admitted that the conditions under which the men were sent to Lake Grace referred to cutting down only, and that the burning off is reserved for the settler when the land is allotted to him. I do not think the Minister will contradict that statement.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes, I will.

Mr. MUNSIE: The majority of men who have gone to Lake Grace have been sent there only for cutting down.

The Premier: What are they getting?

Mr. MUNSIE: Up to 17s. 6d. per acre.

The Premier: They are getting a big price.

Mr. MUNSIE: I admit that I do not know the country. I am not going to say whether that is a fair rate or not, but I say it is not a fair proposition to divide the job.

The Premier: All this is not very encouraging to get on with this work.

Mr. MUNSIE: Does the Premier want land for settlement?

The Premier: Of course I do.

Mr. MUNSIE: Then he should endeavour to get land cleared at the cheapest rate. I have some feeling and I do not want to see those who do the clearing getting the whole of the cream, leaving the man who comes after to cultivate the land with a mill stone round his neck. I think the policy of the Government is likely to lead us into that position, seeing that if a man only gets the job to cut down a certain area, he does not worry so far as the burning off is concerned. It is hard enough to make a living at the price for cutting down, and naturally the man undertaking that work will not show sufficient interest in stacking the trees properly, because he does not have to do the burning off, which is reserved for someone else. I contend that that is a wrong policy to pursue. Immediately there was some argument about unemployment in Western Australia and the attitude of the Government, the Minister for Mines interjected something about the Queensland Government and the unemployment difficulty in that State. I am prepared to admit that that difficulty exists in Queensland, but if we take Knibbs' figures—

Mr. Pickering: They are 12 months old.

Mr. Simons: They improve with age.

Mr. MUNSIE: They are not by any means 12 months old; the figures I refer to are not one month old yet. The latest statistics we can get show that there is less unemployment in Queensland in proportion to population, than in any other State of Australia.

The Premier: Are you going to deal with the cost of living?

Mr. MUNSIE: The figures I refer to appeared in the Press to-day.

The Premier: Do you intend to deal with the cost of living as well?

Mr. MUNSIE: No. I am dealing with the propaganda in opposition to the Labour movement in this and other States.

The Premier: I do not think you have any opportunity just now.

Mr. MUNSIE: We had the interjections about Theodore and the reduction of wages in Queensland and so on.

The Minister for Mines: Who said that?

Mr. MUNSIE: The "West Australian" says that every day during the week, and the Minister interjected about Theodore and unemployment. Will the Minister admit he said that?

The Minister for Mines: Yes.

Mr. MUNSIE: The "West Australian" is always talking along these lines and the

"Daily News" as well, although I admit the "News" is not quite so bad. We find to-day seven inches appearing in the Press in the industrial columns dealing with some trenchant criticism by a union official, concerning the attitude of the Queensland Labour Government about reduction of wages. The paper did not mention a word of truth. As a matter of fact, the Queensland Government have not approached the court nor have they sought to reduce the wages of any Government employee receiving less than £300 a year. Does the "West Australian" tell the people that fact?

The Premier: What has Queensland to do with the Bill?

Mr. MUNSIE: When we have the Minister bringing in the Queensland Labour Government, I intend to stick up for Queensland.

Member: Why not stick up for Western Australia too?

Mr. MUNSIE: I will do that, but in the meantime, this Government must do something for Western Australia as the Queensland Government have done in their State.

The Premier: What about the Bill?

Mr. MUNSIE: If the Premier desires to bring me back to the Supply Bill, I will inform him that he is asking for altogether too much money. He says it is just one-sixth of the total vote for last year, which was nearly half a million more than the total vote for the previous year. The total vote for this year will be about a million more than last year. If we go on the figures dealt with by the Premier for the two months under review, it means that for the 12 months he will spend £10,583,000.

Mr. Pickering: But you are advocating avenues of expenditure.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, because I believe that you have to spend money to get money.

Mr. Harrison: You must have some return for the money spent.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is so; but I am of opinion that money spent on some of the things undertaken by the Government, will not return value for the funds expended.

Mr. Pickering: What about the Como tramway?

Mr. MUNSIE: That will be a wonderfully good investment for a lot of people who own land along that route.

Hon. P. Collier: But the land owners there have decided not to increase the price of their land.

Mr. Carter: Expert evidence was given on that point.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Bill is to authorise the expenditure of £1,763,950. In introducing the measure the Premier told us that had it not been for the defeat of the Licensing Act Amendment Bill last session, which deprived him of revenue amounting to about £100,000, he would have finished up the financial year as he predicted last session. The Premier, however, did not tell the Committee anything concerning how he intended to expend one penny of the amount he asked us to vote. Not only are we asked to vote money, but we are

not informed as to how it is to be spent. I for one want to have information on that point. The Premier got quite nasty to-night; in fact, I do not think the trip Home did him any good. The Premier should have given us some idea as to how he intended to spend the money.

The Minister for Mines: Some of it is being spent in "Hansard."

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not care what you spend on "Hansard"; I want to know whether the Premier intends to spend any of this money in the relief of unemployment on the goldfields. When reference was made to unemployment in the metropolitan area, the Premier waxed wrath and complained of people coming from the country to the metropolitan area to secure work.

The Premier: So they are.

Mr. MUNSIE: I know they are coming from the country to the town for work; what else can they do?

The Premier: They should take work in the country.

Mr. MUNSIE: Six weeks ago, a deputation from Collie came to Perth at their own expense. They waited on the Acting Premier (Mr. Colebatch) and pointed out to him the absolute necessity of relieving the unemployment difficulty in Collie, where there were over 200 men out of work. After their return, the members of the deputation wired to the Acting Premier. The Collie Municipal Council carried resolutions and forwarded them to the Government. Up to the present, they have not even had the courtesy of a reply from the Government. The "West Australian" circulates in the Collie district and the newspaper reported that the Government had placed 1,000 men from Perth in jobs in the country districts. What are these 200 men in Collie going to do when they see that men in the city have been placed in employment? What would I do in similar circumstances? Even if it was necessary to "jump the rattler" to get to Perth, I would go there. You see hundreds of unfortunate individuals walking the streets of the city because the papers have published the reports of what the Government have done in the city. The Government are doing nothing for the men who are unemployed in the country districts.

The Minister for Mines: Yes we are.

Mr. MUNSIE: There is very little result to be shown.

The Premier: There is work for them in the country. Why should they give up jobs in the country and come to the city?

Mr. MUNSIE: I would like to have instances of where that has happened. I do not say that some have not been foolish enough to give up jobs in the country and come to the city, but because some have been foolish enough to do that, do not blame the unfortunate who is out of work in the country and, being unable to get work there, comes to Perth because of what he has read in the papers. It is only natural that when they see that the city people are provided with work which they cannot obtain, they will

come to the city themselves. A good deal has been said as to whether the amount of wages paid to immigrants affects the position. I do not want to criticise the New Settlers' League. I believe they have done good work in finding employment for a considerable number of immigrants, but I think that the Government should never have allowed the control of that work to get out of their hands.

Mr. Mann: Neither they have.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Government are shirking their responsibilities.

The Premier: Nonsense.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Government are placing the work in the hands of men over whom we have no control.

Mr. Carter: Eight thousand men have been placed in positions by the league with less than two per cent. failures.

Mr. MUNSIE: Nothing of the sort; 8,000 immigrants have not come in during the period covered. The league may have found 8,000 jobs, some of them six times over—

Mr. Carter: You are wrong.

Hon. P. Collier: These are facts.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am not wrong. The league may have found 8,000 jobs, but the president of the league has admitted that some have been found jobs eight times over. They are all counted as jobs, and that is quite right too.

Mr. Mann: Do not forget that the league has placed locally unemployed in jobs as well.

Mr. MUNSIE: And good luck to them too. I want to emphasise the point that no matter what humane work the league may be carrying on, if they place men in jobs at wages which will result in the displacement of Australians who are getting good wages, the league will not do much service to the State.

Mr. Mann: You know that is not the case.

Mr. MUNSIE: When that is mentioned from this side, the member for Perth asks are they not protected by awards of the court?

Mr. Mann: It is correct, too.

Mr. MUNSIE: But there are ways and means of evading awards, and of making onslaughts on wages. We have the Federal Court disorganised, rebuilt and made anew for the purpose of wrecking existing awards. For years an organised movement has been endeavouring to get the 44-hour week. They got it in the Federal court. Immediately the Prime Minister took it on himself to announce that he would not permit the Federal Arbitration Court to award a 44-hour week unless three judges were on the bench. And he appointed two additional judges.

Mr. Mann: Are this Government responsible for that?

Mr. MUNSIE: This Government are responsible for their own onslaught on wages.

The Minister for Mines: That is most ungenerous, in view of the attitude of this Government in making retrospective payments.

Mr. MUNSIE: But they did not make all the retrospective payments they should have made. Not any member of either of two or

ganisations working for the State has had one penny of retrospective pay. To-day the Government are lending the onslaught on wages.

The Minister for Mines: That is not correct.

Mr. MUNSIE: Not even the Employers' Federation or the Chamber of Commerce was earlier than the Government in giving notice of reduction of wages.

Mr. Mann: The Chamber of Mines was.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Chamber of Mines cited the Arbitration Court. The Government refused to do that, until practically put in a corner.

The Minister for Mines: That is not correct. It arose out of the award granted to the workers in the Railway Department.

Mr. MUNSIE: It took them nine months to get their case heard. The Government issued a mandate that on and after the 15th June wages would be reduced and hours increased. No other employer did that until the lead was set by the Government. And their commissioner wrote to the Perth City Council, asking them to do the same.

The Minister for Works: Have you never asked another union to follow lead? We paid £20,000 to the sawmills, although we were not compelled to pay a penny.

Mr. MUNSIE: I give you credit for it. But how much retrospective pay has been granted the moulders in the implement works? Not a penny. The Prime Minister declared that a 44-hour week was not to be granted unless three judges were on the bench. The State Government retire men at 65 years of age, and even 60 years. The Federal Government do exactly the same. They have retired men under the age of 65, and then they appoint as one of the judges to decide upon the 44-hour week a man 71 years of age. I am positive that Mr. Hughes, before he appointed Sir John Quick and the other man, had from them a definite assurance that they would award a 48-hours week; else they would never have been put there. Why did they alter the Act to get rid of Mr. Justice Higgins?

The Minister for Works: You were not so fond of him.

Mr. MUNSIE: You have never known the workers dispute his decision. In to-day's "West Australian" Mr. Colebatch is quoted as having said at last night's function that portion of the six millions which the Premier got in the Old Country could be used for purposes other than the settlement of oversea immigrants.

The Premier: That is so.

Mr. MUNSIE: It has been definitely stated by the "Sunday Times," and never contradicted, that the whole of the six millions had to be used for the settlement of oversea immigrants. I hope the Premier will let us know whether he can spend any of that six millions for the alleviation of distress, whether he is permitted to spend any of it in reproductive work, or whether he is compelled to apply the whole of it to the settlement of oversea immigrants.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, the report adopted.

## In Committee of Ways and Means.

On motion by the Premier, resolved:

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year ending 30th June, 1923, a sum not exceeding £828,220 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, £608,430 from moneys to credit of the General Loan Fund, £1,500 from the Government Property Sales Fund, £5,800 from the Land Improvement Loan Fund, and £300,000 from the Public Account for the purposes of temporary advances to be made by the Colonial Treasurer.

Resolution reported, the report adopted.

## First Reading.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

## Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [10-30]: I move:—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [10-31]: I would like the House to consider whether we are doing right in agreeing to an appropriation of £21,500 from the Government Property Sales Fund. From the statements supplied to us by the Treasurer last year, we learned that Government property sales from moneys obtained through loan funds totalled—

The Premier: They are not all loan funds.

Mr. ANGELO: I am not taking the total amount which is £1,171,000. I am taking an amount of only £1,099,000 representing loan moneys. From the 1st July, 1904, to the 30th June, 1920, goods were purchased out of loan moneys and were afterwards sold and the money was used in revenue. Would any business person conduct his business in this way? Would not the mortgagees who lent him the money disagree with such a proposal? From time to time this money is used for the purposes of revenue. At the end of 1920 the balance of the fund was £159,478. Goods were sold to the value of £74,951, making a total of £234,430, but there were payments made during the year 1920-21 totalling £91,110. Looking at the Estimates, we find that this money has been spent in such directions as the following:—Salaries, £5,000; Wyndham town jetty, reinstatement, £7,431; school buildings, including additions and renovations, £39,000; hospital buildings, additions and renovations, £4,800. It has always been understood that loan moneys should be expended on reproductive works and that the cost of upkeep should certainly come out of revenue. Yet we find that for the last 18 years, this money, which should really go into a suspense account, or be spent on reproductive works of some description, has been spent as revenue moneys. There is a note at the end of the accounts reading: "The above receipts consist of proceeds of sales of material charged to loan and revenue votes of years prior to the last financial year. Until the 1st July, 1904, all such receipts were credited in the Treasury returns to the Loan Estimates of previous financial years and since that year they have been reappropriated annually." Is it a fair thing that now that this amount is reaching the large proportion of over a million

pounds, some steps should not be taken to devote the proceeds from the sale of machinery and other goods to either the suspense account or to the carrying out of reproductive works? Some of these items seem peculiar. Last year £6,000 was credited to State fish supply. That appears to me as if a steamer had been purchased out of loan money, and later on had been sold and the money used for ordinary revenue purposes.

The Premier: It had nothing at all to do with the Carnarvon venture.

Mr. ANGELO: This was long before the Carnarvon venture and that was a matter of only £2,500. There is another item "Land settlement for soldiers, £13,800." What have we been selling? We have borrowed money for the settlement of soldiers and have sold a lot of stuff and the proceeds have been absorbed into revenue.

The Minister for Mines: The fact remains that these items are submitted to you before being passed.

Mr. ANGELO: The question for the House to consider is whether we should allow the appropriation of £21,500 and further similar appropriations from this fund which will be asked for during the session, or whether we should do to what we ought to do with that money, namely, add it to the suspense account or devote it to reproductive works only.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir. James Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [10.35]: A good deal of this money comes from sales of goods purchased out of revenue, and I can assure the hon. member that the method of expenditure is perfectly legitimate.

Mr. Angelo: If the House is satisfied, very well.

Hon. P. Collier rose to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Premier has replied and closed the debate.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

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

Hon. P. COLLIER: Undoubtedly the member for Gascoyne has touched a very interesting question on finance. It is true, as the Premier has said, that some of these stores which are sold, the proceeds of which go into revenue, have been purchased out of revenue.

The Premier: Only by a vote of this House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A lot of this is not actual cash at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It goes back for expenditure in directions which would otherwise have to be met out of revenue.

The Premier: By vote of the House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes; I do not charge the Premier with doing anything unusual or improper.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But he charged us with doing it improperly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This practice has obtained in Western Australia for years, but it is undoubtedly a fact that the greater proportion of this money comes from the sale of Government property which has been purchased with loan money.

The Minister for Mines: Revenue is already providing for the redemption of loans by a sinking fund.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That does not alter the fact that it is improper finance on the part of Parliament to spend loan funds in material when such stores and material are disposed of and utilised in a direction in which revenue only should be utilised.

The Minister for Mines: Revenue is already providing more than is necessary for loan redemption.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We have provided in payment to sinking fund more than is necessary to redeem the loans at date of maturity. The Treasurer draws  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. from revenue as a contribution towards the sinking fund for the redemption of our loans. That does not justify the expenditure of loan funds. Virtually it is expenditure of loan funds for revenue purposes.

The Premier: Not at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I suppose it is claimed to have been spent on reproductive work, such as the painting of a building in the North-West or the strengthening of a jetty. What a temptation it is to a Treasurer in these days when he is almost distracted in his efforts to reduce the deficit! He might embark upon the wholesale disposal of Government property. If he happened to realise five million pounds by that means he would be able to utilise the money in a direction in which it would otherwise come out of revenue, and to that extent improve his finances in that particular year. I do not want this temptation to be placed before the Premier. If the finances were not so bad he would no doubt endeavour to finance along sound lines. To-day he is at his wits ends to present a set of figures which will not wear the old familiar aspect we have been accustomed to, namely, large deficits. This is not the first time the position has been discussed in the House. In years gone by there have been many debates on this important question.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—agreed to.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

*House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.*