

erates. We have had a very long sitting, and perhaps the leader of the House will agree to report progress at this stage.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.43 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 29th October, 1918.

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

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

### UNIVERSITY FEES FOR SOLDIERS' CHILDREN.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin) [4.35]: Some time ago the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) asked a question with regard to the remission of fees received from the secretary of the Soldiers' Children Scholarship trust. I referred the matter to the Vice-Chancellor of the University, and I have received the following reply from Professor Paterson—

Referring to your letter of the 19th September to the Chancellor in regard to the remission of fees as required in the regulations for school certificate examinations, I have to inform you that the matter was considered by the Senate at its meeting on the 22nd inst. along with an application for exemption from university fees received from the hon. secretary of the Soldiers' Children Scholarship trust. The university has decided to remit all examination fees payable by the children of fallen or incapacitated soldiers upon the receipt of the necessary guarantees from the trust, but subject to the approval of the university in each case. It was further decided that applications received from sources outside the trust would receive sympathetic consideration.

### QUESTION—"ULYSSES" STRANDING INQUIRY, PAPERS.

Hon. T. WALKER (without notice) asked the Honorary Minister whether he was yet prepared to lay upon the table of the House the papers relating to Pilot Williamson and the wreck of the s.s. "Ulysses."

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister) replied: There are certain papers to come from the Federal authorities in the possession of Naval Base officers, and these papers are marked "confidential." The Government have wired to Melbourne for permission to lay these papers on the table of the House. If we cannot get that permission we shall not be able to place them on the table, but if we do get permission the papers will be made available immediately.

### BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2) £425,000.

All Stages.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin) [4.40]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of 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.

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 COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin) [4.45]: I move—

That there be granted to His Majesty, on account of the services of the year 1918-19, a sum not exceeding £425,000.

This supply is just sufficient to carry us on to the end of November and until the Estimates which are now on the table of the House have been passed.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

Supply Bill introduced, etcetera.

Resolution in Committee of Ways and Means having been passed, a Supply Bill was brought in providing for the expenditure of £425,000 out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Bill passed through its remaining stages and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

### ESTIMATES OF COLONIAL SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [4.53]: I move—

That leave be given to withdraw the Estimates of the Colonial Secretary's Department, and substitute a new print in more detailed form.

It is necessary to ask the permission of the House to withdraw the Estimates for this department as they appear on the general Estimates. Hon. members have had a re-print of the Estimates placed before them, and this has been done at the wish of the House, which

asked for more detailed information in regard to the Estimates of this department.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.54]: It would have been well if the Government had withdrawn the whole of the Estimates and brought them down in a revised, or altered form. In glancing through these Estimates and comparing them with the old Estimates I do not see very much difference. There is slightly more detailed information here and there, but to my mind not sufficient to warrant the expenditure involved in the revision. As the Government decided to alter the Colonial Secretary's Estimates as originally introduced, and to give the House more detailed information, it was their clear duty to have gone back to the old form of the Estimates and brought them down in that form. I want again to protest against the altered form of the Estimates. I find in glancing through them that the Government have been enabled to grant increases in salaries to the higher placed officials, of £50 or so, although this is not shown on the Estimates themselves. Indeed, the fact is smothered up.

The Colonial Treasurer: Where is that?

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is one Under Secretary who is down for a £50 increase which is not shown on the Estimates. I am not discussing the merits of the increase. The Estimates should be presented to the House in a form which would enable members to see where the increases were made. That is not done at present. There are increases throughout the Estimates, but hon. members are not aware of the fact because of the condensed form in which the Estimates have been presented. The Premier might withdraw the whole of the Estimates and have them presented to the House in the same form as we received them in other years. I do not think it has been worth the cost of re-printing in the case under discussion, seeing that the additional information provided is very little better than that supplied in the old print.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irvine) [4.56]: The leader of the Opposition has drawn attention to the Estimates of the Colonial Secretary's Department. It was rather to give the information desired by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. G. Angwin) that I said, "The House wants further information." If members will look at the Estimates they will see that they do not vary very much except that they do not show the vote of the previous year, and that is following out the South Australian system. In the new Estimates we have given the number of clerks instead of putting them in their different places. That is a step towards what we consider is the best way of arranging officers. We say to the Agricultural Department, "You have 45 clerks running your department. We do not care how you ballot them, for that is your business." Hitherto these clerks may have been allotted in four or five different places. We have found

that where a clerk is allotted to a different position, he is inclined to say, "That is my work and mine alone." The object of putting them together like that is to say to the clerk, "You are there to do whatever work is asked of you by the man who is running the office." Otherwise there is little or no difference in the Estimates. It may be true—and I do not doubt the veracity of the leader of the Opposition—that there have been instances where allowances have not been shown quite clearly. In the particular case referred to by the member for Boulder, I think it is made abundantly clear that there is an item for so much on one Estimate, but it says at the bottom that there is an item on other Estimates for a certain amount.

Hon. P. Collier: To whom do you refer?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: To the Under Secretary for Public Works. I promised the House that I would endeavour to show what officers were really receiving. I think members are entitled to that information. I am quite candid. If we can simplify the Estimates so as to do away with the immensity of the duplication of work, it is for us to do so. I am starting here to carry out the instructions of the House; that is in the direction of economy of administration. As I pointed out in my financial statement, the form of the Estimates will at a minimum reduce the entries by 20,000. If the leader of the Opposition, or any member of the House, wants any further information than we give here, we shall be only too glad to give it. If I can save a dozen clerks in the process, in lieu of the little extra information we could give for hon. members, it will be an economy to the general service, and I shall be doing the greater thing. I am sure the leader of the Opposition will believe me when I say there is not the slightest desire on the part of the Government to keep back any information which should be the property of the House. We do not want to keep information away from members. We do want, if we can, to simplify the whole method of dealing with it. We are now trying to do that. I do not say the Estimates are perfect and do not think they are. Unfortunately, we find that the man who makes suggestions has to be there at all times to check the details. Ministers cannot always do that, and inaccuracies will creep in. So far as the instructions are concerned, I know what the House wants. The House wanted to know exactly what every man in the civil service is receiving. If he is receiving any additional salary, the House was entitled to know. Instructions to this effect were issued. I do not think they have been quite carried out. It is one thing to ask for things to be properly carried out, and another thing to see that they are carried out properly. I have done my best in this matter and this is a start. I have this further information, because the Colonial Secretary's Department did not comply with the general scheme of the Estimates. That was to have been a check to see whether there were more, or less, clerks employed than was the case last year. And there are other little things of that kind.

Mr. Holman; They do not want to let us know that there are six more clerks than there were two years ago in the accounts branch.

**THE COLONIAL TREASURER:** There is the position. So far as I am concerned, I want the House to get every information; but in giving that information I want, if I possibly can, to save the country numerous clerks who have hitherto been employed on what I consider duplication of service.

**HON. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [5.1]:** One can well appreciate the good intentions of the Treasurer, and more particularly the cutting down of expenses and the saving of duplication of work. But that is no excuse, I take it, for presenting what I cannot help but call imperfect Estimates, imperfect in point of information. It is only necessary to go back to the Estimates of 1918 in order to see that the Colonial Secretary's Estimates, as now introduced to us, or reintroduced to us in amended form, are very deficient in detailed information. The 1918 Estimates contain no less than six columns of information valuable to every member. There is the vote and the expenditure of the year previous. Those two columns do not appear in the new Estimates. That information is of exceeding value to every member. We want to be able to make these comparisons as we are dealing with the matter, and we do not want to have to ask on each item what was the vote last year, and how much was expended last year. We want to see those particulars before us, so as to be able to judge whether administrative expenditure is being increased or decreased. Then, again, the 1917-18 Estimates have two columns showing whether a particular item represents an increase or a decrease.

**The Colonial Treasurer:** You get that all right on the total.

**HON. T. WALKER:** Yes, on the total.

**The Colonial Treasurer:** That is all that was shown on the other Estimates.

**HON. T. WALKER:** Oh no! That information was shown on each particular item.

**The Colonial Treasurer:** But the increase or decrease is shown in the general totals.

**HON. T. WALKER:** We have to discuss the items, though. When we come to the items, we want to know whether we are saving money or are entering upon further expenditure. There can be nothing more important than that the House should be taken fully into the confidence of the Government, so to speak, when dealing with the expenditure of money. As I have heard the Treasurer himself say, "Government is finance."

**The Colonial Treasurer:** Finance is government.

**HON. T. WALKER:** That is practically the same thing. With the leader of the Opposition, I desire most earnestly to protest against this manner of presenting information to the Chamber. It has nothing to do with economy, because it is likely to misguide us. When supplied with deficient information, we cannot judge what can be saved to the country; and I submit that the information supplied by these new Estimates is deficient. We have not the details necessary to enable us to form a judgment.

**The Colonial Treasurer:** But you can ask me any question you like.

**HON. T. WALKER:** That is not the point, because when one does not see what may lead to a question one is not likely to ask the question. There may be concealing of facts by deficiency of information. One cannot know what is behind the figures. One cannot stop on every item to ask what was last year's vote and whether there is an increase or a decrease. If we debate each item in that way, we lose time in this Chamber.

**The Colonial Treasurer:** I do not know that losing time is either an asset or a liability.

**HON. T. WALKER:** I think it is a liability, and I think the Treasurer is causing loss of time by presenting the Estimates in this way. The hon. gentleman cannot deny that it is serious to conceal from the eyes of members what is occurring as regards the expenditure of the country.

**The Colonial Treasurer:** I do not think there is any attempt to conceal.

**HON. T. WALKER:** There is a cutting down of that information to which we have been accustomed. I cannot conceive that there is any wise judgment in such a course as that. We require all the help we can get. Even when one is in touch with departments, it is impossible to know all that is going on; and members who only discuss these matters here must have the very fullest and clearest information to guide them in their judgment in passing the Estimates. Therefore, with the leader of the Opposition, I most earnestly protest against this course; and I think it would even yet be wise to have the Estimates presented to us in a new form with the fullest information possible. At all events, the whole of the information that was given on the 1917-18 Estimates ought to be given on these Estimates.

**HON. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.10]:** I certainly agree with my colleagues that the Estimates should have been presented in a manner similar to that adopted previously. In my opinion, there is no weight whatever in the statement of the Treasurer that economy is likely to result from withholding information from the House. The positions held by the various clerks in the departments are classified by the Public Service Commissioner. The chief of the department cannot put any clerk to any work he chooses. In the Colonial Secretary's department last year the clerks' salaries varied from £312 down to £144. This year, however, we see no classification at all.

**The Colonial Treasurer:** But you get the totals.

**HON. W. C. ANGWIN:** I admit the totals are there; but if there is a reduction we cannot gather whether that reduction has been brought about by the retrenchment of the highly paid officer or by the dismissal of the young clerk working for £144 a year.

**The Colonial Treasurer:** You would not find that out from any Estimates presented.

**HON. W. C. ANGWIN:** If we see a person is employed only for a certain period, on last year's Estimates, we know then that his services have been dispensed with. From these Estimates we cannot discover that. It is all

but impossible for the chief of a department to say to an officer, "You must do a higher class of work at your present salary." The chief cannot do that. The Public Service Commissioner steps in and classifies each position, under which arrangement the salary of each position is fixed. In my opinion, the form in which these Estimates have been introduced is not conducive to the best consideration being given to them by hon. members. It is the duty of every member, irrespective of where he sits in this Chamber, to obtain all possible information with regard to expenditure. Perhaps that was never more necessary in the history of this State than it is now. We ought to be enabled to pass a fair judgment on the amounts to be expended. I trust that in connection with future years' Estimates the old system will be reverted to, of giving members the fullest possible information.

(Question put and passed.)

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1918-19.

##### In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Department of Agriculture (Hon. H. B. Lefroy, Minister).

Vote—Agriculture, £69,976:

Item, Irrigation expert, £456.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What is the reason of the increase in this item?

The PREMIER: The reason for the apparent increase is that the officer enlisted and was eventually discharged as medically unfit. On his discharge he took the long service leave due to him. Consequently, his salary was provided for only portion of last financial year. There is no increase in the rate of £456, which is the salary he has been receiving.

Mr. SMITH: I would like to get some idea of the work this officer is engaged in. I do not know of any extensive irrigation works being constructed in Western Australia. I believe some irrigation works are in progress at Harvey, but those are purely a local matter, the cost of which is charged to the local board. In addition to the expert himself, I see there is an assistant irrigation expert. What works are going on for which this expert and this assistant expert are required?

The PREMIER: The irrigation expert is at present engaged principally, or almost entirely, in advising settlers in various parts of the country who are desirous of installing irrigation plants.

Hon. P. Collier: Is that Mr. Scott?

The PREMIER: Yes. He is assisting the returned soldier settlers at Harvey, advising the soldiers as to what they should do. He is there also when anybody else requires advice.

Item, Officer in charge of fruit industries, £360.

Mr. SMITH: There is here an increase of £120. I should like some explanation. What are the duties of this officer, and why this increase?

The PREMIER: This officer is Mr. George Wickens, well known to hon. members and to all producers. When the Fruit Commissioner left, Mr. Wickens was placed in charge of fruit industries, and is there to give advice on all matters in connection with fruit trees.

Hon. P. Collier: Did he previously offer any advice about fruit trees?

The PREMIER: Yes, he was previously assistant to the Fruit Commissioner.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): He is the best man this State has seen for years.

The PREMIER: When the Fruit Commissioner left, this new position was created and Mr. Wickens was appointed to the position. He started at £360, which was an increase on his previous salary. He is a good officer, of wide experience. It is considered that the increase is well warranted, as the officer is very efficient and has the entire confidence of all the producers.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I understand this officer does not confine his attention to the fruit industries alone. I believe he takes stock of the various commodities produced on the State farms.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): No, that is Mr. Wicken.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I was under a misapprehension. I shall have the opportunity I desire later on. It is very confusing when we have two men of practically the same name.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think this officer is deserving of a better salary. The fruit industry is of great importance, and if we are to have an efficient officer of real use to the growers, he should be in receipt of a larger salary. This officer ought to devote his time to developing the fruit industry, apart altogether from fruit-growing. A great deal can be done in regard to the drying and preserving of certain fruits. If this officer does this work he is not over-paid at his present salary. I am glad that he has been granted this increase.

Hon. P. Collier: What position did he hold before?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: He was chief inspector. This department should be properly staffed by the right men, and if we are to have such men they should be properly paid.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): This officer has the confidence of all the fruit-growers of the State. From time to time we have had serious outbreaks of codlin moth, and he has shown what he is capable of by handling those outbreaks in such a way that they have never spread from the orchard in which they were discovered. As a fruit-grower, I can myself say that there is no more capable man than this officer in the State. Regarding the growing and drying of currants, this officer has done very good work already. He is also kept busy supplying us with information when required in connection with fruit-growing by returned soldiers. I agree with the member for Northam that this officer's salary does not approach what it should be for the work he carries out. He was

born in an orchard and has been engaged in orchard work ever since. He is the most practical man we have in this State. Unfortunately, in the past we have not always had practical men, with the result that I have had to deal with some of the mistakes that have been made.

Mr. MONEY: If the work of this officer is carried out as it should be the salary is not too large, but I should like to hear from the Minister what steps, if any, have been taken to deal with next season's fruit crop. It is easy to advocate production, but surely it is within the province of the Fruit Industries Department to point to the means by which the fruit crop can be profitably disposed of. During the past season the majority of exporters of fruit in this State have had to carry on at a loss. The producers have produced and have been left at that. I have never yet heard what steps, if any, have been taken with a view to disposing of next season's fruit crop.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I quite agree with the hon. member. It is most desirable that we should find an outlet for our fruit. The department has done everything possible in this regard, and has been in communication with the Home authorities, endeavouring to get shipping space. Unfortunately, owing to lack of shipping, ships with refrigerating space which were to have come here have been cancelled. Every effort has been made to obtain space and to determine where the fruit crop can best be placed. In regard to drying, full information has been readily given as to the best and cheapest methods. Unfortunately, fruit-drying is not a profitable proposition in this State unless one has a family to do the work; because the expense is enormous and out of every 7lbs. of green fruit only 1lb. of dried fruit is produced.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It pays all right.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): It pays in some places where labour is obtainable at reasonable cost, but not in Western Australia, unless a man has a family to do the work. Again, the dried fruits have to be put up in certain packages, and even those packages are not obtainable now. In regard to the outlook for jam, that is only really a flea bite, for it affects but a very small portion of fruit not of first quality. I am afraid that this year, unless shipping space is made available, the fruit growers are going to have another bad season. This officer has been in communication with me weekly. It is estimated that we shall have a crop of apples alone running to something like 800,000 cases. Unfortunately, our population can consume at the most only 400,000 cases. I think much could be done by the growers themselves by seeing to it that the people who do not live in the orchard districts are given fruit at a reasonable price. Last year, as an illustration, when we were getting 1s. 9d. a case for fruit, that is after paying 1s. for the case and 6d. freight and 3d. commission, that fruit was being sold in the metropolis, retail at 4d. and 5d. a pound. This is the weak spot. The growers were getting nothing; the whole of the returns

were swallowed up. If members look in the shops to-day they will see fruit at 5d. a pound, although the fruitgrower has paid 1d. to 2d. per week per case cold storage on that fruit, showing that somebody was making a profit earlier in the season.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Government should take a hand in it.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): They cannot. I have of course great confidence in the Government, but I have not that confidence that they are capable of running a fruit business. The less the Government interfere in a matter of this kind the better. Let growers try to get shops and deal with the business in a big way. Do not let the Government come in and try to retail apples.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You admit the growers are floored?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I do, but it is the growers' own fault. The growers turn round and say, "Why do not the Government do something?"

Mr. O'Loughlen: What is the remedy?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Last season I sold some of my fruit at 1s. 9d., and I saw the same fruit—I know it was the same because I saw the marks on the cases—retailed at 4d. a pound. The fruit-growers should turn round and say, "If you do not sell our fruit at a reasonable price we will open shops ourselves," that is as far as the metropolitan area is concerned. Is it not better to get rid of the fruit at 2d. a pound and let the people have unlimited quantities of fruit than make the people pay 4d. and 5d. a pound, and the producer get nothing? One half of the people in the State never see a bit of fruit, and yet last year something like 300,000 cases of apples were wasted, and children were dying for a bit of fruit and never tasted it. This year there will be 400,000 cases of fruit wasted unless the growers take a hand in the matter themselves. The "Sunblush" scheme was formulated with the idea of doing away with the middleman, but unfortunately the "Sunblush" scheme started out selling cases of fruit at 6s. 6d. delivered at the door, and what happened? The cunning people went to the markets and bought fruit at 1s. 9d. a case and delivered it to people as "Sunblush" fruit at 6s. 6d. a case.

Mr. Green: I waited six weeks for my fruit and then got the cheap stuff, and half of it was rotten.

Hon. P. Collier: Mine was half bad.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I investigated many complaints, and I found they were justified. Instead of waiting to get the biggest price the growers should see what is the lowest price they can sell at with a profit to themselves, so that they will get rid of their stuff. It is no good when there is a glut seeing how much the grower can squeeze out of the people. The grower should find out how much the people eat, and what is the lowest possible price at which they can sell their fruit to the people. Unfortunately the "Sunblush" scheme last year resulted in one of the greatest fiascos ever occurring in the State.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Government should have a distributing depot.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): We want a distributing depot; the public have not the time to wait at the markets and then perhaps have to pay 1s. for a case of apples to be delivered at their doors. If the growers take my advice they will have a distributing depot. They should have shops where people can buy a pound of apples or a case. I know they are frightened of the agents, but I do not care a snap of the fingers for the agents. Then the growers say that to run a shop there must be fruits of all kinds. I know it does not pay at times to have all kinds of fruit in a shop. The main glut in this country is in apples. If that is so, then cut out the other fruits, and if a person wants bananas let them go to Carnarvon for them.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: The officer in charge of the fruit industry has the entire confidence of the fruitgrowers in the Mt. Barker district, and it is to be hoped his efforts will be appreciated by the Government and that he will receive assistance in his office. It is to be hoped that members will not take it that the orchardists are begging assistance from the Government. As far as Mt. Barker is concerned, the growers there want to paddle their own canoe. Reference has been made to the "Sunblush" scheme and the injury that was done. May I suggest that had the Associated Fruitgrowers accepted the proposition put forward by the Mt. Barker people and pooled their fruit, the people would have been able to get fruit at a cheap rate. But the district which is represented by the Honorary Minister could not see eye to eye with the Mt. Barker growers, and the matter fell through. If the growers co-operate as the Mt. Barker people are doing they will be able to sell cheap fruit, which will be of benefit to the industry and to the people of the country.

Mr. NAIRN: What is the policy the Government intend to adopt in regard to the marketing scheme in Perth? A great deal has been said about the difference in the price of the fruit to the producer and the consumer, but a great deal is due to a lack of proper marketing facilities. Some time ago the Government promised that markets should be started in Perth, and for that purpose Mr. Hardwick was sent to Brisbane to obtain particulars and plans. I want to know if it is the intention of the Government to proceed with the scheme. I am certain that with proper marketing facilities the fruit growers and the public would both benefit. We have the most inefficient marketing facilities in the whole of the Commonwealth, and unless some provision is made we are fighting a very uphill battle.

The PREMIER: The Government have this matter in view. It has been under consideration for a considerable time, but at present the Government are not in a position to go in for the expenditure, because storage works are required in connection with a scheme of this sort. We require to be in a position to deal with the matter thoroughly, but the finances of the State will not allow it at pre-

sent. It is to be hoped the time is not far distant when the State will be able to start markets which will not only be a credit to the country but be of benefit to the purchaser.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Endeavours should be made to get fruit into the back country. It is impossible to expect people to write to the growers for fruit and then send a postal note; they will not do it. I think the growers should be able to get a truck attached to the train. I am sure the Government would give a free pass to some man to travel with the fruit and sell it from the truck. If the department approached the railways some agreement could be come to in this matter. When I was Minister I discussed the question with the railway people, and they were willing to fall in with some arrangement. I know of no one more willing to help the fruit grower than the present Railway Commissioner. Then arrangements could be made with station-masters to receive orders for fruit and collect the money, which could be sent to the fruit growing districts. Still, there are many unattended sidings where this could not be done. Last year and the year before apples were sent about the country in sacks, and that could be done this year.

Mr. Robinson: It is against the law.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It may be against the regulations, but it is not against the law. If sacks could be used it would be much better, and there would be no loss. A sack holds three cases of apples, which would mean a saving of 3s. This would enable people in the country districts to get apples without much bother. Many thousands of cases of fruit could be sold in this way.

Mr. ANGELO: I am of the opinion that the local market for our fruit should be considerably increased by educating the people to eat fruit, as is done in other countries of the world where the climatic conditions are similar to ours. I am told that in America people eat fruit four times a day. The climate there calls for this, and the people find it not only economical to eat fruit but of advantage from a health point of view. This, therefore, is the direction in which we should assist our growers. A propaganda could be started commencing with the hotels. If one goes into a hotel in Perth it will be found that fruit is provided never more than once a day. The Government should also assist in a practical manner by providing fruit for consumption on the State steamers. On the last trip of the "Bambra"—the Honorary Minister will hear me out because he was on the same vessel—the most miserable looking apples that could be seen were given to the passengers, while at the same time the very best apples were selling in Perth at 2s. 6d. a case. The oranges on the same vessel were a disgrace. I took the opportunity of sending a sample of this fruit to the "West Australian" in support of what I had written about the fruit which was being purchased for the State steamers by the Government. The "Bambra" could easily have taken 100 cases of good apples for consumption on that trip instead of windfalls. At that time, too, the people in the North-West were paying up to 25s. a case for their apples, whilst in Perth they were almost going beg-

ging. The North-West could take many thousands of cases of apples if proper facilities were afforded for sending the fruit along the coast. Let us come nearer home. In our own dining room at Parliament House how often do members see fruit on the table? We talk about our fruit production to visitors and yet we sit down at the table without even the skeleton of any fruit. It should be the duty of the Government, the House Committee, and the fruitgrower to get together and endeavour to educate the people to eat fruit and the outsiders to buy it.

Mr. HARRISON: The gentleman who is in charge of the fruit industry has been successful in getting rid of the various orchard pests. I understand our orchards now are comparatively, if not completely clean.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You can give the credit for that to the entomologist.

Mr. HARRISON: The greatest difficulty facing the fruitgrower at the present time is the disposal of the crops and the gentleman in charge of the industry cannot put his energies to better purpose than to formulate plans for the disposal of the coming harvest. We do not want a repetition of our experience of last season in connection with the "Sunblush" apples. I went into a cellar where the apples were in order to see the quality of the fruit and I observed cases bearing the names of the grower and giving the size of the fruit. Yet there were men there who were grading that very fruit which was supposed to have been graded and packed according to the marks on the cases. How are we going to dispose of fruit if that kind of thing goes on? The grower is not keeping faith with his customers. The fruit there was not true to label. It is impossible to get the confidence of the consuming public by starting off with fraud—I can call it nothing else. Then the customer must not be charged any more than the price at which he can buy in the open market. The way to get rid of the middleman is to encourage direct purchases by the consumers, and if the Minister in charge of the industry can bring consumers and growers together a good deal of fruit can be disposed of. I would like to know whether the officer whose item we are discussing is acquainted with the process of drying fruit. The ultimate prosperity of our fruit growers has to be studied and that cannot be better done than by exporting dried fruits.

Mr. MONEY: I am very glad we have had a discussion on this item because it has disclosed the fact that half next season's crop cannot be disposed of, and that there will be no market whatever for it. I am not satisfied with the suggestion that it is impossible to dry that fruit or make some provision to deal with it. If the fruit is of no value in the orchard surely there was never a better opportunity for drying it. The officer in charge of the industry should use every endeavour to deal with the fruit which is not likely to be disposed of. The value of that fruit is a big item. There is no producer in the State who is so badly off to-day as the fruit grower. I am speaking too as a grower of export apples. For the past two seasons my export has been nil, and I can assure hon.

members that last year the cost of gathering and marketing was barely paid. The officer might devote his attention more to the disposal of the crop rather than to the production.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He might not be a commercial man.

Mr. MONEY: Then he can seek the best advice from commercial men. Some method should certainly be adopted to deal with the fruit by drying it, otherwise this will be a direct loss to a national asset. We shall have £100,000 going to waste and some effort should be made to save if not the whole of that amount, then half of it.

Item—Economic Entomologist:

Mr. MALEY: I cannot understand the meaning of this title.

Mr. Smith: It applies to his salary.

Mr. MALEY: I take it that Mr. Newman is the officer in question. On going through the evidence taken before the Wheat Commission I find that Mr. Newman's services were not availed of in any shape or form in connection with the weevil pest. It is very necessary we should have an expert officer exercising his functions in this connection. Everyone nowadays seems to be an expert in respect to this pest.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Government engineer, Mr. Pearce, is considered to be the expert.

Mr. MALEY: Are the Government taking every precaution possible in the circumstances? Is Mr. Newman's advice being availed of by the Scheme as it should be in this matter? I have heard that weevil are actually flying away from the wheat stacks, and becoming such an alarming pest that it is felt they will soon attack the wheat in the field.

The PREMIER: Mr. Newman's services are available for the Wheat Scheme, and I have no doubt the officers of that Scheme have consulted him on the matter.

Mr. Mailey: Not according to the evidence.

The PREMIER: I cannot give the hon. member all the details involved in his questions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Scheme officers have only to ask for his advice.

The PREMIER: Mr. Newman has the entire confidence of the orchardists, and has done more than anyone else to prevent the spread of codlin moth. Titles of this description are always high sounding. I believe this is the title given in the profession. I admit that the salary is a low one.

Mr. LAMBERT: Apparently this officer is starting at a very low salary. If he is not worth more, the State should not employ him. His services ought to be availed of in the direction of combating the weevil pest, and should have been utilised by the Wheat Scheme. The salary attached to the position is a mere pittance. Does the Minister consider that the qualifications of this officer are such as to justify him in holding the position, and that the salary that is being paid to him is in keeping with the importance of the office?

Mr. Mailey: Prof. Lefroy is being paid £3,000 a year for the same sort of job.

Mr. LAMBERT: If Mr. Newman is qualified to hold the position he is worth more than this junior salary.

The PREMIER: Mr. Newman is highly qualified and thoroughly efficient. Surely the hon. member knows what his duties are. He has to study all matters connected with the inroads of insect life which may be detrimental to the production from the soil. He is fully occupied in attending to his duties, and is available for anyone to refer to if necessary. I hope the time will not be far distant when this officer's efficiency may be rewarded by a higher salary.

Mr. LAMBERT: This is the only opportunity new members have of becoming acquainted with the duties of the different public servants of the State. I have not asked for this information out of a desire to waste time. I hope when new members ask for information concerning the duties performed by any officer, especially in a case where there is such a big discrepancy between the salary and the importance of the position occupied, the Premier will not think the request is made in any spirit of hostility.

Mr. SMITH: I agree with what the member for Coolgardie has said. If Ministers are annoyed by the requests for information from new members, they have only themselves to blame, on account of the unsatisfactory manner in which the Estimates have been placed before us. In this department the various items are jumbled up; and there seems to be no order or method about them. It is impossible to ascertain what these departments are costing the country. If this entomologist is worth anything at all he is worth more than he is now being paid, if not, the country is wasting money in having such an officer. I hope the Minister in charge of the department will reorganise it and pay his officers a salary commensurate with the work they are carrying out.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Item, Assistant Inspector, Rabbit Branch, £396.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: Does this item represent an increase? The officer is shown as receiving £132 travelling allowance, and there appears to be an increase of £88 per annum.

The PREMIER: The officer, who is almost constantly travelling, has been granted, on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner, a travelling allowance of £132; and this represents an economy. The travelling allowance, which is included in the salary for this year, started on the 1st March, last.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The salary and allowance are not too much, either.

The PREMIER: They are not.

Item, Chief Inspector for South-West, £360.

Mr. SMITH: I would like some information regarding this item, which shows a substantial increase in the salary—an increase

of 75 per cent. Did this officer appear on last year's Estimates? Is this a new office, or just a new title?

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Commissioner for the South-West has gone, and this officer has taken his place.

Mr. SMITH: All the officers of the Agricultural Department seem to be chief inspectors now. Is this new officer competent to fill the position? Were applications called for the vacancy, so that other civil servants had an opportunity to apply?

The PREMIER: Upon the retirement of the Commissioner for the South-West it was necessary to appoint someone to look after the working of the South-West, and this officer was brought over for that purpose from the Lands Department. He has now entire control of all agricultural matters, apart from wheat growing, affecting the South-West. He inspects and advises, he has control of the Brunswick and Denmark State farms, of the Denmark bacon and butter factory, of the Busselton butter factory, the oversight of potato inspection, oversight of inspection and prosecutions under the Fertilisers Act, and the oversight of the Fremantle woolclassing depot. I understand that he has practical qualifications, and that he received various diplomas at the Hawkesbury Agricultural College. Moreover, he is well acquainted with the whole of the South-Western Division of this State. Prior to 1910 he lectured on agricultural subjects.

Hon. P. Collier: What was he doing in the Lands Department?

The PREMIER: He was engaged on similar classes of work, obtaining information with regard to agricultural matters.

Hon. P. Collier: Agricultural matters in the Lands Department?

The PREMIER: Certainly. The officer was in charge of the Agricultural Bureau attached to the Lands Department. He is a gentleman of considerable experience, and his appointment to this position was strongly recommended by the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: One is gratified to hear the various qualifications of this officer as stated by the Premier; but is not the following in accordance with fact? A few weeks ago the officer called for an inventory of the stock at the Brunswick State Farm, which was furnished. Thereupon, the officer asked the manager of the farm for an approximate valuation of the stock, a perfectly proper thing to do. The manager sent up a valuation, estimating 20 sows at £2 each, 40 suckers at 15s. each, and 15 barrows at £5 each. Now I want to know is it not true that thereupon the officer wrote back to the manager saying he could not understand the value put upon the barrows, which Millars' Company's catalogue quoted at 17s. 6d.?

Mr. SMITH: The Premier has not answered my question whether applications were called for this position? The present holder of the office seems to have too many qualifications to be good in any particular one. I understand the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt has placed on the file a minute stating



that in his opinion the present occupant of the Chief Inspectorship is not capable of filling the position. If it is a fact that such a minute exists, the matter is serious. I should like to be assured that the position is not as it has been stated to me.

The PREMIER: I am certainly not aware of the existence of the minute referred to by the member for North Perth. Applications were not called for the vacancy. It is not necessary to call for applications in the case of every vacancy in the public service. This officer was considered to be the most eligible in the service for filling the position. The whole matter was considered very carefully by Cabinet, and various members of the Government have knowledge of the officer. In view of that knowledge and also the information obtained relative to this gentleman, Cabinet approved of the Public Service Commissioner's recommendation.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: While the Premier was on his feet he might have just expressed his opinion on the qualifications of an officer who consulted the catalogue of Millars' Timber and Trading Coy., Ltd., on a question of pigs.

The Premier: How do pigs come into a timber company's catalogue?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not know whether it is wise for me to persist in my query if the Premier cannot understand it.

The Premier: Repeat your statement.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I want to know whether the Premier thinks that an officer with all these qualifications should minute a document as he did. He received an inventory from the manager of the Brunswick State farm showing that among the pigs were 15 barrows, worth 25s. each. This officer in reply stated that while he thought the remainder of the pigs were correctly valued, he had turned up Millars' price-list and found that barrows were quoted at 17s. 6d.

The Premier: I think that must be his little joke.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Well, if he is going to write minutes by way of a joke, he is getting quite sufficient salary. If this is in keeping with the general agricultural knowledge of this officer I doubt if he is exactly the man for the post.

Mr. SMITH: Personally I shall be satisfied if the Premier will undertake to look into this appointment.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not quite know how all this departmental information gets out.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I saw it in the Press.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Well, you cannot believe what you see in the Press.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I will call for the papers to-morrow.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If it is necessary that we should have a commissioner for the wheat belt at £756 per annum, it is absurd to place the control of the whole of the operations of the South-West under a man drawing £360 per annum. It is a most important position, and requires to be filled by the best man we can secure. Mr. Wicken, during his 20 years service in the department, has done a great deal of use-

ful work, and is capable of doing good work still, but I doubt if he is the man to satisfactorily fill this position. The development of the South-West cannot be carried out except by a highly qualified officer. If it is the policy of the Government to appoint gentlemen of the calibre of this officer to positions of so much importance, it is for the members of the Committee either to submit or take definite action.

Mr. MONEY: It has been the general policy to increase development, but the control of the South-West apparently has been handed from a commissioner to a chief inspector. Surely it is a step in the wrong direction. We should understand the many duties required of this officer. It is necessary that anyone in charge of the development of the South-West should understand something about the breed of dairy cattle, should have some practical knowledge as to the best classes of horses, pigs, and sheep for the South-West. It is also necessary that he should have a knowledge of summer fodders. When I look at the many duties this officer has to fulfil it reminds me of the musician who attempts to play seven instruments at once. It is impossible for any one man to carry out with satisfaction either to himself or to the people of the South-West all the duties falling to this officer. In addition to other duties, this officer has to direct the operations of the State farms at Brunswick and at Denmark. If this present officer is to attempt to do this, the only reasonable solution is to appoint a strong advisory agricultural board for the South-West, consisting of practical men and not of mere theorists. I am satisfied that the present officer has not the practical knowledge or experience to carry out his duties successfully. This gentleman is described as chief inspector for the South-West, but I cannot find in the Estimates reference to any other inspectors for the South-West.

Mr. Smith: We want a director for the South-West.

Mr. MONEY: That is quite right. If we are going to seriously attempt to develop the South-West we should have a properly qualified commissioner. I enter my protest against the chief inspector being entrusted with these enormous responsibilities.

Mr. MALEY: I should like to know whether this officer has taken the place of the late Commissioner of the South-West?

The Premier: No; he is merely carrying out some of the duties of that officer.

Mr. MALEY: In last year's Estimates we had the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt and the Commissioner for the South-West bracketed in one officer. In these Estimates Mr. Suttor is Commissioner for the Wheat Belt alone. I support the member for Bunbury in the contention that we should have a director rather than an inspector, to control the development of the South-West. Recently steps have been successfully taken to establish bacon and butter factories in various parts of the State. In this movement the Government have assisted to the extent of contributing pounds for pounds. In view of this we ought to have a capable Government officer to supervise the establishment of those factories, and to se-

to the essential question of standardisation. The Premier should give us a detailed explanation of the duties of this officer, and should indicate how the Government propose to grapple with the problems confronting them in respect of dairying. Is the Chief Inspector for the South-West qualified for the work which he has to do? If not the money is wasted; £363 for an officer is a small salary.

Mr. Maley: Are we entitled to an explanation on the item "Chief Inspector for the South-West"?

The PREMIER: I have already explained what the duties of this officer are. The member for Bunbury said that a director was wanted. The best advice can be obtained from good practical farmers, and there are plenty who are only too willing to give new settlers information. Farmers do not hold sufficient meetings and have discussions as they ought to do and which would be of great assistance to them. The officers provided by the Government are willing to impart all the information that is required.

Mr. MALEY: I wanted to know if this officer has any qualifications to give advice on the working of the many bacon and butter factories that are being established in the South-West.

The PREMIER: I am not in a position to be able to inform the hon. member as to whether the officer is an expert on the question of bacon factories.

Mr. Maley: Will the officer have the supervision of these factories?

The PREMIER: He knows how the work should be carried on.

Item, Inspectors Fruit Industries Branch, £1,925.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: Last year there were eight inspectors and the amount provided was £2,158. This year 10 inspectors are provided at £1,925. Is the reduction in wages or expenses?

The PREMIER: There is an error in this item. Last year there were 11 inspectors, not eight.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When the fruit inspectors were put on it was intended that their salaries should be paid from the orchards tax.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Last year direct taxation was brought in and when I went to pay my orchard tax this year I discovered that the orchard tax was knocked out. It shows the Treasurer does not want revenue. The Minister said that the pests have been cleared out of orchards by the officers being appointed, which is a good thing. If this was the result of the orchard tax it was a good investment.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The hon. member is not correct. The tax was put on orchards for extra inspectors. Unfortunately the Bill was drafted in such a way that only one tax could be collected and that was the registration fee, which was not a tax at all. When I was in the Agricultural Department I found certain correspondence there and asked the Commissioner for Fruit Industries what was the position as to the tax.

He said, "Well, I believe we cannot legally collect it." What was the position then? We had been collecting the money for years. I paid year after year while others did not pay and they could not legally be compelled to pay.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You can bring in a Bill to rectify that.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Yes, but it would be most unfair to tax this particular industry. It was wrong to put a tax on the orchardists, above all others, for this particular purpose.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Seeing that the pests have been practically eradicated from the orchards of the State, I would like to know whether it is necessary to have an inspector from the Agricultural Department going up to a place like Geraldton, where perhaps only a thousand cases of fruit are grown all the year round, to put the people to a lot of expense in connection with the eradication of the South African box thorn. In Victoria the box thorn is used as a hedge where they grow fruit and nothing is done.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): They are just waking up to the fact that it is a menace.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Government are putting a considerable burden on the people where there is not much risk of pests appearing. The Government might, therefore, reconsider the position and discontinue issuing orders for the eradication of this box thorn.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): At the request of the roads board and the municipal council, and other public bodies in the district the hon. member represents, a certain sum of money was spent by the Government last year in the eradication of box thorn on reserves. If the Government are going to be put to that expense it is only right that private individuals should be compelled to do the same.

Mr. MALEY: That question only arose when the inspector came along to serve notices on all and sundry that they had to eradicate box-thorn, and no orders at all were issued in connection with the box thorn on reserves. The owners object to clearing the stuff from their properties if the roads boards or municipal councils are not forced to do the same on the reserves.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): No action was taken against private individuals.

Mr. MALEY: Any number of actions were taken.

Mr. NAIRN: Can the Minister tell us who the genius was who destroyed those beautiful old trees along the coast towards Rockingham? Those trees were landmarks and had been there, I have no doubt, for over half a century. To my knowledge there are no orchards within many miles of those trees. The trees were not calculated to do any harm whatever. They were used by people who went there holiday making as camping places for the shade that they afforded. There was a well close at hand. I would like to know what it cost the department to send their men out so far to destroy those trees, and for what pur-

pose they were destroyed. The man who was responsible for the destruction deserves a niche in the fools' gallery. I have never seen such a piece of sheer destruction.

The PREMIER: The hon. member will recognise that we must carefully guard against the spread of fruit-fly, but why these particular trees were destroyed I am not in a position to tell him.

Mr. Nairn: They were cut down the season before last.

The PREMIER: I have no doubt it was done for some purpose.

Mr. SMITH: I notice there are two items, "Botanist and Assistant Botanist," under last year's heading, but no provision has been made for them this year. I understand, however, they have been transferred to the control of the Government Analyst. On what ground did the Government do this? I am certain that officer knows nothing about botany.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): The hon. member will see that there is no provision for them on this year's Estimates.

The PREMIER: It is merely printed on the Estimates to show what the vote was last year.

Mr. SMITH: Why have they been transferred?

Item, Wheat and dairy farms, including wages, £11,255.

Mr. SMITH: This is a rather substantial amount and it is unfair to the Committee that it should be lumped in one item. We have a right to know what our farms are costing the country. I understand there are four or five altogether, and as the item appears on the Estimates we do not know what each farm is costing the country.

The PREMIER: I am in a position to give the hon. member the information he desires. The item refers to the expenditure in connection with five State farms, and it includes wages, purchase of stock, and so forth. These are the particulars for last year:—Narrogin, expenditure £2,913, revenue £2,098; Merredin, expenditure £1,768, revenue £2,759; Chapman, expenditure £1,534, revenue £842; Denmark, expenditure £1,589, revenue £842; Brunswick, expenditure £2,629, revenue £1,037. Last year the expenditure was £10,433 and this year the expenditure is £11,255, or £822 more. This increase is brought about to a certain extent by the cost of commodities generally and also increased payment for wages. Then again, additional stock has to be purchased, although that amount is recoverable by sale of stock, but there must be a certain amount of money, on the Estimates to enable the farms to procure stock they require from time to time. The amount, although outstanding, does not really mean that the State is the loser by that amount. The revenue from these different farms will be placed to their credit, and the loss to the State is only estimated by taking one from the other. There has been considerable additional stock purchased for the Brunswick Farm.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: Is it not a fact that included in the Denmark item are wages spent on improvements to the buildings, which should really go into capital account instead of into current accounts?

Item, Fruit and orchard inspection, including wages, £3,298.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I should like to know if a portion of this money represents increments to the officers who were to be paid these increments in 1913-14. They have not received any war bonus either. They have given information to the settlers regarding clearing, planting, packing, pruning of orchards, and so on, but have not received travelling allowances commensurate with their calling. There is great disparity between the travelling allowances of some officers of the higher grades and those of the lower grades. This should not be so. If the Treasurer wishes to introduce a reform he should fix the travelling allowances at a reasonable rate, say 10s., and make this apply to all officers. For one officer to receive 8s. a day travelling on a certain duty, and for a superior officer travelling on the same sort of duty to receive 15s. 4d. a day, both getting the same accommodation, is, I think, unjustifiable. The officers that I mention have not received the increases which were customary before the war. They have received no war bonus and no increase in their travelling allowances.

Mr. Smith: There should be no difference in the travelling allowances granted.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I believe the Government would bring about a necessary reform in this direction if they adopted my suggestion of a uniform rate of 10s. If this House decided to alter the public service regulations to carry this into effect, I am sure Parliament generally would agree. Will the Government rectify this anomaly, and does this amount of £3,000 odd include increments to these officers?

The PREMIER: I am informed that the increase here is for a greater number of field inspectors. The hon. member has some right on his side when he supports the contention that it is unreasonable that two men should be put on a similar job, the one receiving 8s. a day travelling allowance and the other 15s. 4d. No doubt the question requires to be thoroughly gone into. The Government will take up the matter with a view, if possible, to revising the system. There is no doubt room for revision.

The Colonial Treasurer: I have been out after it already.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Is there any chance of an increment being paid in the cases I have named?

The PREMIER: There are increments provided for of £12 this year.

Mr. MONEY: Is not this item similar to the item for 10 fruit inspectors? It is impossible for anyone to know exactly what this item means. What wages could there be in orchard inspection that could be in addition to orchard inspectors? The item is mis-

leading. I think we should have more details before passing it.

The PREMIER: This item covers the general cost of administering the Plant Diseases Act, apart from the salaries of the officers on the fixed staff under scientific and technical. The total expenditure last year was £2,768 and went on wages for temporary inspectors, travelling allowances, freights and fares, etc. The money will be spent this year on much the same basis.

Item, Rabbit and other vermin eradication, and upkeep of rabbit-proof fence, including wages, £30,000.

Mr. MULLANY: What proportion of this amount is it proposed to spend in the upkeep of the rabbit-proof fence, and what proportion is it proposed to spend in endeavouring to eradicate the rabbits on our farming areas? I think these two items should be kept separate. How is it proposed to expend this money?

The PREMIER: The amount spent last year was £17,065, £15,423 being spent on the upkeep of the rabbit proof fence, £1,642 on the destruction of wild dogs, and £454 on incidental expenses.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is not much there for the special destruction of rabbits.

The PREMIER: There is an item of £6,000 for the eradication of rabbits on abandoned farms.

Mr. Mullany: I think these two items should be kept distinct, as I have said.

Mr. SMITH: How much do the Government propose to expend on the destruction of wild dogs this year? Is the amount to be increased or reduced?

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): One cannot know what the amount is until one knows what number of dogs are killed.

Mr. SMITH: I hope the Estimates are drawn up on some safer principle than that. A certain amount must have been allotted for the wild dog bonus. What is the amount? Then the Rabbit Department carry on the industry of camel breeding, a curious illustration of the mixing up which obtains in that department.

Hon. P. Collier: The Water Supply Department likewise breed camels.

Mr. SMITH: A large amount of money has been spent on the camel station by the Rabbit Department, who find that there is now practically no market for camels; nevertheless, the station is still carried on and the men are still employed there. Further, there is a horse breeding station at Jigalong.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): They are the same place.

Mr. SMITH: No. They are hundreds of miles apart.

The PREMIER: Last year £1,642 was spent in wild dog bonuses. No special amount is set apart for this year, but the bonuses for wild dog destruction will be paid out of this vote. The amount is generally about £2,000 per annum; it has been roughly that for 20 years. As to the camel station, I know the Rabbit Department have been breeding camels. The expense is very slight. I have questioned Mr. Crawford on the subject several times, and he assures me that the men

employed on the rabbit fence, with the assistance of natives, merely breed a few camels which are useful in connection with the work on the fence. I do not think any camels have been sold by the Rabbit Department; at any rate, not for the last two years. I will look into the matter, and if there is no need for the camel station it shall be wiped out.

Mr. LUTEY: Do the Government intend to prosecute farmers inside the fence who are not taking steps to destroy rabbits on the holdings? Many months ago it was reported that there were colonies of rabbits inside the fence, but I have heard of no prosecutions.

The PREMIER: If the Vermin Bill passes, the Government will be in a position to deal with the matter.

Mr. Lutey: You have the power now.

Item, Eradication of rabbits on abandoned farms under control of Agricultural Bank and Industries Department, £6,000.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Why is it that the Agricultural Department and the Industries Assistance Board, both of them independent departments established under special Acts of Parliament, do not provide from their own funds the cost of rabbit destruction on the properties, in the same way as private owners have to do? If special grants of this nature are to be made to the two institutions, we shall not be able to learn from the statements presented by them what expenditure the country has really incurred through them. If these two institutions are not to be called upon to provide money for rabbit destruction on their properties, then private land holders should not be required to do so either. Really this item should appear in the Estimates of the Attorney General, who is also Minister for Industries.

The PREMIER: The lands in question do not really belong to the Agricultural Bank but to the State. If the Agricultural Bank is to spend money on rabbit destruction, the money must be found by the State. I believe the Agricultural Bank Act does not allow the bank to spend money for such a purpose. Hence the appearance of this item on the Estimates.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then it should have appeared on the old Estimates.

The PREMIER: The Rabbit Department do the work of rabbit destruction, which they understand, while the Agricultural Bank management do not understand it. The expenditure of this money will be under the control of the Rabbit Department.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: In that case we should have false returns from the Agricultural Bank in future.

The Premier: I do not think so at all.

Hon. T. WALKER: I agree with the member for North-East Fremantle. A division of control such as is expressed here, seems to me absolutely absurd. Firstly, the work is under the Agricultural Bank, as is evident from the wording of the item, "Eradication of rabbits." Although it is true that the State owns the property, the Agricultural Bank is practically the mortgagee of those abandoned farms, and, like any other mortgagee, it should look after its own property; and if money has to be found for the work, the obligation should

be placed on the Estimates of the Agricultural Bank.

The Colonial Treasurer: After all, the loss has to be made up by the State.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes, but let us have it shown in the proper department. We have the Rabbit Department, the Industries Assistance Board, and the Agricultural Bank, all interfering in this. Which department takes the actual responsibility?

The Premier: The Agricultural Department.

Hon. T. WALKER: Then if so where does the Agricultural Bank come in, and where does the Industries Assistance Board come in? Can either of them interfere? If not, why are they mentioned here? Has the bank any say in the matter at all?

The Premier: No, except that it can report to the Agricultural Department that there are rabbits on certain abandoned farms.

Hon. T. WALKER: I want to know where the real responsibility rests.

The Premier: Entirely with the Agricultural Department. The department will make use of the Agricultural Bank's inspectors.

Hon. T. WALKER: Who is going to pay the inspectors for their services?

The Premier: It is part of their duty.

Hon. T. WALKER: The officers of one department are doing the work, but the responsibility is with another department. There we find the possibility of friction or of neglect. The Agricultural Department relies on the inspectors of the bank, while the bank relies on the Agricultural Department to do all the work. If, as a private owner, I am penalised for not eradicating rabbits on my farm, why should the Agricultural Bank go scot-free? It should be the duty of the bank and of the Industries Assistance Board to see that the farms in which they have an interest are properly freed from the pest. It is not so now. It is by no means satisfactory to the settlers suffering from the pest. The Agricultural Department is dependent on the assistance of the bank's inspectors and, that assistance not being forthcoming, the settlers suffer. It is a muddling way of doing things, making directly for negligence in dealing with a very serious menace to the settlers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier fails to understand my objection to this amount being placed on these Estimates. It is a charge against the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board. The Premier has on his Estimates this year an increase of £18,315, while the Minister for Industries shows an increase of only £700. Here we have £6,000 on the Estimates of the Agricultural Department which should be on the Estimates of the Agricultural Bank. Hon. members should be able to see in the reports of the Agricultural Bank what losses, if any, have been made. If the Agricultural Bank find that, owing to past laxity in, say, making unwarranted advances, losses have been incurred, we should know what the losses are.

The Minister for Works: Do you say that the bank's advances have been unwarranted?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. I say that if they made losses we should know of it. If the State is put to any expense in eradicating rabbits or other pests from lands held by the

Agricultural Bank, it should be shown on the balance sheet of the Agricultural Bank. Presently we shall have from the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board reports showing how well those institutions have been managed. Yet we find here in this one item on the Estimates of the Agricultural Bank what is virtually a grant of £6,000 to the Agricultural Bank and to the Industries Assistance Board. That is not a reasonable way of presenting the figures. If the Railway Department had to spend this sum it would be shown on the Estimates of the Railway Department, and on no other.

Mr. Smith: This should be charged against the abandoned farms.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, so as to show later on what losses have been really made. I know it makes no difference as far as the finances of the Government are concerned, but it is on the wrong Estimates and we shall never see a correct balance sheet as far as the Agricultural Bank is concerned. I move an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

The PREMIER: The amount is placed on the Estimates for a special purpose. It should be shown how the money has been actually expended. The Agricultural Bank cannot make use of its funds except for its customers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Will the Government charge it up against the bank later on?

The PREMIER: Yes. This amount has to be administered by the Agricultural Department, and it will be shown in the future how the money has been spent, and how much has been spent on abandoned farms in the possession of the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Department.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then it will come out on their balance sheet?

The PREMIER: It will be shown there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I want to see a proper statement. I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Item, Noxious weeds, £100.

Mr. MALEY: Is the Premier satisfied with the administration of the Noxious Weeds vote? Members of the roads board are appointed as honorary inspectors under the Noxious Weeds Act. In our district we have any number of noxious weeds, such as Spanish radish, doublegees, wild onion, spur weed, stinkwort, stinking Roger—in fact, every noxious weed that is known in the State—and we are obtaining no benefit from the administration of the Noxious Weeds Act. I suggest that the Government take the administration of the Noxious Weeds Act from the Agricultural Department and incorporate it with the Roads Act. No honorary inspector likes to report a neighbour, as he gets into bad odour with that neighbour. In some cases, although action has been taken by an honorary inspector, it has been found that the Agricultural Department has forgotten to gazette the appointment.

The PREMIER: I shall be pleased to look into this question when the Roads Bill is

being considered later. It might be found advisable to place the administration of the Noxious Weeds Act under the control of roads boards. It is a sensible suggestion and I will look into it. The £100 is placed on the Estimates to enable the Government to deal with reserves and other Government properties where noxious weeds are found.

Item, Potato inspection, including wages, £600.

Mr. PICKERING: I should like an explanation of this item, especially in view of the Irish blight which has been found amongst potatoes. It is necessary that the Government should take an opportunity of appointing an inspector at a reasonable salary, because the late inspector was very much underpaid.

The PREMIER: This amount is practically the same as last year. There are only two inspectors employed. Mr. Young, the senior inspector, has taken over the duties of the late Mr. Bratby. The amount is to pay the salaries of the inspectors.

Item, Assistance to poultry industry, £500.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is a new item.

The PREMIER: The amount is for rendering assistance to the poultry industry in a general way, for paying salaries, and rendering assistance through Government officers. Mr. Maconochie was employed when the Estimates were being framed, but he has left and gone East. At the present time the proportional monthly amount is not being expended. There is only one officer now being employed by the Government, a Mr. Waite, who is partly employed by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. It is very difficult to get persons with a knowledge of poultry. Mr. Allan was the poultry expert and gave general satisfaction, but he went to the front. The duty of the inspectors is to see that there is no disease amongst the poultry in the different poultry farms which generally are around the metropolis. Unless it is necessary to put on extra assistance the full amount will not be required.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I saw in the Press some time ago that the Commonwealth were in partnership with the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., in connection with the poultry business. I think the Government should stand on their own foundation in rendering assistance to the poultry industry. I could understand the Government giving some subsidy to an association, but the Westralian Farmers are agents for various manufactures, articles required in connection with the poultry industry. Why should the Government subsidise a servant of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.? It is a dangerous precedent to adopt. Mr. Waite is secretary of some association, or he was.

Mr. Smith: He was secretary of the co-operative association.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: At Belmont, I think it was. This is a wrong practice, to assist an agent of a firm that is trading in certain lines which other firms are trading in. It is assisting in the payment of a man's salary. It is wrong that the Government

should subsidise the servant of another firm. The Premier could find a returned soldier who very likely would be a poultry farmer, and he might be assisted with a subsidy of this kind.

The PREMIER: The individual in question has organised all the poultry farms around Perth into a co-operative society and they have been so very successful that they have managed to export eggs.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If they are so successful, why do they want a subsidy?

The PREMIER: This man has been successful. The Agricultural Department has always had a poultry expert and this man is the adviser and organiser of the department.

Mr. BROWN: With regard to the poultry farm at Subiaco, I would draw the Premier's attention to the fact that there is £300 or £400 worth of wire netting practically going to waste at the present time on that farm and it would be well to dispose of it.

The Premier: I will go into that matter.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: I would draw attention to the fact that the item for the stabling of horses for Government departments appears under last year's Estimates, but there is no provision for it this year. Have the horses been disposed of?

The Premier: That item is not on the Estimates for this year.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Agricultural Department.

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

Colonial Secretary's Department, Hon. H. P. Colebatch, Minister—Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister) in charge of the votes.

Vote—Colonial Secretary, £498,163:

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister—Pilbara) [9.35]: In introducing the Estimates of the Colonial Secretary's Department, I do not intend to take up any length of time. They are the same Estimates which we have always had presented to us. May I be allowed though to refer to the question of the finances? These Estimates have considerably to do with the finances of the State, as the expenditure of the Colonial Secretary's Department is roughly half a million pounds and the revenue under £100,000. My experience, in connection with the introduction of these Estimates, is that hon. members always seem to be under the impression that we should have no increases. On this subject I desire to refer to a previous Government. The Seaddan Government were severely criticised by some of those hon. members who are at present occupying the Treasury Bench. I was a member of the Seaddan Government at that time and we heard it said repeatedly that the finances were in their then condition owing to maladministration and extravagance in the department. Two subsequent Treasurers have proved beyond all shadow of doubt that the Seaddan method of finance could not be improved. I mention this because I think it is time that justice should be done to the Seaddan Government for their

administration. I am introducing these Estimates for the fourth time. When the Wilson Government came into office the public of Western Australia were fully persuaded that it only required good administration to square the finances. That Government failed. The present Treasurer said he was going to cut everything to the bone in the way of expenditure but the trouble is that it had already been cut to the bone and it is now impossible to scrape anything more off the bone. The Estimates are cut as low as possible, consistent with efficiency and taking into consideration the many necessities of the State. Hon. members will find, if they go through the Estimates of this department for the past three years, that they have stood at practically the same figure. The present year's Estimates are slightly lower than those of two years ago. It is impossible to make drastic reductions without being harsh on various people.

Hon. P. Collier: You have cut them pretty bare now.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I am of that opinion also.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There is no opposition to these.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I do not think there is any opposition to any of these Estimates. We have heard some very doleful remarks about the finances. There is no doubt that the finances of Western Australia are in a bad way, but then we have to remember that as soon as the war is over, the whole of the finances of the world will have to be re-adjusted. There is not a shadow of doubt about that and the few millions we owe will not be comparable with the thousands of millions which the Empire owes, and there will have to be an entire readjustment.

Mr. O'Loughlen: On what lines?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): At the present time I am dealing with the Colonial Secretary's Estimates. If I were Treasurer I would disclose the lines, but it would not be on the lines that everybody of the State would go to the Government for all they could get and give nothing in return. With regard to the Estimates of the Colonial Secretary's Department hon. members will find there is a net decrease of £5,657. That indicates that we have been fairly careful.

Mr. Holman: But will you keep inside those Estimates?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I do not think we will in regard to one or two. In the Harbours and Light Department hon. members will see that there is a reduction of £7,400. Properly speaking that is no reduction at all, because last year we spent a good deal of money on repairs to the "Penguin." She was leased, as she has been this year, to the Naval Department. Last year she was leased on the terms that we provisioned her, and therefore we had to spend money in provisioning and manning the vessel. This year she has been let on the terms that the Federal Government shall do that work,

and we shall therefore show a decrease in the expenditure. We also show a decrease in the revenue. Again, there are other items that are worthy of note. There are increases in the Medical and Public Health and Charities of £7,439. Included in that vote there is £3,000 additional subsidy for the Children's Hospital. It became absolutely imperative to grant that subsidy. The hospital got into such a position that it was impossible to go on, and we had to provide a subsidy or take the hospital over, or do away with it, which was out of the question. In connection with the Perth Public Hospital we have had to provide £2,500 more than previously. For many years we have subsidised that hospital to the extent of £20,000. For years past they have been asking for more.

Hon. P. Collier: When we took office the grant to that hospital was £12,000.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Of course, the war and the collections for the various funds have considerably affected the funds of the institution. We will have to look forward to the time when we shall have to face the question of taking over the Perth Hospital and running it as a Government institution. I do not think it would be any more expensive to do that than to pay the subsidy we are giving to-day.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Less than £400 was collected by way of subscriptions last year.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): There is another item which shows an increase, the Fisheries, £931. That amount is made up entirely of £1,000 in connection with repairs to the steamer "Torrens" which is at Shark Bay. The reasons for repairing the vessel is that a company were desirous of starting fishing operations at Shark Bay and Carnarvon and they wanted to take over the vessel. We count the original value of the "Torrens" at £600 and we spent £1,000 on her, and the company will take her over on lease, paying six per cent. interest on £1,600 with the right of purchase at the end of 12 months. I may say that even if the company does not succeed the ship is well worth £1,600 when repaired. We could sell her for more than that to-day, but we have no desire to do so, because we want to give those people a chance. The conditions are that the ship, if she comes back to us, is to be returned in good order and condition less usual wear and tear. They are to maintain her in every way.

Mr. Teggdale: Have you security?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Yes, a good deposit has been put up. Speaking generally, the Estimates are practically the same as they have been for the last two or three years. There is an increase in the Lunacy Department, which is, perhaps, the most genuine one of all. That increase is owing to the increased number of patients. The Inspector General's report is on the Table, and it will be seen in that report that he has decreased the cost per patient by a reasonable amount. It will also be found in the various reports that this has been the case at Woolloom too. But I agree with the leader of the Opposition that we can go too far in regard to cutting down these institutions. I

am fairly sure the Committee does not desire to decrease the expenditure on these institutions to such a point that we could not properly treat the inmates. In regard to the various institutions, there are in particular two in respect of which we have had knowledge for the last four years that the accommodation is insufficient. One is the Old Men's Home, and the other the Hospital for the Insane at Claremont. The matter has been before Ministers for the last four years. By some means or other we shall have to find money to provide further accommodation.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is stated that there are in the Old Men's Home a number who should not be there. Is that correct?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I do not think so. The management is fairly good in that respect. In regard to that institution, there is a recoup from the Federal Government. There are something like 200 old age pensioners in the institution. The Federal Government pay us 8s. 6d. a week in respect of each of them, and the pensioner gets the balance.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I think the amount is 10s. now.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): If that is so we are making a shade of profit, because the cost is something under 9s. It is all very well to complain. I remember the inquiry made in regard to the Old Men's Home. Prior to that inquiry I was fully cognisant of the fact that we required to spend some £3,000 or £4,000 on that home before we could get the necessary accommodation. Without the necessary accommodation, we cannot treat the patients as they should be treated. I am making these statements so that the Committee may be prepared to receive Estimates showing a considerable increase for the purpose of providing accommodation. Alternatively we may provide it out of Loan Estimates. In regard to the Old Women's Home, it is not overcrowded at present. If I had a more liberal Treasurer I should like to build a place on the Swan river specially for the institution. That would cost anything from £10,000 to £20,000 and we have not the money. However, the institution, as I have said, is not overcrowded, and there are very few complaints regarding it. There are a couple of other departments which I might specially mention in passing. One is that of the Police Force. I again express my opinion that the Western Australian Police Force is certainly not discreditable to the State. It is easy to raise complaints regarding the police. As a matter of fact a small percentage of people in every country does not believe in police at all. Our police are not only engaged in the prevention and punishment of crime, but they carry out some most extraordinary duties. I have here the report of the Commissioner of Police, in which he gives the duties of the Police Force outside the work that used to be considered police work. To take just a few of them: they make inquiries re collecting for the Crown lands, re protection of timber reserves, and re the prevention of the unauthorised removal of timber. For the Electoral Department they count

and check rolls and make inquiries re breaches of the Act. They also make inquiries re breaches of the Early Closing Act. For the Education Department they make inquiries re non-attendance at school and they enforce the compulsory clauses. They have to attend to the inspection of shearers' huts under the shearers' accommodation measure. They have to inquire re applications for permission to kill kangaroos. They make inquiries regarding honorary inspectors under the Game Act, and inquiries re the increase or decrease of opossums. They enforce the provisions of the Fisheries Act re fishing in enclosed waters. They perform a number of services for the gaols, including the paying of gaol accounts. They attend to local and Eastern States records of prisoners and prisoners' finger prints. For the hospitals they perform a number of services including the delivering of messages to relatives and the informing of relatives re the deaths of patients. Under the Immigration Act they make inquiries re the collection of debts. For the Lunacy Department they escort insane patients to the hospital and make inquiries on behalf of the Master in Lunacy. They act as clerks to wardens' courts and mining registrars. They act as inspectors of mining leases. They carry out health board regulations, and attend to prosecutions. For the Medical and Health Department they assist in various ways at hospitals, as, for instance, in attending to delirious patients. For the Agricultural Department they make inquiries regarding persons to whom machines and implements have been sold on terms. For the Railways they escort the paymasters and make inquiries re persons trespassing and goods reported lost in transit and otherwise. Under the Roads Board Act they report offences against by-laws and health regulations. They also report breaches of the uniform general by-laws relating to motor traffic, and they inquire re breaches of the Dog Act, and as to the character of persons adopting children.

Mr. Teesdale: Cannot we take the rest as read?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I think so, but I have not finished. In regard to the State there is another page of it, and equally as much is done for the Commonwealth. The Colonial Treasurer is endeavouring to get some recognition from the Federal Government of the work done by our police for that Government.

Hon. P. Collier: If you do that they will establish Federal police here.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Just a word or two in regard to the loyalty of the force. Roughly, there are some 500 members of the force and, taking all their responsibilities, the position they are in, the likelihood of their being over-officious, and of interfering with people with whom they ought not to interfere, and having regard to the power they exercise it would not be a matter for wonder if 10 per cent. of them were not up to their work. Yet I do not think there are in the force 50 men who ought not to be in it. I want hon. members to consider the position from that point of view. I remember that when the Scaddan Government



were enforcing that 7.89 per cent. reduction the police stood by us, notwithstanding the fact that we were reducing their amounts by the same percentage as in the case of those allowed off work, whereas the police had to remain and work. That amount has since been made up to them; but it was not promised to them while the reduction was being enforced. No doubt on that occasion the police acted loyally by the Government. It seems to me the police do not pay any attention as to who the Minister of the day may be, but are loyal to the Government. Again, in regard to enlisting, we laid down the rules that if any member of the force desired to enlist, he must resign from the force and forego all benefits that might be accruing to him, except his superannuation rights.

Hon. T. Walker: Was that not detrimental to recruiting?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I do not know, but I am convinced that it was absolutely right. It has been followed by many countries in the British Empire, including New South Wales, Tasmania, Canada, and South Africa.

Hon. P. Collier: Whilst the Government did not undertake to keep the positions open for them. I hope the Government will provide positions for those who come back.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): We found that, notwithstanding we would not give them any promise whatever, many first-class men in the police resigned and went to the Front. I think it is the duty of the Government to reinstate those who come back fit and well in the grade in which they were when they left.

Mr. Teesdale: And it ought to be done.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): That is the desire of this Government. This is a department, of which I am afraid we have not put enough on the Estimates to cover the cost of administration. We may have to exceed the amount. If these men come back they will be coming on as senior constables. It will possibly mean that they will retain their grade, and that the time they have been away will be counted in their favour. They will retain their seniority, and because of that we may get an excess of higher grade men, that is seniors. Seniors are all paid more than juniors, and we may get, and I hope will get, an excess of senior men. This will necessitate higher payments to them. I am of opinion that the Estimates provided will not fully meet the cost. If things go as they went last year we can just about get through on the estimates shown on these papers. With regard to the police force and the expenditure in that connection, I would point out that the rates of pay in 1910 were, probationers 6s. 6d. per day, constables up to five years 7s. 6d., constables from five years to ten years, 8s., and for ten years and over 9s., corporals 10s., and sergeants 11s. 6d. In 1911 the rates were, probationers 6s. 6d., constables under three years 8s., over three years and under five years 8s. 6d., over five years and under ten years 9s., and ten years 9s. 6d. In 1917 the rates for probationers were 7s., for constables under three years 8s. 6d., from three to five years 9s., from five years to ten years 9s. 6d., from

ten to 15 years 10s., from 15 to 20 years 10s. 6d., and for 20 years and over 11s. The main difference in regard to the expenditure is that men who have been any length of time in the service are receiving, as they should, better pay. If a man has been 20 years in the service of the police 11s. a day is not too much to pay him. I am sure the Committee will approve of these increases. With increases of that description we must have increased expenditure. With regard to aborigines, I do not know that there will be much criticism of this department. The summary of Estimates shows a decrease of £1,363. These estimates are drawn out differently to most of the estimates of this department, because the receipts are credited against the expenditure. The net expenditure is not shown on the other estimates. In that amount there is a sum of £1,250, which we expect to get for the sale of the steamship "Venus." On the other hand we are demolishing the lock hospitals at Bernier and Dorrie Islands. It was a mistake they were ever built there. We are rebuilding something infinitely less elaborate at Port Hedland, and making slight shelter shed provision at one or two other ports on the coast. Under the amending Health Act, medical officers have to treat patients of this description. This will mean—although it will not show altogether this year—a decreased expenditure of something like £2,000 or £3,000 a year. The whole of the structures in this department are paid for out of general revenue. There is nothing put to capital account, nor is anything taken from loan money. We have a couple of stations which have been built up within the last two or three years, notwithstanding the decrease by some thousands in the expenditure, at Carrolup and Mogumber. Mogumber is now in course of construction. In regard to Carrolup, we have a manager's residence of four rooms, wood and iron, a farm hand's residence, a hall of stone and iron, quarters for the nurses, the teacher and the missionary, and we have also a small hospital. I might read a letter which was received by an hon. member and passed on to me, which complains of the treatment of the aborigines. The writer of the letter says amongst other things—

About twelve months later the Government became financial, war conditions then prevailing, and away they went, and now nothing is too good for the natives. There have been comfortable buildings erected, with lavish furnishings, piano, gramophone, wire mattresses and bedding, and washstand and toilet ware for natives. Twelve sewing machines have been installed.

The comfortable buildings are there and have been built out of revenue notwithstanding the reduction in the expenditure by several thousand pounds per annum. The lavish furnishing amounts to a decent cane chair for the women, and a decent tablecloth. The piano was sent there from Dorrie Island, where it had been for a number of years, and the gramophone was presented to us by a generous citizen. We feel the want of a kettle drum or side drum. If there is anyone generously disposed towards the aborigines I should be pleased to accept from such person

a side drum. The natives use a kerosene tin at present. With regard to the 12 sewing machines referred to—

Mr. Teesdale: Bosh!

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): There have been six. We are distributing a good deal of made clothing to the aborigines. I am confident that with a little training the half-caste girls particularly will be most adept at making clothing. We are sending a sewing mistress down to teach them to sew. We have bought Australian flannel, and intend to endeavour to make clothes there instead of buying them ready made. The letter goes on to say—

A flock of sheep, not to grow wool, but to feed natives, has been supplied.

We have 250 sheep there, and we hope to be able to provide sufficient killing sheep as a result of the natural increase. The wool is taken off most carefully and well looked after. We have about 250 to 300 acres of land cleared, farm implements, horses, carts and motor-cars also being there. All this has been done out of revenue, although the revenue is considerably lower than it was a few years ago. In launching these Estimates on a sea of trouble, I can only say I will do my best to answer as fully as possible any questions that may be asked by hon. members. I ask for mercy.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [10.10]: The Honorary Minister asks for mercy. I do not know that he deserves it. We have an example of the administration of the Colonial Secretary in having a double set of Estimates placed before this Committee. Why this extra expense has been incurred it is not very difficult for us to see. It is caused by the slipshod method, which is a result of the work carried on practically under the administration of the Colonial Secretary.

Hon. P. Collier: The Under Secretary is away.

Mr. HOLMAN: That might account for it to some extent. Of course the Colonial Secretary must come in for a good deal of the criticism in connection with the administration of the department but being a pressman he has utilised his experience or knowledge in the direction of boosting himself up to a great extent, and so escaping much of the criticism which perhaps another Minister might have received. We should have some explanation as to who was responsible for this double set of Estimates. It appears from the Estimates that it is desired to cloak over many things. The previous Estimates were set forth much more fully than they are to-day, and contained a great deal more information. The present Estimates represent the most unsatisfactory section of the general Estimates which has been sent down.

Hon. P. Collier: There is very little difference between the new and the old.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am convinced that the Lunacy Department ought to embrace a larger area than it does. The new Estimates merely set out the number of clerks, etc., employed, this having escaped the first edition of the Estimates.

Mr. Smith: What about a stop press?

Mr. HOLMAN: We should have a stop press. This certainly puts one in mind of the "Daily News." Why the Government should go to the expense of having these Estimates reprinted merely for the purpose of showing the total number of clerks employed last year is beyond me. Had we had a full set of Estimates, the same as last year, giving information which should be available to the Committee, this would not have been necessary. In the present position it is impossible to understand what the Estimates really are. Under "Head office and branches" there is a huge discrepancy. The vote for 1917-18 was £5,700, and the expenditure for the same period was £9,430—something like £4,000 over the amount granted. Why has that vote been so largely exceeded? The manner in which the Estimates are presented on this occasion will not allow us to detect such discrepancies. It is impossible to discover increases and decreases in the items. With regard to one official of the department, I am not satisfied that the information given me by the Premier in reply to a question is correct. In particular I am satisfied that the statement that the officer was absent from the office for only a certain number of days is incorrect. Between the Colonial Secretary's Estimates for last year and those for this year, there is a difference as between day and night, in point of information given. Why the facts are being cloaked in this manner is beyond me. Regarding an audit of the accounts of a certain department, we have not been able to get the information which we are entitled. To-day I questioned the Premier as to whether reduction of a certain officer's salary had been made, and the reply I received was in the affirmative. I find now, however, that last year the accountant's salary was £300, while on these Estimates it is shown that the expenditure was £432. That is a very remarkable thing, and one calling for explanation. To me it looks as if items were set on the Estimates with a downright intention to mislead this Committee. Assuredly, no expenditure of public money should be submitted to the Committee for the express purpose of misleading. There must be something in it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is a footnote referring to the accountant.

Mr. HOLMAN: The footnote makes not the slightest difference. Most likely, when we come to the expenditure on State hotels, we shall find a further amount expended from that vote. Probably the administration of the department is the same right through the piece. When the accounts of the Fire Brigades were audited, it was stated that a consolidating Act came into force "last year"—that is to say, 1916—and that the Estimates for the then current year were framed under the provisions of that Act, but that the Governor's approval of those Estimates had not been obtained in accordance with Section 40, and that therefore the expenditure had been illegal. And yet the Premier refuses to supply the Committee with that information. We want to know how

far the system of illegally expending money obtains in other departments. The report further states—

In this connection I submit that the Secretary to the board wrote to the Under Secretary of the Colonial Secretary's Department giving full particulars of the Estimates and asking for the approval of the Governor in accordance with Section 40, and received a reply stating that this had been done; but I find, on investigation, that the blame for the neglect rests with the Colonial Secretary's Department.

There is the position—the money has been spent illegally, and the whole of the blame rests on the Colonial Secretary's Department. Yet the Premier, to cloak over the illegal expenditure, refuses to supply the House with the information for which I have asked.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): The audit has only just come to hand now.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not blame the Honorary Minister, who does not administer the department, but merely introduces here the Estimates of another Minister. The audit has been a remarkably long time coming. The report in question gives a great deal of interesting information, pointing out what has been done and who is to blame for doing it. I hope the Honorary Minister, if he has the necessary authority, will place the audit file on the Table. Hon. members are entitled to such information relative to any department. Evidently there is a desire to cloak the doings of this particular department. When on the items, I shall endeavour to obtain from the Honorary Minister explanations of the extraordinary excesses on some of last year's items. There is an estimated decrease of about £5,000 shown on last year's expenditure, but, as I have shown, on one item alone the excess last year amounted to something like £4,000. Another matter requiring explanation is why these Estimates show an increase of six in the number of clerks employed by the department—an increase of six in two years during which the work has of necessity been less? Last year there was an increase of two clerks in the accounts branch and this year the bunch of clerks includes another four new appointments. What are the new clerks doing? The item does not show, but before it passes I shall endeavour to obtain the information. Last year's two new clerks were explained on the ground that the administration of State hotels was coming into the Colonial Secretary's Department. But there is no increase in the work of the department this year to explain the further influx of clerks. There does not appear to be enough in the department to keep all the officials going, and there should have been a reduction of staff. But in all probability in the Colonial Secretary's Department the same state of affairs obtains as in other departments—some officers doing more than their fair share of work, while others are holding sinecures practically, drawing high salaries and doing very little for them, being absent from the office for the most part of their time.

Mr. Harrison: How would you remedy that state of things?

Mr. HOLMAN: The civil service of Western Australia sprang up from a system which was not the very best, which did not enable the State to obtain the best return from the civil service. A large section of the civil service do more than their share of the work, but there are another section who should be got rid of, if that is possible, at the earliest possible moment. I refer to civil servants holding their positions not by merit but by influence, and responsible to a considerable extent for the rotten administration of the service.

Mr. Harrison: What remedy do you propose?

Mr. HOLMAN: A repeal of the laws sheltering such civil servants.

Mr. Smith: Are you prepared to support such legislation?

Mr. HOLMAN: Certainly, I am. In our public service, as in other avenues of employment, there are real good men doing giant's work. We have seen some of them killed by the work they have done. On the other hand, certain public servants are drawing salaries for which they do practically nothing. I do not blame the whole service, but the system under which the service sprang into existence was a thoroughly bad system, and everybody knows it. The sooner we realise where the defects are and improve the service the better it will be for the finances of the State. One could speak at some length on the manner in which some of the departments are administered, and refer to the good work done by various officers and the indifferent work of others. It would be decidedly to the advantage of the State to get rid of many officers and in that way save not only their salaries, but the money that is squandered through their maladministration. The House could well appoint a select committee to go into the matter next session. There are business men in the House who could place their fingers on the defects in no time, and an unbiased report on the condition of some of the departments would enable the Government to effect many improvements and a considerable saving. We should certainly have a select committee or even a Royal Commission to carry out these investigations. Unfortunately Ministers do not seem to appreciate the positions they occupy. They appear to let their officers lead them by the nose in any direction those officers desire. We have had evidence of that to a considerable extent of late by the presence on the floor of this House of civil servants who have been called in to instruct or assist Ministers. Such a thing was unheard of until recently. When the Labour Government were in office, no one ever thought of inviting a civil servant to come into the Chamber to tell a Minister what he had to say. At the present time Ministers do not appear to know anything at all about their departments or about the Bills they are introducing. And the departments are split up more than ever.

Mr. Jones: And there are more Honorary Ministers.

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes, and with even less work than Ministers had to do some years ago it is necessary for them to have officials on the floor of the House to instruct them. I remember the time when the Commissioner for Railways was refused permission to go in the lobby of the House and it was then made clear that the lobbies were sacred to the representatives of the people. What do we find now? Ministers are so lax in connection with the administration of the affairs of their own departments that they must have officials beside them to put words into their mouths when they have to address the Chamber. The present Minister for Works when Commissioner for Railways was ordered off the floor of this House by the Speaker of the day, in spite of the fact that he had been invited to attend by one of the Ministers. Now almost every evening we notice departmental officers taking up a position beside the Minister, and I believe in the other Chamber a few nights ago an official actually took possession of the Colonial Secretary's seat during that Minister's absence. So far as the administration of the departments is concerned, a great deal is left to the officers and that is one reason why such a mess is made of things. But I do not suppose we can expect any improvements with the Ministers we have in office. Some of the Ministers, however, do effectively control their departments. The Minister for Works is one of these. He has had experience in administration and that experience has given him an insight into things which other Ministers do not appear to have. Great laxity seems to have been displayed in the administration of the Colonial Secretary's department. In fact things there appear to be in a state of chaos. The expenditure is mounting up and very little is shown for the work done. I notice that there is an increase of four clerks in the Colonial Secretary's office. Why was that necessary? I thought these were times of economy. If we had the right stamp of men employed it would be possible to effect decreases instead of appointing additional officials. In 1915-16 the number of clerks employed in the Colonial Secretary's office was 15. Last year the number was increased to 17 and this year the number is 21. One cannot wonder at the laxity of administration when we see some of these departments increasing by leaps and bounds, the expenditure going up year by year, and no improvement in the services. These things require immediate attention. There is a 40 per cent. increase in the number of clerks in that department. The explanation provided by the department may appear fair on the surface.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): They have taken one or two of them from the Medical Department.

Mr. HOLMAN: One explanation is that some officers have been taken away from their offices, while other officers attend to their allotted duties. It would be much better if those officers attended personally to their own work. However, these matters can be

dealt with on the items. In connection with the remarks of the Honorary Minister in regard to the police, I agree with him as to the quality of the men in the force. I have never known better men, and I am pleased to be able to say this in respect of the force. We have reason to be proud of our police force. Although a few may seem disposed to be officious, and although some of the higher officials, perhaps, have not carried out their duties in a proper manner, still we have reason to congratulate ourselves on the force as a whole. I am disposed to think that some good work has been done in the various institutions under the department. In connection with the Medical Department, I remember that some 16 years ago I secured from the Government a monetary subsidy for the purchase of an ambulance van for the Great Fingal Mine. Recently I received from the manager of the company a notification that they were about to sell the ambulance. I take exception to this, for the ambulance belong to the people of the Murchison, and not to the Great Fingal Company. I hope the Minister will do what he can to save that ambulance. I think £150 was paid for the van, and of this sum, as far as I remember, the Government contributed £70. It was provided for the convenience of injured miners and sick people in the locality, and the company are now trying to sell it.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I will look into that to-morrow morning.

Mr. HOLMAN: For my part, I will endeavour to turn up the records, but after this lapse of time it will probably mean some little difficulty. I will withhold any further criticism of the departments until we come to the items, when I hope to learn something more of these increases in the number of clerks. On the Estimates of Contingencies in Head Office and Branches last year they asked for a vote of £4,490, and spent £9,430. That is not right. When we pass the Estimates we ought to know that the amount will not be exceeded. In all probability this is the worst department in the whole service for excess votes. It is late to enter upon it this session, but I hope to see next session an inquiry instituted into the whole service. The result of such an inquiry would help to stop the drift in the finances and would secure better work than we have hitherto had.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.48]: It must be remembered that the Colonial Secretary controls departments from which very little revenue is obtained. The member for Murchison is wrong in regard to the expenditure of the head office. Last year the total amount of the vote was £8,759, and £8,437 was expended, leaving a balance of £352.

Mr. Holman: I was referring to Contingencies Head Office and Branches.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The head office and branches were under seven heads last year, but this year they are all under one heading. I admit that it shows an increase of £535

on the expenditure of last year. If the Government appoint a certain officer to do certain work, it is the duty of that officer to carry out that work; and if the Government desire to put that officer in charge of various sub-departments, that officer cannot refuse. The hon. member has referred to one officer in particular, I know not why. That officer was asked by the Scaddan Administration to take a seat on the Fire Brigades Board. This was for a special purpose. The expenses in connection with the Fire Brigades Board were going up year by year, and it was felt necessary at that time to ask one of the officials to become a member of the Fire Brigades Board with the object of checking their expenditure. I am pleased to see that during the last two years the Government subsidy has decreased by £1,363. It is owing to the Fire Brigades Act, closer supervision on the part of Government officials, and less administration by the Board or representatives of fire insurance companies that this state of affairs has been brought about, and I think we are entitled to feel some satisfaction. Not only has the State's contribution decreased but the contributions from the local authorities have decreased. There was a saving last year in these contributions of about £6,000. It has been brought to my notice, but is not generally known, that the Fire Brigades Board for years have been drawing money from the local authorities which they had no right to draw. It was necessary that there should be a certain expenditure in connection with fire protection, and this had to be provided in accordance with the terms of the Act. This has been going on for years and no notice has been taken of it. The hon. member also referred to an item which was exceeded last year by £72. I would point out that most of this money was spent before the Estimates were passed. When we ask a man to take on a position we must pay him for doing so. If I mistake not, the objection to the vote last year was not so much to the officer who was doing the work, but was due to the feeling that those who were controlling State hotels should be officers entirely in that service. I think the Premier pointed out that the money had been expended and the work carried out. It was therefore necessary that the amount due should be paid. I agree that there should have been an officer entirely in charge of our State hotels. There are various departments under the control of the Colonial Secretary which necessitate a large expenditure of money. We cannot move in the direction of curtailing this expenditure without affecting those who at present are obtaining necessary assistance from the State. If we wish to cut down the Colonial Secretary's Department we must first attack those who are sick and who are mentally afflicted, and those who must have aid on account of the loss of the bread winners. I hope Parliament will never attack those votes which affect the people I refer to. My experience of the Charities Department has been that many a person would rather go without than

go to a public charity unless they were assured of secrecy regarding their application for assistance. If there is a board instituted to deal with these cases, and the Government hand the money to the board for distribution, I am sure that there are many people in the State who, though in need of assistance, would rather do without it than place their positions before a body of that description. I hope the Government will not cut down the expenditure in this direction. I quite agree that strict economy should be exercised in administration. I think a saving could be made in connection with our Government hospitals if a proper inventory was taken of the supplies that were handed out. I remember on one occasion, when the Cue hospital was taken over by a local hospital board, a ball was held for the purpose of raising funds. Sufficient crockery was found in the hospital to cope with the refreshment side of the entertainment, and this indicated that there had been an over-supply sent to the hospital. No doubt applications had repeatedly been made, but there had been no one to check the supplies that were issued. A Government officer should be set apart to visit the hospitals at stated periods, and see what stocks there were in hand, and check these stocks against the lists held by those who were in charge of the Government hospitals. Such a course as this would obviate the possibility of an over-supply of requisites in any direction, and mean a saving of money. I notice on the Estimates that the Fremantle hospital is still cut down to its old £5,000 a year. Although there is an increased expenditure in Perth of nearly £8,000, Fremantle has been reduced since 1916. It is impossible to get anything cheaper in Fremantle than it is elsewhere, and owing to the increased costs all round it is found very difficult at the Fremantle hospital to carry on with the vote that is set apart for it. There is no doubt there will be great resentment on the part of the public if any drastic reduction is made to the Colonial Secretary's Estimates, for the reasons I have given. I see there is a reduction with regard to harbours and lights. Most of this is brought about by the fact that the steamship "Penguin" is being run by the Commonwealth. With regard to our lighthouses, we find that the Federal Government have taken over all the paying propositions in this respect.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They have taken over most of them. Those which do not pay the Federal Government have left alone, but those which have paid they have taken over. This is the general attitude of the Federal Government towards the State. It is becoming well recognised that whenever the Federal Government interfere with the States they always take the best of everything. We find that in almost every instance, and it is applied to the revenue derived by the Colonial Secretary's Department. I am glad that the Federal Government have at last realised their responsibilities in connection with the old age

pensioners and their home. They used to make it an excuse that only those pensioners who were sent to the home by the magistrate should be allowed pensions. This matter has been fought for some years, and just prior to the Labour party leaving office they promised £3,000, which was considered to be due. This has been paid since.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): It is £4,500.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am glad to hear that they intend to pay £4,500 to the old age pensioners in future. The Government should not make a profit out of these people. If the Government are recouped for the cost of upkeep that is as far as they should go, and the balance of the money should go into the pockets of the old age pensioners, to assist them in purchasing the delicacies they may require. It is difficult to reduce these Estimates so far as the payments that have to be made are concerned. These payments include the upkeep of hospitals, the maintenance of police and prisons, the upkeep of asylums, and our charitable institutions. All these branches of activity are necessary, and I believe they have been doing good work for many years past. I hope this will be continued.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister—Pilbara—in reply) [11.1]: I am very pleased at the manner in which these Estimates have been received, particularly by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin), who speaks with knowledge, having put these same Estimates through the House two or three times, and being aware of the difficulty of putting through Estimates of which one has not the control. Several points raised by the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) I think I can reply to when the items are reached: it is hardly necessary to deal with them just now. As to the ambulance van at Day Dawn, I shall make inquiry to-morrow morning, and whether it belongs to private subscribers or to the Government—

Mr. Holman: The office do not know. The matter is 16 years old, and therefore to obtain information is difficult.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The suggestion of the member for North-East Fremantle to appoint an inspector of hospitals appeals to me as a very promising one, and likely, as the hon. member has said, to save the State a good deal of money. The remainder of the hon. gentleman's criticisms I shall endeavour to answer when we are on the items.

General debate concluded.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.4 p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 30th October, 1918.

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

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

### MOTIONS—BUSINESS UNDERTAKINGS.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.32]: I move—

That the resolution passed by this House on the 17th inst., as follows:—"That the Under Treasurer be requested to state the total capital expenditure from Loan Funds on each of the business undertakings put down in the Return No. 3, page 496, of 'Hansard' be rescinded."

This seems to demand a brief explanation. When the resolution was passed requesting the Under Treasurer to put these figures before the House, it was objected to by the leader of the House. I do not question his right to do that nor his objection on the score of procedure. My attitude, on the other hand, is quite clear. I do not place reliance on the papers put forward and the statements made by Ministers in connection with our State trading concerns. We know perfectly well how easy it is in business affairs to put this or that forward which will intentionally or unintentionally mislead the shareholders. We know of that in private business affairs. We are now launched out in State trading concerns. I am giving the closest possible attention to these matters, and I want a thoroughly independent report, not from the Ministerial department, but from the officer who is the officer of Parliament, namely, the Auditor General. Objection having been taken to the insertion of "the Under Treasurer," I now move to rescind the resolution and will later move another motion in substitution thereof. In that later motion "the Auditor General" will appear. When we have a report from the Auditor General I shall be able to place some very interesting information before hon. members in regard to the financial position of these State trading concerns.

Question put and passed.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.33]: I now move—

That there be laid on the Table of the House a report by the Auditor General showing the total capital expenditure from Loan funds on each of the business undertakings set down in Return No. 3, page 496, "Hansard."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colbatch—East) [4.35]: I do not wish to oppose the motion, but I think the remarks of the hon. member that he has no confidence in figures and statements submitted by Ministers is a gratuitous affront to Ministers which would probably be much more seriously regarded if it came from any other quarter.