

get nothing. Undoubtedly the present system of Government trading is pernicious. When the Industries Assistance Board was created there was no intention that it should be permitted to enter into all sorts of trading transactions. According to their report, the board are now trading in implements, super, and numerous other commodities. I willingly accept the statement that it was originally intended that the board should supply the farmer with super and certain stores. But it was not originally intended that their operations should include the purchase of machinery and the liquidating of debts in various directions. If that was so, why has this Bill been introduced to validate what the Industries Assistance Board have done? For this reason I am inclined to believe—though I speak without special knowledge on the point—that there must be some report from the Auditor General relative to this huge department. It would be wise on the part of members to obtain an adjournment of the consideration of this measure until we have the Auditor General's report placed before us and before giving the Government any additional power to validate or enter into further undertakings. The reference to the moratorium is a purely legal point and one that my honourable friend Mr. Nicholson might look into. With these few remarks, Mr. President, I propose to support the second reading of the Bill in order to give the Government the power they must have for the continuation of the Act, but I think that the Auditor General's report should be laid on the Table, so that members can have an opportunity of seeing what this official, as an outside expert without any influence being brought to bear on him, has to say upon this department generally, from a trading point of view.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Northampton Mechanics' Institute.

2, Shipping and Pilotage Consolidation Ordinance Amendment.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 8.34 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 28th November, 1919.

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

QUESTION—FEDERAL CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS.

Mr. VERYARD (without notice) asked the Premier: Is he aware that the Governments of the Eastern States are declaring their attitude toward the Federal Government's proposals to amend the Constitution, and will he state if he intends to advise the electors of Western Australia to support or reject all or any such proposals at the forthcoming Federal elections?

Hon. P. Collier: Where have you been dozing lately?

The PREMIER replied: I should like to inform the hon. member that we have already advised the people of Western Australia to reject the proposals.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: See that you vote "No."

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, vote "No" and save the State.

QUESTION—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, MINIMUM WAGE.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Premier:—J, In view of the Court of Arbitration having awarded a minimum wage of 11s. per day to railway employees, is it the intention of the Government to adopt this rate as a minimum to be paid to all Government servants? 2, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: Yes.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1, Merchant Shipping Act Application Act Amendment.

2, Land Tax and Income Tax.

- 3, Perth Mint Act Amendment.
- 4, Inebriates Act Amendment.
- 5, Licensing Act Amendment Act Continuance.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Hon. W. C. Angwin and Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Limited (Private) Bill.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.35]: In dealing with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Limited (Private) Bill on Tuesday, I was reported in the Press to have said that the British Government had the controlling interest in the company, and that it was the only company dealing in oil which was outside the combination. My attention has been called to these remarks by the manager of the Neptune Oil Company who claims that his company is purely an Australian company and not connected with any combination whatever. It was pointed out that some of the other companies had endeavoured to attach the Neptune Oil Company as portion of the combination with a view to taking orders which should come in their direction. It cost the company a considerable sum of money to fight the statements made in this regard and consequently, the statement which appeared in the Press would in all probability injure the Neptune Oil Company's trade again. The words I used, which I read from Mr. Winston Churchill's statement in the House of Commons, were:—

Amongst British companies who have maintained an independent existence, the Burma Oil Company with its off-shoot, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, is almost the only noticeable feature.

I make this explanation because I did not desire in what I said—which was misreported, for the report does not convey what I said—to do any injury to any person or company and particularly an Australian company. The Neptune Oil Company deals in machine oils and not in fuel oil. The Bill which I introduced deals with oil for fuel. I make this explanation in justice to the company in Western Australia.

BILL—CARNARVON ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—DISCHARGED SOLDIERS' SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks to make a number of minor amendments to the Act which was passed last year in order to bring it up to date and to remedy defects which experience

has shown are necessary. I am asking the House to agree to extend the privileges of the Act to nurses who served outside the Commonwealth. The member for North-East Fremantle will not object to that.

Hon. P. Collier: Are they going on the land?

The PREMIER: I hope so; so far only one has applied. It is intended to extend the Act to other war workers at the discretion of the Minister. Our information shows that about 35 munition workers went from this State. Y.M.C.A. workers will be included in the term "war worker." My desire is to see the soldiers settled first. We have found that the powers of the board can be delegated satisfactorily to others who may easily do much of the unimportant work. The amendment contained in Clause 4 is designed to give the board, with the approval of the Minister, wider powers of delegation. Under the Act, stock, machinery, etc., cannot be purchased or sold without the expressed approval of the board. This has been found to be unworkable, and the idea is that the board, with the approval of the Minister, may authorise an officer of the department to act on its behalf. As the Act stands no concession can be made to applicants in the case of conditional purchase lands acquired by transfer. Under the original Act we charge the soldier just one half of the cost of the land. Land purchased at 10s. is charged up to the soldier at 5s. per acre. It is proposed by this amendment to apply that condition to soldiers who acquire conditional purchase land by purchase so that they shall be entitled to a rebate of one-half the balance of unpaid purchase money due at the date of purchase. If 10 years of the 20 years term have still to run, the half rate will apply to the 20 half-yearly instalments remaining to be paid. This concession will involve considerable loss to the Lands Department. These men are not entitled to the same consideration as original selectors from the Crown as, in the majority of cases, the purchase of conditional purchase lands does not mean new settlement on virgin lands. I realise, however, that it is desirable to offer some inducement in order to get as many new settlers as possible. Hence, the reason for giving the selector of Crown lands a rebate of 50 per cent. of the full purchase price of the land compared with 50 per cent. of the unpaid balance only in the case of land acquired by transfer. The trouble has been to meet the demand for land because we did not get ready early enough to meet the requirements of our soldiers. Subclause (2) extends the privileges of the Act to a dependant of a deceased soldier in respect of land owned by the deceased soldier prior to his enlistment. At present, the usual concessions can be applied only to dependants who select land direct from the Crown. Clause 6 is intended to give the Minister power to suspend rent for five years on pastoral leases acquired by transfer. This concession can at present be extended only to soldiers who select Crown land. A num-

ber of pastoral leases purchased on behalf of soldiers are unimproved, and it takes just as long for them to reach the profit period as original selectors. The concession need not necessarily be extended to soldiers who acquire pastoral properties as going concerns. This is only a fair provision. There is another amendment made necessary by reason of the fact that the amount bearing reduced interest has been increased from £500 to £625. This alteration was agreed to at the last conference of Premiers, and I think it will commend itself to this House. The effect of the amendment will be to apply the interest rate of 3½ per cent. to an amount of £625, the rate rising by one-half per cent. each year until the ordinary rate is reached. Another amendment deals with the security taken by the board or the Agricultural Bank. As the law stands at present, when a soldier settler comes under this scheme, all the lands owned by him are secured to the Government. But it is quite sufficient for the Government to have a mortgage over the land on which they make advances. As the law stands at the moment, the Government's security extends to all other lands to which the soldier may have a title. He may take the title to a financial house and borrow on it, and then the financial house would find its security questioned. The same amendment seeks to make it possible for the soldier who has other property to run on that property stock not purchase for him by the board. It often happens that a stock firm will advance a soldier money to buy sheep for fattening purposes. As the law stands, those sheep, although not fattened on land mortgaged to the board, could not be sold without the board's permission. The board are quite content to have a perfect security over all they pay for, and other chattels of the soldier. Say a soldier had a team of working bullocks at the time he obtained a farm through the board, and took those bullocks to the farm; then they would become part of the security of the board. That is quite right. But it is not right that where a soldier already holds a farm, that farm should form portion of the security to the board for the amount advanced by them to permit of the soldier acquiring another holding. I trust the amendment will go through, because we do not want to hamper the operations of any soldier, nor to injure the security of any financial institution. In this connection it is to be borne in mind that occasionally soldiers had borrowed money from a bank before they went to the war. Another amendment provides that the board shall have power to purchase freehold land without that land becoming re-vested in the Crown. As the law stands, freehold land bought by the board must revert to the Crown, and the soldier for whom it is bought must take a conditional purchase lease. As a matter of fact, the custom is as follows: A soldier goes to the board and asks them to advance him money to buy a little farm, and the board agree to do it. If the farm is freehold, one would expect in the ordinary course of business, that the title would be transferred to

the soldier and that the soldier would mortgage the property to the board for his advance. A mortgage of course is necessary, because the board also advance money to purchase stock. We want that to be the system. We do not want to have all the trouble and expense of small holdings being re-vested in the Crown, and then transferred to the soldier under the conditional purchase system. In the case of estates purchased for subdivision the position is different. Such an estate must be re-vested in the Crown, because it has to be sold among a number of people. But in the case of small farms, it is quite unnecessary that they should revert to the Crown before allotment to the soldiers. It will be remembered that when the original Act was passed Parliament agreed to remit certain registration fees and other charges in the case of soldier settlers; but these remissions did not include stamp duty. I now propose to ask the House to agree that in future the Government may remit either the whole or a portion of the stamp duty on the transactions of soldiers. Stamp duty is a fairly considerable expense; on the purchase of a property worth £1,000, it amounts to £10. The original Act fixes the capital to be used for the purposes of soldier settlement at £50,000. As the funds must be appropriated by Parliament before they can be used for this purpose, it is surely unnecessary to come to Parliament year after year for an amendment of the Act. Fifty thousand pounds is altogether too little, and so I propose to amend the Act in that respect, leaving it to Parliament to appropriate funds from time to time. A further amendment relates to returned soldiers under 21 years of age. Under the existing law they can mortgage a conditional purchase holding, but cannot mortgage freehold land. Accordingly the Government ask for an amendment providing that for the purposes of the principal Act minors be permitted to mortgage freehold land bought for them by the board. There may not be many such cases, but I think provision should be made for them. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.52]: I looked into this Bill during the morning, and have no objection to offer to the carrying of the second reading. Objection may perhaps be taken to some of the clauses, and explanation regarding them will be asked for during the Committee stage. The Bill generally seems to have for its object the liberalising of the Act passed last session. Every one of the clauses is in its nature something more generous towards the returned soldier settling on the land, than the provisions of the principal Act. It is somewhat of a commentary upon the manner in which the House did its work last session that we find a short Act of only 30 sections requiring this year an amending Bill of 12 clauses—practically half the size of the original Act.

The Premier: Most of the amendments are very small.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But some of them are rather important. However, we can thrash the Bill out in the Committee stage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 3:

Hon. P. COLLIER: This clause seeks to include in the interpretation of "Discharged soldier" members of the medical and nursing staffs. I am not sure that the interpretation in the present Act does not cover members of those staffs. I was under the impression that the nursing staff, in particular, were really members of the military forces. If that is not so, the point will be cleared up by this amendment. The clause seeks also to give power to the Minister to extend the benefits of the principal Act to munition and war workers employed outside the Commonwealth. But why is the matter left permissive to the Minister? If, after consideration, it is thought that munition and war workers should be entitled to the benefits of the Act, let it be done clearly and specifically. The clause as it stands may place the Minister in the invidious position of having to decide to extend the benefits of the measure to some of our returned munition and war workers, and to deny it to others.

The Premier: I do not think he would do that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In view of all the safeguards contained in the principal Act, we may well extend its benefits to munition and war workers, who, in some ways, have rendered war services as valuable as those of the men who actually enlisted in the A.I.F.

Mr. Money: That would be munition workers employed by the Government.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But why not say so in the Act and make it clear that they shall be entitled to consideration in the same way as the others? I want to make it definite in the Act that they shall be.

The PREMIER: I think that can hardly be expected. "War workers" has a pretty wide definition.

Hon. P. Collier: Has the Commonwealth agreed to this?

The PREMIER: It has been inserted at their request.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Was it by a promise or is it in their Act?

The PREMIER: They asked us by correspondence to include these people, and naturally, as they have given us some guarantee, we have agreed to do so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What guarantee?

The PREMIER: About £125,000 out of every million, to cover loss, interest, or otherwise.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How long is it since that has been done?

The PREMIER: I told the hon. member before. It is nearly £80,000 more than sufficient to cover interest. It is a fair guarantee and a perfectly reasonable one. I doubt if war workers should be regarded in exactly the same light as the soldiers who have been in the firing line. Members know that although we have settled hundreds of soldiers, we have to settle a good many more. It is possible to provide land for the munition workers and the nurses to-morrow morning, but I do not know in this case whether we should go as far as for the soldiers, but should rather leave it to the discretion of the Minister and the board.

Hon. P. Collier: When did the Commonwealth agree to this?

The PREMIER: It was not just lately.

Hon. P. Collier: It must have been quite lately.

The PREMIER: No, it was quite three months ago. There are not many munition workers and nurses who will go on the land.

Hon. P. Collier: There are a fair number of munition workers.

The PREMIER: There are 35 in this State.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I agree with the leader of the Opposition that the power indicated should be here. I am very much afraid that if we do not put the power, here definitely the Commonwealth will not fulfil their promise.

The Premier: They are bound as tightly as they can be.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There are a lot of promises made before election time.

The Premier: It was not made during election time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I want to make the matter definite. The Premier says that this has been put in at the request of the Commonwealth, and if that is so, I want to make this clause such that the Commonwealth cannot withdraw. I would not trust some of them at all. If the Commonwealth turn round and say that as this power is only at the discretion of the Minister they might refuse to carry out their promise and the Minister would have to turn these people down.

Hon. P. Collier: He would have to do it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have not got much confidence in the Federal Government. I move an amendment—

That in line 6 the words "by the Minister" be struck out.

I could trust the Premier, but not these Commonwealth Ministers. If men could be put on the land I know the Premier would do it, but I do not want him to be let down by the Federal authorities. The deletion of these words will be beneficial to the Premier.

Mr. Money: This does not affect the Commonwealth undertaking.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, it does.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister will be bound by the Commonwealth, and if they withdraw he will have to find more money.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier has brought in a Bill to carry out the promise of the Commonwealth, and I want to define the position in such a way that the Commonwealth will not be able to jump out through any loophole.

Mr. Money: There is no definition of "war workers." It is very wide.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It should be defined.

The PREMIER: I am certain that the Commonwealth will foot the bill. They have to find the money. They have agreed, by correspondence, as all Governments do, that they will find the money. We find the land. I have said that we will find the land and we are going to do it, but I do think it should be at the discretion of the Government to say who should go first, the soldier or the war workers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It does not say that.

The PREMIER: That is what it means, among other things of course. I think we should have this power. I am naturally in sympathy with these people.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member for North-East Fremantle knows the Commonwealth have been making promises.

The PREMIER: I will promise on behalf of the Federal Government that they will keep this promise.

Hon. P. Collier: You cannot do that.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 6:

Hon. P. COLLIER: This clause proposes to extend very considerably the powers of the board in delegating their authority to anyone else approved by the Minister. In Section 6 of the Discharged Soldier Settlement Act of 1919, it is provided that the board may delegate their powers under paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of Subsection 1 to any persons approved by the Minister, and may accept and act on the report of such persons. It is proposed to strike out the words "under paragraph (a), (b), and (c) of Subsection 1," which will mean that the board will then have unlimited power, subject to the approval of the Minister, to delegate their authority. When we look through this Act and find that it is practically administered by the board, it must be realised that their powers are very extensive indeed. I question whether it is wise to agree to this, even with the reservation that the delegated powers have to be approved by the Minister. Under Section 13 of the Act the board is empowered to clear, drain, grade, plough, fence, or erect buildings, or otherwise improve any land set apart for the settlement of soldiers or disposed of to discharged soldiers. All those matters mentioned confer very great powers. Section 15, inter alia, provides—

The Agricultural Bank may, under the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act, 1906, on the recommendation of the board and for the purposes aforesaid, make advances to a discharged soldier to whom land has been disposed of under this Act, or who has been permitted to occupy any Crown land in anticipation of the passing of this Act

Section 21 sets out that the privileges conferred by this Act on discharged soldiers may, on the recommendation of the board, be extended by the Minister to any discharged soldier, and so on. Section 22 deals with the power of the Minister, on the recommendation of the board, to "purchase on behalf of the Crown, any alienated land, including land held under pastoral lease which a discharged soldier holding a qualification certificate, may desire to acquire under this Act, and the land so purchased may be disposed of under and subject to the provisions of this Act." The original Act clearly confined to those duties set out in paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of Subsection (1) of Section 6 the power of the board to delegate their authority. Those are practically nominal duties which the board have, and I do not think it is wise now to give the board the power to delegate all those very responsible authorities that they have under the original Act. The board which recommended the purchase of some of those estates acquired in the South-West under the Act were comprised of members to whom powers had been delegated.

The Premier: Not under this section.

Hon. P. Collier: But if the clause is passed it will be possible for the board to delegate every power they have under the Act.

Mr. Pickering: And the Bill is widening those powers.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Certainly. It is widening the powers of the board to delegate their authority to others. There must have been some specific reason for confining to those three paragraphs in Section 6 the power to delegate. A great deal of objection was raised to even the power to delegate the limited power set out in the Act. Now the Premier proposes to give unlimited power in this direction. If the clause is passed the board will be able to delegate any or all of these powers to any person approved by the Minister. The board consists of men holding high and responsible positions in the Public Service. The Committee has confidence in them to administer the Act fairly and impartially, but the Committee might not have the same confidence in others delegated to carry out the functions of the board. Why is it now proposed to extend this power to cover the Act generally, instead of confining it to paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of Subsection (1) of Section 6?

The PREMIER: I do not know why the hon. member should regard the giving of this power as dangerous. I do not know what prompted the limitation of the power in the first place. I can see no reason why

the power should not be extended, while, on the other hand, it would be very convenient to the board to have the power extended.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the board may delegate all these powers.

The PREMIER: After all, the powers will only be delegated to trustworthy men, who will report to the board itself. There is no danger whatever in the proposal.

Mr. MONEY: I agree with the leader of the Opposition. But if paragraph (d) were added we should then know definitely the powers to be delegated. Paragraph (e) is entirely too sweeping, and it would be better to exclude that provision. I do not think we have had sufficient reason why so sweeping a paragraph should be there at all. The object of the clause is to extend decentralisation and achieve necessary promptness.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Even paragraph (d) gives very great powers. It reads—

The duties of the board shall be to recommend to the Agricultural Bank what assistance shall be given and advances made under the Act.

If the clause is passed this board of deputy members will have the right, without reference to the original board or to the Minister, to recommend direct to the Agricultural Bank what assistance shall be given. That is too great a power to hand to deputies who may be appointed only temporarily because the board for the time being is unable to attend to a rush of work.

Mr. Money: It will be reviewed by the bank.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Certainly; still, such a recommendation would carry very great weight. I hope the Minister will not proceed to endow these men, appointed temporarily, with all the powers conferred by the Act.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I hope the Premier will agree to delete this clause, for the powers it confers on deputies are altogether too great. The Minister has not time to give sufficiently close scrutiny to everything done by the board. How, then, will it be possible for him to closely scrutinise the operations of a board of deputies?

The PREMIER: There is something in the contention of the hon. member. Probably we are delegating more power than I thought we were. I am willing to have this clause struck out. I still think that the limitation set up by these words in the original clause is a sufficient safeguard, but, as we can carry on our work without this power, I am willing to let it go.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Amendment of Section 12:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I wonder whether the portion of Section 12 of the principal Act regarding pastoral leases was ever put into effect. Are our pastoral leases being acquired for this purpose, or are they likely to be acquired?

The Premier: Some of them have been.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Have any returned soldiers applied for pastoral leases?

The Attorney General: I applied for one man, but he could not get one.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not aware that any application has been made to resume pastoral lands. This is what this amendment would mean, namely, the resumption of pastoral leases.

The Premier: We have purchased some few small places.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They would have to be very small. I cannot imagine the returned soldier being able to purchase a large pastoral lease, after what I have heard of the profits that have been made upon them.

Mr. MALEY: A day or two ago I asked a question as to whether there was any power to resume pastoral leases for returned soldiers. The Premier baldly replied in the affirmative, and said that the other matters mentioned in the question were under consideration. Will the Premier point out any specific authority, which he says he has to enable him to resume pastoral leasehold land?

The PREMIER: We have bought some pastoral leases, in the cases of two or three men who have combined together.

Hon. P. COLLIER: For soldier settlement?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Does not Section 10 of the Act give power to resume pastoral leases?

The PREMIER: If it is desired to secure land at a cheap rate, it may not be possible to get it by that means. People are not always ready to sacrifice their holdings. In many cases in the North-West people are living a strenuous life and are not making big fortunes. I have a report from a pastoral lessee whose land is situated near the Cue line. He has been there for ten years but has not made a fortune yet.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 15:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I notice that the amount set down here is being raised from £500 to £625. Is this also by arrangement with the Commonwealth Government?

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This, then, is the amount which the Commonwealth Government advanced at which the rate of interest commences at 3½ per cent.?

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Is this in conformity with an old promise made by the Commonwealth Government?

The Premier: This is the result of the decision arrived at by the Premiers' conference last year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am surprised that this promise of the Commonwealth Government has only just materialised.

The Honorary Minister: It was found to be insufficient in the Eastern States.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Commonwealth Government found that they were not generous enough in many ways toward the re-

turned soldiers, but they only found it out during the last few weeks.

The PREMIER: This was arranged some time ago.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Extensions have been made in all directions during the last few weeks by the Commonwealth Government. Even a candidate for Federal Parliamentary honours only found it convenient a few weeks ago to distribute the military pay which he has had for many months. I suspect everything in the Bill which has relation to a promise made by the Commonwealth Government. Their promises are not worth the striking of a match, and they have to be tied down by Act of Parliament. The week before Parliament closed a motion was submitted that the promise made by Mr. Hughes for the payment of a gratuity for soldiers should be ratified and confirmed by Act of Parliament before the elections. The motion was rejected by Mr. Hughes and his supporters, showing that there was no intention of carrying out the pledge.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There has never been such a discreditable election.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I object to this wholesale attempt to bribe the men who kept Australia free. The Federal authorities ought to have a higher regard for the honour and integrity of our returned soldiers than to be scattering broadcast their promises on the eve of the elections. After the 13th December the soldier will slump very considerably in the estimation of these people. Unless the Premier can assure me that this promise has been ratified by some statute, from which these slippery gentlemen cannot escape, I am not prepared to pass it.

The PREMIER: There is no conspiracy between Mr. Hughes and myself.

Hon. P. Collier: I am sure of that.

The PREMIER: If Mr. Hughes would increase this amount by another £500 by to-morrow morning, I would telegraph and ask him to do so.

Hon. P. Collier: He will promise you if you do.

The PREMIER: It did not occur to me to make use of the occasion. This £625 is not given by the Commonwealth, but is merely an advance. I hope the Committee will not reduce the amount. This arrangement was made some months ago.

Hon. P. Collier: Have you tied him up?

The PREMIER: I am quite satisfied it is all right. I am spending the money all the time so that they really are paying up.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Amendment of Section 22:

Hon. P. COLLIER: This clause seems to contradict the parent Act. The Act says that the Minister may on the recommendation of the board purchase any alienated land. Now a proviso is added which says that the board may purchase for the discharged soldier any alienated land, and there is thus, it appears to me, a divided authority.

Mr. Maley: This is an exact copy of the Act with the exception of the addition of the words "conditional purchase."

Hon. P. COLLIER: The amendment is practically the same as the section of the Act. It has been badly drawn up.

Mr. Money: Does not the board act as the agent for the discharged soldier? They may buy for him.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Act says, "The Minister may on the recommendation of the board purchase on behalf of the Crown any alienated land." The thing is contradictory. I am not a lawyer but if I were I would stake my life on the reading of that.

Mr. Money: The soldier would be the principal.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister is purchasing for the soldier even though he is purchasing for the Crown.

Mr. Money: Yes, ultimately.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In any case, the powers are inconsistent. If it is the right thing for the Minister to purchase on behalf of the Crown for soldier settlement, it should be right for the Minister to purchase for the discharged soldier direct because he is doing it for that purpose in the first instance. The soldier may decide to acquire a whole pastoral lease. Under this amendment the board will have power to effect the purchase without reference to the Minister at all.

Mr. Money: They help him now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But I do not think any board under this Act should have the final say as to the purchase of any estates, because whilst we know operations in this respect have to do with single holdings, the clause does not limit them to that. It may be a large pastoral lease. The final say as to the purchase of the property should be that of the Minister.

The PREMIER: It was never intended that this power should go entirely to the board. I think we can amend the clause in the direction we all desire to see it altered, by the addition of a few words. I move an amendment—

That in line 3 after the word "may" the words "and with the approval of the Minister" be inserted.

That will meet the case. The paragraph will then read, "The board may, with the approval of the Minister, purchase for a discharged soldier any alienated land etc." We want to obviate the necessity of vesting these small blocks in the Crown.

Amendment put and passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 10—Amendment of Section 28:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not think there is any need for Subsection (2) of the Act which this clause proposes to amend. "The Government may raise such sums of money as may be required for the purposes of this Act." The Premier proposes to omit the

limitation of £50,000 on the ground that the money has to be appropriated by Parliament. I do not know it is necessary to do that, though it may be necessary. Seeing that the money for this purpose is raised by a loan Act, and then on the Loan Estimates we appropriate the money for the different purposes, and seeing also that the amount will have to be appropriated by Parliament for the purposes set out, it seems to me that the paragraph in the Act was unnecessary.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 11—Amendment of Section 29:

Hon. P. COLLIER: Evidently the Premier seeks to give greater consideration in the way of payments than was intended in the original Act. This will mean a remission of a considerable sum of money.

The Premier: It might be.

Mr. Money: It will be nothing when acquired by the Crown; it only applies to the individual properties.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is really giving a greater concession to the soldiers. It proposes to free soldiers from the charges under the Stamp Act.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12—agreed to.

New clause, Amendment of Section 5:

Mr. PICKERING: I move—

That the following new clause be added to the Bill to stand as Clause 13:—1, The member of the board required by Section 5 of the principal Act to be a discharged soldier shall be appointed by the Governor on the nomination of the Western Australian branch of the Returned Sailors, Soldiers, and Nurses Imperial League of Australia. 2, The member of the existing board appointed as a discharged soldier shall, on the commencement of this Act, retire from the board, but shall be eligible for nomination and reappointment.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept the new clause because it is not relevant to the subject matter of the Bill. I rule the new clause out of order.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported with amendments:

BILL—AJANA-GERALDINE RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [6.0] in moving the second reading said: The owners of mining lease No. 150 at Northampton, known as the Surprise lead mine, have been very considerably hampered in their operations owing to the expense of carting their lead ore to the Government railways and, having been able to secure material and plant for

the laying down of a light line, they have sought power to carry out the work. This Bill, therefore, is to enable them to lay the line, and every precaution has been taken to see that the interests of the State and of those concerned are guarded. The Bill gives authority for the line to be constructed and maintained. Regarding the land required to lay the line down, such land which is unalienated from the Crown may be used and other land may be resumed under the usual conditions. Provision is also made that, should the Government of the day at any time think it in the interests of the country to acquire this railway, it may be purchased, and the sum at which it may be purchased will be determined by the Engineer-in-Chief of the Public Works Department. Such price is not to exceed the cost of construction less reasonable allowance for depreciation. It is also provided that, should matters turn out unfortunately and the lease not prove a success, the lessees may surrender their lease, and if they do not make arrangements with the Government to purchase the railway, they may remove the rails and material. There is one condition that, if they do this, they shall level the road and make it decent, so that it may be used if necessary for other purposes. The survey of the line is to be made by the Public Works Department at the cost of the mine. The reason why I stipulated this was that, if the mine turned out to be a success and if the Government considered it advisable to lay down a standard line, the route would be such as would be followed by a line intended to serve the whole of the district. Members know that it would be of very great convenience to have a light railway of this sort on which material could be conveyed during the construction of the standard line.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What gauge will the line be?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I understand 3ft.

Hon. P. Collier: Understand! Do not you know?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot say at the moment.

Hon. P. Collier: You think it is a 3ft. gauge!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A line of 3ft. gauge would be no good for the Government to purchase.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It might be 3ft. 6in.; I am not sure.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no 3ft. gauge anywhere.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not regard that as being of any great importance. It is probable that it will be a 3ft. 6in. line with light rails. The Government would not be likely to purchase the railway unless it was found desirable to do so. Provision has been made for the line to carry goods and passengers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Should not this be termed a tramway instead of a railway?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Formerly it would have been termed a tramway but the Crown Law authorities are responsible for calling it a railway. When the first draft came before me, I struck out the word railway and inserted tramway, knowing that this was the term used in years gone by, but it has been altered again. However, that does not make any difference. Provision has been made for the carriage of goods and passengers, and for the Government to make by-laws. The schedule contains a description of the route and the right is given to deviate three miles on either side. The Bill is a plain and simple measure to assist those who are carrying on a very important work, and the reason for the railway is to enable them to reduce the cost of cartage. Now that the value of the product has gone down, owing to the cessation of the war, it is necessary, if the industry is to be continued, to reduce expenses wherever possible.

Mr. Maley: The price of lead is now at a higher point than any reached during the war period—£36 10s. a ton.

Mr. Willcock: They would save a lot of money by using a railway.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Certainly.

Mr. Hudson: You were wrong in saying that the price had gone down.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was an error; we all make errors. The length of the line will be about 11 miles. If the railway will enable the company to reduce the cost of carriage, even though the price of lead is higher than it has been, the company will have more money for the development of the mine. We want to see our lead and other mines worked successfully, in order to make bigger opportunities for our people. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

BILL—NORTHAMPTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [6.8] in moving the second reading said: This is a little Bill dealing with the Northampton district. Members will recollect that, when I gave notice of the measure, Mr. Maley thought a mistake had been made in describing the land as Northampton town lot No. 31½. I have had full inquiries made regarding this. The Crown Law authorities sent the plan to me, and it appears that originally there was a reserve. Many years ago a portion of this reserve was cut out for the purpose of a mechanics' institute. The Lands Department at the time marked this particular lot No. 31½. The reason for the Bill is that the institute was vested in trustees and, during the process of time, some of the trustees have

died. Eighteen months or two years ago, an attempt was made to get this building into the hands of the local authority. One of the trustees, Mr. Burgess, was quite willing that this should be done, and signed the necessary papers. The other trustee, Mr. Williams, deferred signing time after time for one reason or another. Recently there has been received from the district a petition, signed very largely and asking what steps should be taken to have the reserve vested in the road board. As the building has fallen into desuetude, it will very soon cease to be a building at all unless it is taken in hand and repaired. Mr. Williams would not agree to sign. The Public Works Department have communicated with him and asked him to sign. He professed to be reasonable, but he did not sign.

Mr. O'Loughlin: What were the reasons for not signing?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That the majority of people in the district did not wish it to be handed over to the road board.

Hon. P. Collier: Do the people of the district know that this Bill is coming forward? Have they had an opportunity to express an opinion?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, we have a petition from a great number of the people of the district. The member for the district will be able to give further information regarding that. The position is that this building is falling into disrepair and becoming an absolute wreck. There is no one to look after it. The trustees will not do anything; the road board cannot do anything unless the lot is transferred to them, and the Government are powerless to do anything unless the land is vested in the Crown. I see no objection to the Bill.

Mr. Hudson: What are the terms of the original vesting?

Hon. P. Collier: The state of disrepair of the building is in keeping with the condition of the whole town.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The remaining trustee apparently does not want to divest himself of his brief authority, and will do nothing for the good of the people of the district. Therefore, the whole matter needs to be put on a proper footing.

Mr. O'Loughlin: He must be like you, a little stubborn.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: No doubt he is. If I may take the authority of that eminent paper, the "Primary Producer," which appeals to the Country party so much, and is quoted so often by members opposite, I am like the hog that won't go; obstinacy is my name. I commend the Bill to the House. It has been considered by the officers of the road board department, and the auditor has reported in favour of it. One trustee says he is quite satisfied to hand it over if a majority of the people are in agreement. According to the member for the district the residents desire it, and the House should certainly consider the circumstances. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [6.13]: The facts are as outlined by the Minister. The mechanics' institute is not a credit to the town. I do not endorse the remark from the front Opposition benches that the town is in practically the same state as the institute. The institute was one of the first mechanics' institutes built in the State by Government assistance. In those days, the procedure was to vest the land and building in trustees, but the practice to-day is somewhat different.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MALEY: The Northampton road board desire to obtain control of the local mechanics' institute in order that it may be looked after and cared for. Mr. Williams, one of the two surviving trustees, has invariably stated that he is perfectly willing to sign the transfer, but has always jibbed when it came to the actual point of signing. That has been going on during the last three years. Within the past 12 months the Public Works Department took the matter in hand with a view to inducing Mr. Williams to sign the necessary transfer, but their negotiations have achieved no more than those of the road board. Hence the introduction of this Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—SHIPPING AND PILOTAGE CONSOLIDATION ORDINANCE AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. T. Broun—Beverley) [7.38] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill intended to amend the "Act to alter and extend the provisions of the Shipping and Pilotage Consolidation Ordinance, 1855." Under that Act the maximum amount chargeable for the piloting of a vessel is £12. In order to remove that restriction, Clause 2 of the Bill proposes to delete from Section 2 of the principal Act the words "but so as never to exceed." In the case of the port of Wyndham, where the coast is dangerous, the distance over which a vessel has to be piloted into harbour is from 25 to 30 miles, and the cost of the service is heavy. Shortly a number of vessels will be proceeding to Wyndham, and as the law stands they can-

not be charged more than £12 for pilotage. It will be necessary to appoint a harbour master for Wyndham, and the Government do not desire to make a loss on piloting vessels into the port. Other vessels besides our State steamers visit Wyndham—the Commonwealth ships and the steamers of private companies. If this Bill passes, the Government will be able to charge what they consider fair for pilotage. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1919-20.

In Committee of Supply.

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

Colonial Secretary's Department, Hon. F. T. Broun, Minister.

Postponed Vote—Lunacy and Inebriates, £70,100.

The CHAIRMAN: The leader of the Opposition has moved an amendment that this vote be reduced by £500.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. T. Broun—Beverley) [7.44]: The report of the select committee which inquired into the Hospital for the Insane is in keeping with the evidence given before the committee, which is appended to the report. I have looked through the report and must say that it is a very comprehensive one. I have not gone right through it from beginning to end, but I have looked at the main portions of the document and the evidence that was taken. I find that in many instances the evidence was rather contradictory and not substantiated. When I came into office, it was rather unfortunate for me as a new Minister to find that at that time there was a certain amount of dissension at the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. Owing to the influenza epidemic it was found necessary to isolate the institution for the protection of the patients. The staff were informed that the institution would be isolated and that they would not be allowed to go off the premises. Unfortunately a number of them objected to the isolation and notice was given warning those who broke isolation that they would be dismissed, if the warning were disobeyed. I am pleased to find that the committee upheld the action of the authorities in isolating the institution. We have been fortunate indeed that no influenza occurred there. It has been stated that although action was taken against those who left

the institution and disobeyed the isolation order, a number of other-members of the staff left the institution from time to time. That may be so, but it was not the fault of the Inspector General nor the Superintendent, because they were continually watching to see that the isolation order was not disobeyed. The grounds of the institution cover a large area and it would be impossible to notice everyone who went in or out of the institution. Although insubordination was prevalent, even amongst the members of the staff themselves, there was a certain amount of disagreement. In fact, they were not a happy family. Naturally when a lot of people live in an institution such as the Claremont Asylum, differences arise among members of the staff. In going through the report I have no desire to go into every detail or to read lengthy portions of the evidence to the House, but I desire to draw attention to a few matters. When speaking the other night, the leader of the Opposition inferred that the Minister is responsible for all that takes place in an institution like this. I think the leader of the Opposition knows better than that. It is impossible for a Minister to know everything that takes place, but he has to rely upon the heads of the institution he controls, as every other Minister has to do. Surely he does not expect me to step aboard an aeroplane and fly north to see whether, at the Moola Bulla station, the natives are being fed or to go to Broome to see whether unlicensed ships are used for pearling or even to go to all the different institutions under my control to see that everything is as it should be and take the complete responsibility for everything. I have to rely to a great extent, as every Minister does, upon the heads of the institutions and naturally be guided by the information given by those heads.

Hon. T. Walker: That is, control by the heads, not the Minister.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Nothing of the kind. I expect the heads of the department to advise me and I accept my share of responsibility. The other night the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) referred to me as a rubber stamp. I am no more a rubber stamp Minister than the hon. member was.

Hon. T. Walker: It looks like it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Not at all. Regarding the Inspector General for the Insane, the leader of the Opposition complained of his appointment during the war. It was nothing unusual to appoint a man to a position where the previous head has died or left. Dr. Montgomery died and the superior officer at the institution took his place. That is quite a customary thing to do especially where institutions such as that at Claremont are concerned. The Inspector General has had a great experience so far as lunacy is concerned and naturally the Government considered it best to appoint him to the position. As a matter of fact it was done prior to the present Government coming into office and it is therefore un-

necessary for me to labour that question. I desire to be fair not only to the Inspector General himself but also to those in the institution. There is no one who has a greater feeling of sympathy towards the patients than myself nor a greater desire for their protection, safe keeping, and happiness in that institution. A good deal of the trouble that has existed and still exists there is undoubtedly due to the lack of accommodation and the overcrowding of the patients. When patients are overcrowded as is the case at the Claremont institution, it is harder for them to recover than if they had plenty of room to move about in and had more liberty. It has been mentioned by the member for North-East Fremantle and other members of the committee that men who were dismissed from the institution were being pursued and victimised. There is no victimisation whatever so far as I know. I mentioned before when we were discussing the appointment of a Royal Commission that some members who had been dismissed from the institution applied for positions at Blackboy, but it was considered at that time that if they were not satisfied with isolation in one place, they would not be satisfied with it in another. That was really the reason, in all probability, why they were not taken on at Blackboy; at least, that is what I surmise. They have not been victimised to my knowledge and I have been unable to find anything to support the contention that they have been victimised. Regarding the case of McGowan, the member for North-East Fremantle mentioned my name in that connection. I was informed by the Inspector General that this man was not well and his physical condition was such that it would not be safe to reinstate him in his old position.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How did he know that, seeing that he did not examine him?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I notice that that point was brought out in examination, but he stated in evidence that he could tell by looking at the man. I came to the same conclusion myself. When he came to see me I thought at that time that he looked very ill. I could not say whether it was tuberculosis or not. I am a layman and would not be able to judge that matter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Dr. Montgomery said he was not infectious.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Dr. Montgomery did not bind himself in any way. He said that he would probably be infectious but he would not guarantee he was cured.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He gave a certificate to say he was fit for duty.

Hon. T. Walker: That is good enough.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In reply to a question by the chairman as to whether if he had been in charge of the asylum and thought that this man's physical condition was such that it would not be safe to employ him there, having regard to the health of the other patients, and had afterwards found that he had recovered, he would have given him back his position. The doctor replied that if McGowan had applied for a position at Wooroloo and if there had been a vacancy,

he would have appointed him, but they had no such position to give him at Wooroloo. McGowan, he further said, was a medical nurse, and if he had been willing to make a position as orderly, he would have given it to him. The chairman also asked the question—

Do you think he would be a source of danger to the patients at Claremont if he had been reappointed to his old position? The doctor replied—

Not when he left the sanatorium. He was then quite able to take up his old position. Of course we cannot tell from day to day what may happen. Such a man may get influenza and in three or four days' time may become infectious; but I could not say that he was infectious when he left Wooroloo.

Mr. Chesson: You could say the same thing about any man with influenza.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In reference to the Edwards case, I want to make the position clear regarding the letter. The position is that he approached the Inspector General and told him he was leaving the institution and then wrote the letter to the Inspector General that has been quoted in evidence, after he had approached me. I propose to take the points given in the summing up of the evidence by the select committee. In regard to the dairy, we all know that the milk is supplied to the different hospitals, with the result that there is not sufficient for the whole of the institutions. The Government are now importing several additional cows, so as to bring the supply up to the requirements. As to the fire appliances, I admit that they should have been kept in order. It is to be hoped that in future they will be properly maintained. As it is, according to the report of the select committee the place is dangerous, and unless proper fire appliances are provided there may some day be a catastrophe. The same may be said of the alarms. These points will be attended to. As to the use of croton oil, we learn from the medical witnesses that the medicine is not harmful if it be properly administered. It is shown in the evidence that in 1913 there was a stock of six ounces of croton oil at the institution. To-day there is still from two to three ounces in stock. None of the attendants admitted having administered croton oil, so it is strange what has become of the three ounces which have disappeared. No complaint has been made by the visiting committee in respect of the use of croton oil. In my opinion the drug should not be administered except under the doctor's orders. In regard to the change of diet, that is a matter entirely for the Inspector General himself. It costs him nothing to supply whatever is necessary for the patients. The visiting committee, in their report of the 18th October, 1919, say they saw all the patients, who appeared to be well cared for. They saw the meals spread, and testified that they were of good quality and sufficient. They were interviewed by 54 patients, but they report that there were no complaints of any importance. They examined all the dormitories, and found them clean and in order. The report of the visiting committee is entirely favourable. In regard to the low percentage of recoveries among the patients, the causes for

this are various. One of the chief factors is the overcrowding, and the mixing up of all classes and types of patients. Unless we can provide sufficient accommodation at the institution, it is not likely that there will be so high a percentage of recoveries as there would be under more favourable conditions of segregation. It is pointed out that the recoveries have been very few, especially during last year. If we take the figures for the mental wards at the Kalgoorlie and Perth public hospitals as a comparison, it will be found that they throw a new light on the recoveries at Claremont. In 1909 the admissions at the mental wards were 154, the deaths 9, the discharges 87, and the transfers to Claremont 58. In 1918 the admissions were 427, deaths 7, discharges 278, and the transfers to Claremont 138. Obviously only the worst cases were transferred to Claremont, cases not likely to recover. That is the point I want to raise. It makes a big difference in the percentage of recoveries. If we take the whole of the admissions into the mental wards, in conjunction with the transfers to Claremont, we find that in 1909 the percentage of recoveries was 52.56.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you infer that patients, although not insane, were sent from the mental ward to Claremont?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, just the reverse. Only the absolutely insane are sent to Claremont, with the result that the recoveries at Claremont are not nearly as many as they might be. It will be noticed that in 1909 only 154 were admitted to the mental wards, whereas in 1918 the number rose to 427, the transfers to Claremont being 138, and the discharges 278. In 1909 the admissions at Claremont were 312, and the recoveries 164, making the percentage of recoveries 52.56 per cent.

Hon. P. Collier: Is this the Inspector General's explanation?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, I got the figures for myself.

Hon. P. Collier: But the hon. member will not contend that he is able to prepare a defence which did not occur to the Inspector General?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The figures I have show that the institution has had admissions from Kalgoorlie and from Perth.

Hon. P. Collier: But you are working it up as accounting for the low percentage of recoveries. That defence did not occur to the Inspector General when before the select committee.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He probably did not give it a thought. But it makes all the difference to the percentage of recoveries in the institution.

Hon. T. Walker: It is misleading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, because only very serious cases are taken from the mental wards at Kalgoorlie and Perth and put into the Claremont hospital.

Mr. Jones: That has always been done.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I admit that. Only the worst cases are transferred to Claremont. In 1918 there were 427 admissions.

Hon. T. Walker: How many of them returned from the war?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Not many. The returned men go to Stromness. In 1918 there were 495 admissions to the hospital, and

the recoveries were 312, the percentage being 63.03.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I advise you to keep them all at the hospital.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Some of them at the hospital are insane for only a very short time. The percentage of recoveries from 1909 to the present day are as follow:—In 1909 it was 52 per cent.; in 1910 it was 61 per cent.; in 1911 it was 68 per cent.; in 1912 it was 64 per cent.; in 1913 it was 65 per cent.; in 1914 it was 62 per cent.; in 1915 it was 68 per cent.; in 1917 it was 63 per cent.; in 1918 it was 63.03 per cent. These percentages are based on the actual figures.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They do not keep the insane at the mental wards for more than a week.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I know that. The worst cases are sent to Claremont.

Hon. T. Walker: All cases of insanity are sent there.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Undoubtedly! It all depends on what the hon. member terms insanity.

Hon. T. Walker: Those who are insane.

Hon. P. Collier: He has palmed off that explanation on you because he would not use it himself.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is a thoroughly good explanation and the hon. member will find that it is so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That will not carry any weight.

Mr. Pilkington: There is no reflection upon the Inspector General in the report in this case.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The select committee complain in regard to the percentage of recoveries being not so high as they should be, and they said that it was only 15 per cent. and had fallen off very considerably.

Mr. Jones: It is his own conscience that is condemning him.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: A question was asked as to the reason for this, but the Inspector General was not able to answer it at the time.

Mr. Pickering: Is not the percentage of recoveries all on the same basis?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, on the admissions.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is what I want to point out. There are many patients taken into the wards at the different hospitals that are cured before they leave. They may have been thought to have been insane, otherwise they would not have gone there.

Hon. T. Walker: That is only the testing stage in order to find out whether they are mental or not. It is a receiving home.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The point has been raised as to the discharging of patients and the difficulty there is of getting a patient out of the hospital for insane once he has been placed there. Several complaints were made by the parents, or relatives of insane persons, to the effect that they were unable to get them out of the hospital once they got in. No doubt a lot of the insanity amongst the patients there is due to the lack of accommodation, for they have not all the chance of recovery that they would otherwise get.

Hon. T. Walker: This is a place for making lunatics and not for curing them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, in some cases owing to the overcrowding of the institution and to the lack of proper facilities for the patients.

Hon. T. Walker: You admit that. You had better keep your mouth buttoned up there.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What we want is another building and more accommodation, so that those patients who are likely to recover can be isolated from those who are not likely to recover. When persons are only slightly affected mentally, their chances of recovery are impaired if they are placed amongst other people who are really bad mentally. Such slightly affected persons should be isolated, as is done at Whitby. At this latter place there is a very different type of patients. These patients are given their liberty and have every opportunity of improving in health. They can stay out all day and there is no trouble about controlling them. That cannot be said of the patients at the Claremont Asylum, at all events in its present over-crowded condition. The Turner case has been mentioned. The evidence regarding that case appears in the report and included amongst this is the evidence of Dr. Tymms. The hon. members on reading this evidence must come to the conclusion that Turner was insane. No one knows better than the Inspector General or the superintendent, both of whom are continually passing through the hospitals, how to judge of the insanity of a patient. They have the necessary training and are able to diagnose a case even on sight when passing through the hospital. There is no judge, however eminent he may be, who can determine so well the mental condition of a person as can those who are intimately associated with mental cases. Judges should, therefore, rely upon the testimony of the Inspector General or other medical officers of the institution as to whether a patient should be released or not. In 1902 or 1903 a man was released by a judge contrary to the advice of Dr. Montgomery. This man subsequently took his own life after attempting to shoot the members of his family. This kind of thing has occurred on many occasions. We should not go against the evidence of the medical officers in an institution of this kind, and say that patients should be released when they are not fit to be at large. The question of the shortage of staff was raised. The Inspector General has power by an order in Council to appoint to the staff and also to dismiss any member of the staff if he requires to do so. In his evidence Dr. Birmingham makes comparisons regarding the staffs of the various institutions he visited while on his tour round the world. He visited some 20 institutions in the United States and England, and found that the proportion of attendants to patients was not greater than one to 10. In some cases it was only 1 to 18. In New South Wales the proportion is 1 to 10, in Victoria 1 to 6.2, and in Western Australia 1 to 6.06, which indicates that the number of attendants to patients here is exceptional. The member for Subiaco stated that there were 200 or 300 patients in the hospital suffering from senile decay. Here again trouble arises through the lack of accommodation. Such patients should

be kept in an institution by themselves, so that they can be well cared for. The question of lighting of the institution has also been referred to. This is a matter which should receive attention, and if the lighting can be carried out more cheaply than at present by means of power supplied by the Government electric light station, then the matter can be taken into consideration. With regard to the building, Cabinet decided some three years ago to erect a new one but, owing to the war, the matter was delayed. A previous Government had arranged that the Inspector General and the Government architect should visit the Eastern States with the object of inquiring into this matter. The plans were to have been prepared suitable for an institution of this kind. That matter will be gone into by the Government, and I hope before long the money will be available for the purpose of providing sufficient accommodation for all the patients. The official visitors to the institution have frequently pointed out the necessity for increasing the medical staff. There certainly is not sufficient medical staff there at present. I telegraphed to the Eastern States in order to compare staffs at the institutions there with the staffs here. At Callan Park in New South Wales they have one medical man to 220 patients. At Gladville the proportion is 1 to 287. At Parramatta it is 1 to 312. At Kenmore it is 1 to 366, at Rydalmere it is 1 to 500; in one hospital in Brisbane it is 1 to 339, at another 1 to 386 and at another 1 to 435, and in Adelaide there is a superintendent, an acting superintendent, and a junior medical officer, which represents three medical officers to 1,191 patients. In Melbourne the percentage is 23 to 5,905, or about 1 to 260, and at our own institution the percentage is 1 to 373. It appears, therefore, that the institutions are all on a par in this respect. In my opinion we should have another medical man in that institution, and if it is considered advisable to appoint such a man the appointment will be made. If a board of control is appointed, the whole question of the management of the hospital will undergo a change. Before appointing such a board it will be necessary to decide exactly what the powers of the board will be. It would be very much better if a board were appointed under the control of the Minister because the Minister must keep his hand on the expenditure. It is a matter which will require the closest attention, which will be given to it by the Government. The whole trouble in the institution is caused by over-crowding. If the Government are able to provide the money for erecting another building, much of this trouble will be overcome and matters will be very much better for all concerned.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fre-mantle) [S.28]: The Colonial Secretary has commented on a statement made by the Committee with regard to the percentage of recoveries. The Inspector General could not account for the falling off in the percentage of recoveries. I suggested to him that it might have been brought about by the war and all he said was that it might be. The Colonial Secretary has built up his case on the mental wards of the Perth

and Kalgoorlie hospitals, but these have nothing to do with it.

Hon. T. Walker: Nothing whatever!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: These wards have been in existence for eight or 10 years and the same method of ascertaining the percentage, namely on the admissions, has been in existence for the whole of that time. A patient is committed to the Perth Hospital mental ward if there are any doubts as to his being mentally affected. If he is proved to be insane upon the examination of two doctors, one of whom belongs to the Perth Public Hospital and the other being a visiting doctor, he is committed to the asylum. If he is not insane he does not go to the asylum. This principle would apply whether there were five or 500 persons concerned. Such a patient is not kept in the Perth Hospital for more than seven or 14 days.

The Colonial Secretary: They are kept there for observation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When I was Honorary Minister administering the Health Department, assisting Mr. Drew, a dispute arose over the signing of certificates in connection with patients and the payment for the work. This was in the case of patients committed to the institution. The late Minister, Mr. Connolly, decided upon appointing a new medical officer at the Perth Public Hospital and that the signing of the certificates was to be a part of his duties. The consequence was they could not get the other doctors to sign the certificates with him and Dr. Sweet waited on me to point out the difficulty he had to contend with. He said it had been the practice in the hospital for some years, but Dr. Sweet could not get the other doctors to sign because the guinea was not forthcoming, and it meant that they had to keep the mental patients there longer on account of the doctors failing to sign the certificate. That also meant an increased charge against the hospital. Those patients were there merely for observation and to determine whether they were fit subjects for the asylum. Prior to that time the patients were put into the police lock-up and sent from there to the asylum, but the basis of the Minister's calculation did not apply before the mental ward at the hospital was built. As soon as that ward was opened the patients were not sent to the Claremont institution direct. They were only sent there after they had been declared to be insane by the doctors at the mental ward hospital.

The Colonial Secretary: I am basing my argument on the treatment by the doctors.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That makes no difference; it is based on the percentage.

The Colonial Secretary: The percentage works out equally all the way down.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It does not; it varies. In 1910 the recoveries were 43.39 per cent, and at that time the mental ward was in existence and was being carried on as is being done to-day; that is, a person would

be sent there for observation and would be detained there for a week or 10 days, and if it was proved by observation that the patient was a fit subject for the hospital at Claremont, he was declared to be insane and sent there. The same thing applies to-day. The percentages which appear in the select committee's report are taken from the annual report presented to Parliament by the Inspector General himself. The figures were not prepared specially for the select committee, and I would repeat that, during the past 10 years, there has been no alteration in the method of admitting patients to the institution. At any rate, I have no intention of dealing any further with that. The Minister referred to croton oil. If he has read our report, he will see that we said that croton oil, if administered properly, was beneficial to the patients and that it was used in other parts of the world, or words to that effect, and that it should be administered by a doctor. This appears in the evidence given by Dr. Anderson—

5002. In reference to croton oil, and the question of medical attendants giving it without the permission of the doctor, you use these words, "Are we going to enumerate every drug in the place for the guidance of the attendants." Seeing that croton oil is a very strong purgative and must be used with care, are the attendants instructed at any time that it should not be given without permission of the doctor?—Croton oil is not specifically mentioned to the attendants, and neither is strychnine nor morphia. Attendants are allowed to give cough mixture and the white draught.

5003. By Mr. Angelo: And nothing else?—No. They are allowed to give a laxative like castor oil.

The only question so far as the select committee was concerned in regard to croton oil was that the medical testimony showed that it was used in almost every hospital for the insane and, if properly administered, was beneficial to the patient. Dr. Atkinson stated that it relieved the blood pressure on the brain. Other doctors also stated that it had that effect. But the evidence of the doctors was that it should never to be administered except on the order of a doctor.

Mr. Money: There is nothing in the report that any damage has been done.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. The Minister stated in the House before the select committee was appointed that croton oil was rarely used. The doctors in giving evidence made a similar statement. My colleague on that select committee, the member for Subiaco, and others were anxious to find out how much croton oil had been used. Evidence was given that it had been used in some instances drastically.

The Colonial Secretary: Where did it go?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is what we wanted to find out and we also tried to find out what quantity was used. The store-

keeper was asked and he said, "I have gone into that question and I find that 6ozs. were brought here in 1913. It is kept in the dispensary, not in the store." A statement has been circulated that while the committee asked the storekeeper what quantity of oil was taken in, the Committee did not take into consideration the quantity of oil which was in the wards and which had never been used. I do not know who circulated that story but it must have come from the institution. Anyhow it is quite wrong. The storekeeper does not take in croton oil. It is taken into the dispensary and put into use when required in the various wards. The quantity brought in was 6ozs., and at the time the storekeeper gave evidence he said there was between 2ozs. and 3ozs. there.

Mr. Money: What is it worth an ounce?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know. That aspect of the question had nothing to do with the committee.

Mr. Money: Only that it seems two or three ounces of croton oil have been lost and no damage has been done.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What the committee wanted to find out was the quantity which had been used. We took into consideration the quantity of oil which was taken to the institution, and the quantity that was there at the time of the investigation.

Mr. Money: And there is so much missing?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, and according to the evidence no person administered it. As a matter of fact croton oil has been administered to a fair number of patients, and if the doctors did not administer it, then the attendants or someone else must have done so, or else they gave it to the rats. The report of the select committee sets out—

A good deal of conflicting evidence has been tendered on the question of croton oil being administered to the patients. From the evidence of Dr. Montgomery, Woolooloo Sanatorium (Questions 3607 to 3610) Dr. Atkinson, Principal Medical Officer (Question 4546), and Dr. Birmingham, Fremantle (Question 6467) croton oil is used frequently in all hospitals for the insane and, when properly administered, is of benefit to the patients. It is a drastic purgative, and should only be administered on an order from the doctor. From the evidence of the Inspector General and Dr. Bentley, croton oil is rarely given to patients at Claremont, but, from the evidence of the storekeeper (Question 3464) the quantity used has averaged approximately 150 doses per annum during the last five years. Your committee is of opinion that attendants should be instructed that croton oil shall not be given to patients at any time without a special order from the doctor.

I am not going to say that the doctors administered the croton oil. There is no evidence to bear out that statement. But somebody did administer it.

Mr. Money: The oil is missing, and you are not able to prove that it was used.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: From the evidence tendered it must have been given to a fair number of patients.

Hon. T. Walker: And it was the duty of the hospital authorities to account for it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is another question it is well to refer to. The select committee were not instructed, nor did they investigate, any charges against any person. There is an impression about—of course I have an idea of the source from which it has come—that the select committee were appointed to investigate charges made against Dr. Anderson. Nothing of the kind.

Mr. Pickering: Were any definite charges made?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, we took into consideration the general administration of the hospital. We could not go beyond our instructions given to us by Parliament. We were tied down in regard to the matter. As a matter of fact, the committee had to ask Parliament to extend the powers originally granted to enable them to take in the mental ward at the Perth hospital, the mental ward at Kalgoolie, and the Whitty asylum. The statement has been circulated that the committee did not treat Dr. Anderson fairly, that we did not deal with him justly. That is a lie and I throw it back in the teeth of the person who was responsible for its circulation. The committee sat absolutely unbiassed. As chairman of that committee I had nothing whatever against Dr. Anderson. I went there with a completely open mind so far as he was concerned. Moreover the Labour party have never discussed Dr. Anderson, nor were they, as a party, biassed against him. We took a great deal of evidence. There were 16 male witnesses, of whom five were still at the institution. The others were those who had been dismissed through the isolation regulation. Those 16 came voluntarily in response to the invitation published in the newspaper. Then we had a list of attendants before us, and we picked out 14 names, without knowing the men. In addition one, a late employee of the institution, volunteered to give evidence. The 14 to a man told us they had nothing to say, but would be ready to answer questions. Some of them could not understand what they were there for. Dr. Anderson asked that he should be allowed to be present and examine the witnesses. The matter was dealt with by the committee, and it was decided that he should not be present, because it was contrary to the Standing Orders and, moreover, there was no charge against Dr. Anderson. An additional reason was that it was thought that if he were present we might not get the evidence so freely. But we promised Dr. Anderson a copy of the evidence, so that he could go through it. We first sent a copy to the Minister, to be sent on to Dr. Anderson. Dr. Anderson said it was being delayed, and asked that we should supply him with a copy direct. This we did. Then it was complained that we were keeping back the evidence. The evidence was no sooner produced than we sent a copy straight

away to Dr. Anderson. If ever I have the honour to act on a select committee again, nothing will induce me to send a copy of the evidence to anyone.

Hon. T. Walker: Except to the witnesses.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I will never again send a copy of evidence to any person except to the witness interested.

Mr. Money: Was not Dr. Anderson present during the hearing?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No.

Mr. Harrison: He could not possibly be there all the time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There was no need for him to be there, seeing that we were not investigating any charge against him. We supplied him with the evidence, and he had full opportunity for rebutting that evidence, whereas no other witness had an opportunity for rebutting Dr. Anderson's evidence. Dr. Anderson was the first witness and the last. This is why I shall never again allow a copy of the evidence to go out: The first witnesses from the institution gave their evidence openly and freely, but as soon as they found that Dr. Anderson was getting a copy of the evidence we had difficulty in getting evidence out of them. We could not imagine why this was. I may say we had had evidence against Dr. Anderson on the score of inebriety. In justice to Dr. Anderson, once a witness had charged him with having been the worse for liquor I thought it advisable to ask other witnesses the same question. The majority of them replied in the negative. One to whom I put the question—"Did you ever see Dr. Anderson the worse for liquor in the institution?" said "No." Eventually that witness finished his evidence, and I thanked him for his attendance. As he rose to his feet he said—"In regard to the statement made here that Dr. Anderson has been the worse for liquor, I want to give it an emphatic denial. I have been six years in the institution and I have never seen Dr. Anderson the worse for liquor." Mr. Jones said—"How do you know there is evidence that Dr. Anderson was the worse for liquor?" and the witness replied—"Dr. Bentley told me so."

Mr. Money: That was not wrong.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, under the Standing Orders it was.

Hon. P. Collier: To go priming a witness before he gives evidence!

Mr. Money: Do not say "priming."

Hon. P. Collier: What else was it?

Mr. Nairn: Dr. Bentley was only a witness himself.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not at that time. He had not then been before us. I am revealing this in justice to the select committee. We did everything we could to give Dr. Anderson fair play. The report shows that.

Mr. Money: There is nothing in the report.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yet we are accused of being biassed! However, that statement by the witness indicated the reason why we could not get evidence freely. We

called 15 male attendants, and nine female attendants. Nobody from the female division volunteered to give evidence. Then we had the matron, and, in addition, Dr. Bentley. Seeing that we had evidence from all parts of the institution, it might easily be that some of the witnesses were biased against Dr. Anderson, but on the other hand the greater number were in favour of him. We thought we had taken sufficient evidence to guide us as to the administration of the institution, but Dr. Anderson wanted to bring 16 or 17 additional witnesses to rebut the evidence given. The select committee discussed it and concluded that it was not necessary to have more witnesses; that we had sufficient information before us to report upon, and that it was necessary we should report before Parliament closed. Dr. Anderson had all the evidence and examined it closely. I may add that he had also the assistance of the Crown Law Department.

Hon. P. Collier: Which he was not entitled to.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yet he accuses us of dealing unjustly by him. Dr. Anderson came before us and occupied two days in commenting on the evidence and answering questions put to him. I want to emphasise that the select committee gave Dr. Anderson and everybody connected with the institution fair play, even exceeding their duties in doing so, violating the Standing Orders.

Mr. Angelo: He went right through the evidence himself.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We supplied him with the whole of the evidence, even getting a typewritten copy of the evidence taken on the day on which Dr. Anderson was there, and inviting him to take it home with him for perusal.

Mr. Money: His name is not mentioned in the recommendations.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not think the select committee know even to-day who is the officer in charge of the administration of that institution. Dr. Bentley says he is in charge of the administration, under Dr. Anderson. Dr. Anderson says he is in charge of the administration. We do not know who is the manager of the place. The visiting committee say they recommended the appointment of a superintendent so that the doctor might give more time to the patients; but as soon as the superintendent was appointed he took over the administration.

[Mr. Foley took the Chair.]

Mr. Angelo: There are two bosses there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The select committee endeavoured to do justice to all at the institution. The Minister referred to the number of doctors there. He pointed out that in many of the institutions in the Eastern States they have only the same number of doctors as we have here. In a statement in the Press the other day the late Minister also said that we had not sufficient doctors. But, if hon. members peruse the evidence

they will find that the doctors themselves say that the time they give to the patients is quite sufficient. Apparently from one and a half hours to two hours daily is all the time the doctors give to the patients. If it takes only that time to attend to the patients then clearly there are sufficient doctors at the institution. As far as we could gather, Dr. Anderson does not examine the patients at all. He leaves that to the other doctor. From the doctor's own evidence there is no necessity to increase the number of doctors. The doctors there spend most of their time in routine work. Another point: the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) has asked certain questions in the House in regard to a petition which is going round the institution. It seems to me the doctor at the institution, if aware of this petition, should have immediately stopped it, if he desired to be fair to the select committee and to hon. members. The petition reads as follows:—

We the undersigned members of the staff of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane take this opportunity of respectfully protesting in the strongest manner against the unfair and the unjust criticism which has been levelled against the present Inspector General and his management of the institution. A large number of false statements have been made and a general exaggeration of facts is apparent in the report in the "West Australian." There is no chaos except in the imaginations of some ill-informed people who know nothing of the institution or its workings. Dr. Anderson has never been autocratic in his dealings with the staff, and the patients have always been treated in a most sympathetic and fair manner. It is not in accordance with fact to state that the diet varies between bread and butter and bread and jam. There are always other things such as meat, vegetables, soup, puddings, porridge and milk, which they regularly get. A misleading statement of this kind is obviously unfair both to Dr. Anderson and the staff, and must have a disturbing influence on the general public, who are not cognisant of the conditions of the institution, and who would come to the erroneous conclusion that the patients are starved, whereas in reality they are well fed. The select committee have apparently accepted the statement of a few junior attendants. We understand that the Inspector General was refused the right of calling rebutting evidence. If this had been allowed we feel sure that the committee would not have arrived at the hasty decision as shown in the report. We feel sure it would be impossible to manage such an institution as this with a board of amateurs. What knowledge could such a board possess regarding the mental condition of patients, which takes years of experience to learn? The board could only refer to the medical officers, therefore making unnecessary duplication. In regard to the minute working of the institution, an amateur board could only learn

this from the medical officers and would be guided by the latter's advice. Regarding the staff, we are quite satisfied with the present Inspector General both in his management of the institution and his dealings with the staff, and consider that the inception of a board would be a calamity to the institution.

The "amateurs" we recommended were two doctors, a solicitor, and two laymen. This petition is signed.

Mr. Jones: Read the names, and I shall tell you who they are.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The first name is that of the chief attendant. This petition was permitted to be circulated amongst the staff of the institution. Is that fair to the select committee? We were appointed by the House to make an investigation and it was done fairly, honestly, and justly to all concerned. Is it fair that the officer in charge of the hospital should allow a petition of that kind to be sent around? I do not know who drafted it.

Hon. P. Collier: It is easy to see whose hand was in it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In the "Daily News" of the 24th November there appeared a letter. I do not know who wrote it, but it is signed "Fair Play."

Mr. Jones: It contained the same arguments.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If I tried to guess the writer, I think I could get very near the mark. The letter contained some of the statements which appear in the petition, and asked no fewer than 35 questions in regard to these matters. One of the questions read—

Is it a fact that Mr. Jones, M.L.A., told Dr. Anderson that the whole force of organised labour was out to down him? That is the first I heard of it.

Mr. Jones: And the first I heard of it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Is it fair that, when a select committee were appointed to investigate the conduct of the institution, the officials managing it should permit a petition to be sent around against the work of the committee?

Hon. P. Collier: It was sent to the Minister.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If I were Minister and an officer approached me with a petition of that kind, I should suspend him straight away.

Mr. Money: Is the petition addressed to anyone?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was presented to the Minister.

Hon. T. Walker: This rubber-stamp Minister received it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yesterday the member for Fremantle asked the Minister, among other things, the following question—

Is he aware that a petition is being circulated at the Claremont Hospital for the Insane, during hours of duty, for signature by the attendants, expressing confidence in the Inspector General?

The Colonial Secretary replied—

A petition expressing confidence in the Inspector General has been received.

Some people would think the committee went out of their way to down the Inspector General. I assure members that no person would have been more pleased than I if it had been proved that the institution was getting along without any trouble. There were no complaints regarding the women's wards, either as to food or anything else. Everyone was satisfied and the only matters mentioned were small details in connection with uniforms, etc.

Mr. Money: Were the women's wards equally crowded?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. Regarding the diet of the patients, the select committee said the patients received bread and butter and bread and jam for breakfast and tea 365 days in the year, and porridge for breakfast about three times a week. That is the food they receive for those meals. We know they have a change at dinner time, when they get meat and puddings.

Hon. P. Collier: It was never stated to be otherwise.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. Personally I have nothing whatever against Dr. Anderson. I have had no occasion to treat him unfairly, and every member of the committee endeavoured to render him justice so far as justice could be rendered to him. We are satisfied that a change should be made in the administration of the institution. We are satisfied that those in charge of the institution containing 1,100 people—a township in itself—should be in constant touch with the institution, and as it is necessary to build a new institution we are satisfied it would be far better under the control of a board. The Minister cannot possibly keep in touch with the institution; I do not care who he might be, it is impossible for any Minister to control such an institution. The whole question is whether we are going to have one-man management or a board, as the select committee suggest. We suggest a board somewhat on the lines of the English system. The commissioners in England are mostly inspectors, and we do not expect a board whose chairman would receive £1,800 a year. In England the boards of control are appointed by the county or borough councils. The board of commissioners consists of 11 professional men and six laymen. We think it necessary to have two doctors on the board so that they can bring their medical knowledge to bear on any matters which they might be required to investigate. They have a barrister and solicitor trained specially in regard to these matters, and laymen represent the general public. It is advisable to have a board who come into contact with the patients weekly or fortnightly, not once in three months, and this is what is going on here. If this system were adopted at Claremont, a good deal of the ill-feeling and disorganisation now prevailing there would be removed. Dr. Montgomery told us

that at the asylum in England with which he was connected, a patient was never put under restraint. He said if a patient were kept under restraint for longer than 12 hours, it was necessary to report to the board and justify the action. That shows the effect of a board. We were informed by persons who had experience of other institutions that the medical superintendents went among the patients and mixed with them to find out how they were getting on. Nothing of that is done here.

Mr. Money: As to administration, would it be like the old central board of health?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No; the administration would be more on the lines of the hospital under the charge of the Minister, who would look after the financial side.

Mr. Money: The old central board met weekly.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The board of control could meet as often as was desired. They would have control of the institution and would know what was going on. I did not intend to occupy so much time on this discussion, but I wished to call attention to these matters, and I still think the report of the select committee speaks for itself.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [9.10]: I do not propose to take up much time, but I wish to enter my protest against the very weak speech delivered by the Colonial Secretary. I do not want to be personal, and I have no feeling in the matter, but I must say I have never heard a more apologetic speech on behalf of men who are more or less on their trial by this Committee and the institution they are managing, which is undoubtedly on its trial, than has been given by the Minister. He virtually justified what he imagined he had been accused of being—a rubber stamp to his department. I do not know that he has been exactly accused of being a Minister in that position, but to-night he has practically echoed the sentiments admittedly prepared for him by the officers, who had their chance to speak before the select committee, who had not there and then the answers ready as they were questioned by the committee, but who, after perusing the evidence tendered to and the report of the select committee, have since furbished up a case. We have heard their case through the statement delivered to-night by the Colonial Secretary. I have a feeling of pity for the poor people who are compelled to be in the institution under its present officers and under the present Minister. What has the Minister told us to-night? He has told us that, on account of the conditions prevailing at the Claremont asylum, a person sent down there to be treated is bound to become worse. Those are practically the words he used. If they were mentally defective in a curable stage, they would be incurable after they had been in the asylum for some time. He said it was better to keep lunatics at large, to let them loose and run their risk in the community,

and for the community to run their risks with the lunatics, than to keep them in the institution as it is now being conducted. They have no hope once they get into that institution. That is practically the admission that is made by the Minister in charge. Has anything more shocking been uttered in a Parliament of Australia or anywhere else in the world by a responsible Minister? If that is the state of things can he be satisfied. Can he take his meals or seek his bed in comfort knowing that we are manufacturing lunatics by our method of treating them at Claremont? This State is now being punished for its political sins and its other sins. If ever there was a political sin committed in this country it is in having at the head of a department of this kind a Minister of the calibre representing that department. He evidently is absolutely callous in his heart as to the treatment of these people. He says, in a manner which carries with it no emotion, that he is manufacturing lunatics at Claremont.

Mr. Pickering: A new State industry!

Hon. T. WALKER: I daresay it is. What a state of things it is. Do we wonder at the contempt in which Parliamentary institutions are held, when we have a confession of that kind made from the Treasury benches to night? What kind of Minister is he who receives a petition, got up in the institution itself, it is asserted, and we cannot deafen our ears to what is floating about and is so freely rumoured—

Hon. P. Collier: The facts are not denied.

Hon. T. WALKER: I believe it is a fact. He receives a petition drawn up by these people by the doctors of that institution, the heads of that institution. It is a petition with which to whitewash themselves. It is a petition which might be forgotten if it went no further, but for the violation of every principle protecting inquiries of this kind. It represents a breach of every privilege this House holds dear. Whilst the matter is sub judice and whilst inquiries are proceeding, and whilst this select committee is asked to come to a conclusion on the evidence furnished, its judgment is to be perverted, its opinions are to be biased by a surreptitious petition drawn up under false pretences and in secrecy and received by an irresponsible Minister of the Crown, reflecting on every member of this committee and reflecting especially upon every member of the select committee which was entrusted by the House to take evidence. Can we then say that we have a man fitted to hold that Ministerial chair? Twenty years ago in any Parliament of Australia a Minister who lent his protection—and I was going to say his encouragement—to such a course, would have been arraigned on the floor of the House, and a vote of censure would have been passed on his Government, and the Government of which he was a member would have been compelled to retire from office. That is what would have happened 20 years ago in any Parliament of Australia. But now there is no emotion whatever about it. It falls flat.

These things can go on. No wonder we have an increase in lunacy when affairs of State are so madly conducted as we see them in the case under review. Is the Minister dead to every sense of responsibility that he can aid and abet these plotters behind the back of Parliament, against some of the most painstaking and honourable men who ever undertook unselfishly and entirely unbiased to prosecute this inquiry? I wonder that his colleagues tolerate it. They permit Dr. Anderson and Dr. Bentley and the chief of their staffs to stab in the back those who have performed a public duty, and have submitted the result of their inquiries to this impartial Committee for judgment. Are the Minister's colleagues dead to what is being done? Has every sense of public honour perished in this community? Are we playing at Parliament? Have we forgotten entirely that we are the servants of the people? Above all, have we forgotten that underlying this matter we are dealing with one of the secret springs of social health in our community? What can demand more compassion from man than the failure of the mind, the disease, so to speak, of the soul? Those so bereft and so afflicted as they are with mental disorder at Claremont are our especial charges. They are treated as if they were so many diseased curs, cast from our side, rounded up and impounded, and forever forgotten. That is apparently the way we are treating them. There is no sensibility touched by conduct of that kind. It can go on and the world need not notice it. Let it be put out of sight like a sewer. Let it be something we must cover up and put away so that we might never be conscious of its existence. To what stage of callousness have we grown in the community that the Minister will perpetrate these things in open daylight, and his colleagues can sit unmoved, apparently protecting and shielding him—at all events, keeping him where he is whilst this is going on. The revelations of this committee would at one time have startled the whole world. I am thankful to say we have had some notice taken of it in a section of the Press where I scarcely expected it. The leading article in the "West Australian" was a credit to that paper. It was a surprising departure from its usual course. It touched the raw spot, and clearly demonstrated that the institution had been vilely mismanaged. It rightly drew the people's attention to the fact that a man can be dead and buried for years in that institution, and yet on the books he can be kept alive.

The Premier: Do you blame the Minister for that?

Hon. T. WALKER: No, but when he knows that this exists and that it is possible, and that similar things are going on from day to day, and can put up to night an apology such as he has done, and try and paint this lunatic asylum as a paradise of perfection for management, then I do blame the Minister.

The Premier: That happened in 1913.

Hon. T. WALKER: I do not care when it happened. It is possible that these things can be. We do not need to go back to 1913

because we can see what is occurring now in 1919. To all these things the Minister is dead and I do blame him; and for all that he paints this as the most perfect institution possible. He tries to compare it with institutions in other States and makes it appear that ours comes out on top. That is the burden of his theme to-night. That is what he has been trying to do.

The Premier: Oh no!

Hon. T. WALKER: The Premier was asleep when the Minister was speaking.

The Premier: I was not as much asleep as you think.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Premier was very much asleep or he would have heard what the Minister said. That was the apology the Minister gave to-night—that it was a good institution, that all that has been said against it is wrong, and that if we only looked at a few figures, which were altogether misleading and had nothing to do with the institution, we would see that this asylum was just what it ought to be under all existing circumstances. It is for that I blame the Minister. There is no spirit in him to look at the foundation. There is no spirit in him to make an independent inquiry of his own volition. He frankly tells us that he must be guided by what the heads of the institution tell him. He admitted it and started off with it. He must be guided by these officers. He tried to make it appear that this was a plausible argument.

The Premier: He did not say that.

Hon. T. WALKER: I say he did say so. In order to make it a plausible argument he asks if an hon. member expects him to take a flying machine all round Broome the first thing in the morning.

The Premier: He said Wyndham.

Hon. T. WALKER: Very well, to Wyndham. Does the hon. member expect him to go here, there, and everywhere and inspect things for himself? What was this argument used for but for him to say "I am compelled by the nature of things to be guided by my officers." That was the object. That is why he tells us these things and why he went to such absurdities. He shows us what a fledgling he is.

The Premier: He cannot be in touch with all the patients at once.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Premier apologies for his underling's mishaps and mis-judgments. The Premier is trying to apologise for his Minister.

The Premier: No fear! I am not.

Hon. T. WALKER: He is sheltering the wrong doer, and attempting to protect him from the criticism he deserves.

The Premier: You ought to be fair.

Hon. T. WALKER: I am as fair as justice will permit me to be. I am fair to the uttermost to those poor wretches who are kept there year in and year out, sent in partially mad, but made wholly mad by their treatment in that institution. Fair? Whilst hundreds of men are wasting their lives buried in that living grave! Fair? With a Minister who can sleep snugly in

his bed whilst that is going on, and knowing it is going on, and apologising for those very people that keep that state of things in perpetuity! Fair? It is on the Treasury Benches that the unfairness exists, whilst that thing can persist in a civilised community. I am fair. I am saying that the Minister himself admits, as stated, that he must be guided by his officers and only guided by them. What is the good of having a Minister, then? What is the Minister for? A Minister surely is a man who makes his own inquiry, who can scent out a misfit among his officers, who can detect the misapplication of effort to the purpose intended, who can ascertain the imperfection of the machinery over which he presides, who knows something of the workings of human nature, of the weaknesses that may mislead and misguide and misdirect. What is the Minister for if it is not to prevent these very corruptions, these very wrongs that are eating into the heart of our society like a cancer? What is he for if he is not for that? Is he there merely to record the statements of Dr. Anderson? Merely to be Dr. Anderson's parrot gramophone in this Chamber? Merely to transcribe to us the frenzies of apology on the part of those who have been wrong-doers under his aegis? Merely to act thus is to make responsible government a travesty. It is to degrade the institutions to that level when the scorn and contempt of the public are amply earned. There is no responsibility in a Minister who is merely the recording machine of those who are running these concerns. The Minister is there to be a part of the life of the machine. He should be a real directing agency. He is the man who, ascertaining by any source of information the defects, should be able at once to correct them by having the moral courage to remove, if necessary, the offending officer without a scruple and even without a moment's delay. But that is not done. The Minister is no more than a mere figure head, filling a post and pretending that the office is discharged, misleading the public, allowing the disease—for such I cannot but call it—to sink deeper and deeper into the community. The State is disgraced by the multitude of its mentally aberrant subjects, disgraced by the apparent lack of humanity. I hope to goodness that some moral courage will be found somewhere in the Cabinet, and that this sort of thing will be stopped. If men had the pluck now that they had in my younger days, if we had such moral courage in the general community as I knew of in my early life, a Minister who could put up a defence like that which we heard to-night would not be in office for another week. Fortunately the Minister has gone; but I would like the Premier to say to-night that the present management of the Hospital for the Insane is not only absolutely unsatisfactory but disgraceful, and—worse than disgraceful—dangerous.

The Premier: The Minister told you he was going to give the report full consideration.

Hon. T. WALKER: We know the kind of consideration that means. It is an absolutely empty phrase.

The Premier: No, it is not.

Hon. T. WALKER: Let us know that the form of management is to be changed. The Minister knows that it ought to be. Why should the institution be handed over to one doctor or two doctors? It is the preserve of the doctors now. Until this select committee had inquired, we could not touch them. If a cry came from that institution, if a complaint reached the public, it was stifled. When inquiry was proposed here, the demand was stifled; and the same thing occurred in another place. When the select committee was first asked for, how was that demand opposed? "For goodness sake do not have an inquiry!" That is the sort of thing that went on. There was no inquiry for ever so long. But at last an inquiry does come, and the revelations are startling. And the Chairman tells us that the select committee's report puts things mildly. No person reading the report in conjunction with the evidence but must recognise how softly the hand has covered the offender with reproach. Even in the select committee's report there is a screening, and not an exposing, of the wrongs. If I may say so, the report is milk-and-watery. It is a mild report, quite in accordance with the kindly nature of the chairman and the other members of the committee.

Hon. P. Collier: And yet the committee have been charged with bias.

Hon. T. WALKER: No person reading the report and evidence but must recognise that the evidence goes far beyond the mild, gentle suggestions of change and pointing out of wrongs.

The Premier: That is just what the committee were to suggest.

Hon. T. WALKER: I know that; and they did suggest changes. But the evidence is a revelation far beyond the report. If the report had been written by those whose blood was boiling at the revelations made, there would have been strictures and condemnations and blame in almost every paragraph. But all that is eliminated. Nobody is blamed.

The Premier: If you want to work reforms, that is the way to treat the subject.

Hon. T. WALKER: There it is! Policy! In order to work reforms, be kind. Never expose the wrong-doer. Screen him, shelter him, stroke him down. What a different spirit was exhibited by those who were in authority at that institution! Nobody is to be hurt. But Dr. Anderson and the rest, without coming forward themselves in their own names, get their underlings to write petitions to the Minister and letters to the Press, inferentially abusing and slandering the members of the select committee, and

trying to poison the public mind against the committee.

The Premier: Surely you do not accuse Dr. Anderson of having done that?

Hon. T. WALKER: If I am rightly informed, Anderson and Bentley had their fingers in the pie as regards the getting up of that petition.

The Premier: Oh, no!

Hon. P. Collier: It bears their stamp in every line.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes. Let the Premier make no mistake about that. The Colonial Secretary should know that if he can get petitions like that while the matter is sub judice in this House, all is not well at Claremont. Now is the time for us to know what changes there are to be. The Premier in his calmer moments would not for a moment think of handing over the full management of the institution to these doctors, letting them be in untrammelled, uninspected control from year's end to year's end, while having charge of the most delicate infirmity that can fall upon humanity—disease of the mind. The reforms in England that turned lunacy into a curable disease from a possession by demons were not brought about by methods of the kind that we see adopted in this Chamber. They were brought about by strong, stern resistance to those who then followed the same methods as are in vogue at Claremont now. The light of day was let in on those methods in England, and thus the poor, pitiable creatures in the asylums were brought under the public compassion, and it became impossible to send men and women to those institutions to be lost sight of for ever and to be shut out from all hope. It cannot be so any longer in England. One part of the publicity and one part of the security and one part of the protection of these unfortunate persons in England is the government by commissioners, by boards in every county. In England they will not tolerate the heads of these institutions being unwatched, uninspected, ungoverned. In England the public is in touch with the asylums, and watches them. That was the change which our own Lunacy Act was intended to bring about. But we are drifting back to the days before reforms were effected. We shall become the abhorred of every civilised nation of the earth. We ought to have a statement at once that a change shall be made, that there shall no longer be a kingship, so to speak, of the lunatic asylum, but a reduction to order and responsible government. Let us have management of the institution by a board in touch with the public, backed by a Minister capable of performing his duties, a Minister who will see that the public are protected, and not the delinquents.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [9.43] I do not know that there is much use in discussing the matter any further. The close of the session is near, and I suppose that is why we have only nine members present out of 50. The others have become weary, I presume.

But I think it would be a good thing if we were nearing not only the end of the session, but the end of our inglorious existence as a Parliament. The Minister has disappeared; but I want to say that I endorse every word that has been uttered by the member for Kanowna regarding the attitude of the Colonial Secretary as affecting the administration of this department. We listened to-night for a considerable space to the Minister, who had had ample time to peruse the report and the proceedings of this select committee, and to prepare a statement to be made here of the course of action he intends to pursue regarding the institution at Claremont. But a more miserable, pitiful exhibition than the Minister made of himself to-night I have never seen during the years I have been in this Parliament. Was there in the Minister's speech any indication that he intended to take a firm hold of the institution? Was there in that speech the slightest indication of a desire to effect reform? He recited like a schoolboy, a pitiful apology for everything that has been condemned by the select committee. The points raised were enumerated one by one, and while he could not, or dare not, disagree with the recommendations and findings of the committee, he did go so far as to apologise for the incapable and inefficient management of the institution. I did not expect that the Minister would come down with a determined, decided policy regarding the findings of the committee; that is a matter for Cabinet decision, and I am fair enough to say that Cabinet has not had time to deal with the whole of these matters. Instead of expressing surprise, dissatisfaction, and abhorrence at some of the things revealed by the select committee's report, as a Minister with any regard for his responsibilities and duty would do, we heard him like a gramophone, pouring out in a miserable, weakly fashion everything pumped into him by the Inspector General of the Insane. What hope is there for reform from a Minister like this? He might make an efficient official or Minister in the Lands Department, or some other department, looking after the welfare of stock, but to have him in charge of our institutions, asylums, and gaols, which touch our social life and have to do with human life and suffering, is to have one in control of administration who is incapable and unfitted for the position. It is not too hard a thing to say that the Minister has shown a callous and cold-blooded attitude on this matter, which indicates to the House and the people generally that he is not fit to administer these or similar institutions. He resisted an inquiry into the management of the institution as long as it was possible for him to do so. We did not expect him to know all the details of the administration of the institution. His childlike defence, when I charged him with responsibility of administering the affairs of this institution, was the schoolboy expression about expecting him to fly in an aeroplane to-

Moola Bulla to inquire into the management of the station. What puerile nonsense for a Minister to talk! No one expects him to know the details regarding the institution, but we expect him to have some independence of thought and judgment for himself, and not a mere rubber stamp and gramophone for the officials placed under him. Not only did he attempt to prevent the inquiry being made, in order that members might have an opportunity of knowing how the administration of the institution was conducted, but when he secured the unanimous report of the select committee, which was conducted in an impartial manner, the language of which was moderate in the extreme, instead of showing some strength of character and determination to alter things, he gave us a list of the items dealt with and made excuses. He "hopes" that the appliances will be improved, not that he has given instructions. He "trusts" that the Inspector General will seek to remedy the defects in the alarms. When one hears such expressions one wonders what else can be expected from him. The Premier had interjected, when reference was made to the petition, that attendants were free to take that action. Attendants should not be free to approach a Minister by way of petition couched in language which reflects upon the work of the select committee. If it were couched in respectful language, it might be different, but when it is framed in such a way as to say in effect that the committee were working in an incapable and inefficient manner, and that the committee had based their findings on the evidence of a few junior attendants, and went on to reflect not only upon the committee but upon the House, while the matter was sub judice, I say the Minister had no right to receive it. I wonder if the Inspector General would have extended the same freedom to those desirous to forward a petition to the Minister requesting his removal. The Premier: He could not prevent that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We know how he fired attendants out at the institution for not half the offence as would be involved in the sending of this petition.

The Colonial Secretary: How do you know he had anything to do with it?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not a fool. It bears his mark all through the wording.

The Colonial Secretary: How can you prove that?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The wording is sufficient. The whole thing is, from beginning to end, his work, and it is signed by sycophants, one of the first of whom is a man who jumped on a person and was responsible for his death in an institution. That is the man who is protected and retained in the asylum. This shows clearly what can be permitted in such an institution, where a man can remain three days without examination, to be allowed to die ultimately like a dog. What happened then, goes on now. The Inspector General has been at work very actively since this report of the select committee was pre-

sented, in order that the findings should be set aside. It would be a calamity, say these "know-alls" who signed the petition, if the institution were placed under the control and management of a board. They know more than this impartial committee who had the evidence before them and examined so many witnesses. So the whole miserable thing goes on. It is quite clear to my mind that the Minister has no intention of making any alteration. His object is to get through this House and hop into recess, and let the same condition of affairs go on.

The Premier: That is not so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When the motion was brought forward for the inquiry into this institution, members had been approached with special pleading against the inquiry. We know how the Inspector General himself has lobbied members in this House, trying to avoid the investigation of affairs at his institution. He knew that an inquiry would reveal things which would not reflect creditably upon his control of the institution. Now, if he can secure the overthrow of the recommendations of the select committee, so that he can continue, all will be well. One only needs to read the evidence of Dr. Bentley and Dr. Anderson and then ask who is in control of the institution. Because the management is said to be in a state of chaos, these "know-alls" charge attendants mostly, set themselves up to petition the Minister urging the ease of the Inspector General. Chaos is no name for it. I have no feeling in the matter regarding Dr. Anderson. I have never met Dr. Anderson except on one or two occasions and have no feelings against him personally or politically. But when I know that these things have been going on in the institution where these unfortunates are committed to the care of the people, I would be criminally negligent of my duty if I did not voice my opposition. I do not care whether it hurts the feelings of Dr. Anderson or anyone else. I am not going to be a party to people being herded together as these patients at Claremont are. What has the Minister to say about that passage in the report which shows that unfortunate patients are kept in strait-jackets from 4.30 in the afternoon till 11 o'clock the following morning? The committee say there are not sufficient attendants. If there were more, then the patients would be released from this restraint. The Minister has nothing at all to say about that. He merely makes a miserable apology, so far as he dares, merely expressing the view of Dr. Anderson. Could anything be more humiliating than hearing a Minister recite figures which mean nothing at all, in explanation of the fall in the percentage of recoveries. A more absurd contention I never heard in my life. It shows how weak the Minister is in the hands of the Inspector General, because he comes here to mislead this House with figures that have no bearing on the question, and which the Inspector General was too shrewd to advance

himself when he was before the committee. When asked to explain the fall in percentages, the Inspector General explained that he did not know, except that they did not recover. When he thought the matter over, he primed the Minister up with a set of figures, and by quoting them to us, he attempted to mislead this House and the country as well. The figures have no bearing on the recoveries whatever. The fact that the Minister swallowed them, and repeated them here, shows how he is under the domination of the Inspector General. It is no use discussing the matter further; the majority of members do not care. They want to get in recess and get away from here.

Mr. Jones: And leave the patients in the hell they are in.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They are not concerned. If a division is taken on this question they will troop in and vote blindly, regardless of what is to take place in that institution. I do not feel disposed to allow the session to close, leaving those unfortunate at the asylum in their present position, unless we get a definite indication that an improvement is to be made. If the Ministry were likely to endeavour to effect some reforms one might be satisfied to allow things to go; but when we have only a lame duck kind of explanation, nothing more than a miserable defence of the present management, it is quite clear that we are not going to get any improvement if it is left in the hands of the Minister. That being so, the Committee is not justified in allowing the Estimates to go through.

The Colonial Secretary: You will find there will be an improvement.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why did not the Minister say so before?

The Colonial Secretary: I told you distinctly that I intend to go into it thoroughly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I should have more faith in the Minister's expressed determination to go into the question if he had not spent so much time in a miserable apology for the present condition of affairs. Too often do Ministers seem to think that they must be loyal to subordinate officers, that it is their duty to accept the say-so of officers in responsible positions. Ministers say they must rely upon those officers. Of course they must rely on them for the general management of an institution; but Ministers should themselves exercise some judgment and initiative, should not be content to be rubber stamps for the permanent heads. It is a bad thing for all when Ministers are dominated by their departmental officers.

The Colonial Secretary: I desire to see an improvement. There is not anybody in the Chamber who does not desire a considerable improvement.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister has not expressed any very keen desire to improve things. He certainly said he hoped the Inspector General would improve the fire appliances.

The Colonial Secretary: They are easily attended to.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is true, but they are highly important, although easily attended to. It shows what the management has been, when even the fire appliances have been neglected! The fact that things have been allowed to drift as they have is clear proof that no effective reform can be secured under the present control, that nothing less than a complete change in management will be any good. When Dr. Bentley was appointed superintendent, we were told that more time would be devoted by the doctors to the inmates; yet only one and a half hours daily is devoted to the inmates now, notwithstanding that we have two highly paid medical officers, and that Dr. Bentley's salary has been increased from £400 to £750. Those two highly paid officers put in practically all their time in routine administration, and both admit that they overlap each other in this. I am going to divide the Committee in an attempt to reduce the amount; not that I want the amount reduced, for the money is required by the institution; but in order to secure an expression of opinion from the Committee that as the result of the findings of the select committee a complete change in administration ought to be made.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [10.5]: It is the intention of the Minister and of the Government alike to go thoroughly into this question as soon as the House is in recess. Something has to be done, and we intend that it shall be done. But I doubt whether the Committee wants to know to-night what can be done. The leader of the Opposition has been fair enough to say that we have not had time to determine that. I am satisfied that some of the recommendations of the select committee will be given effect to.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the Colonial Secretary devoted the whole of his speech to apologising for the existing conditions?

The PREMIER: I have heard the hon. member himself defending the administration of the departments. It is not fair to attach to the Minister all the blame for the past mismanagement. The Minister has been but a few months in office. Have matters gone from bad to worse during those few months? Of course not. The Minister is quite able to manage the affairs of his office, and he has managed them well; but can he be expected to personally visit the asylum? We have a visiting committee to do that, and the Minister must be entitled to take reports from that committee. To attack the Minister personally is, I think, unfair. The Government and every member thereof must be held responsible for what happens in the departments. No man could have done more than the Minister has done during the few months he has been in office. I know that the man who signed this report of the select committee is an absolutely fair man. I know that every word in this report is true, for I know the fairness of the chairman of that committee. When he presents a report

to the House, every member has a proper regard for it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That was the unanimous report of the committee.

The PREMIER: I know that. But it should be recognised that the Minister has a serious responsibility, and is not unconcerned. He was just as much distressed as was the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) when this report came out. I hope the Committee will not reduce the vote, but will trust the Government to do what is right. We shall not disregard the recommendations of the select committee. I hope the Committee will agree with me that the Minister has done his duty in connection with the control of this hospital. To blame him for what has happened would be ridiculous. Something has been said about the medical reports on the Chinaman who had been dead for six years. But the hon. member himself was in office for more than half the term referred to. Yet an attempt is made to place the responsibility on the present Minister, who has been in office only three months.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We do not blame him; the thing was done before he came into office.

Hon. P. Collier: We are blaming him, not for the past, but for making, as he did today, an apology for the existing conditions.

The PREMIER: The position is a very difficult one. I ask the Committee to leave it to the Government to do what is right. We realise our responsibility. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) knows well that what is necessary will be done.

Mr. Jones: But I want something more definite than that.

The PREMIER: You cannot get anything more definite to-night.

Mr. Jones: You might say whether you are prepared to reinstate those returned soldiers.

The PREMIER: We are prepared to go into the whole question.

Mr. Jones: And sack the office boy as a reform!

The PREMIER: We are not in the habit of playing the part of cowards. We will do what is right.

Mr. Jones: I like that much better.

The PREMIER: We will do what is right. I hope the Committee will not reduce the vote. I am not going to discuss the subject further. I have said all that can be said to-night. I am not going to discuss all the happenings at Claremont. It is bad enough that those things should be.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [10.10]: The Committee owes a debt of gratitude to the select committee. I think they are to be commended for the temperate tone of their report. I am more especially pleased with the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones). I have not been very much in sympathy with that hon. member, but I think his course of action in regard to the asylum has been warranted by the facts.

The Premier: Why cannot you wait until we have time to consider it?

Mr. PICKERING: I have a perfect right to discuss the question before the Committee, and I intend to exercise that right.

The Premier: I am not referring to the hon. member.

Mr. PICKERING: I beg your pardon. It is evident from the report that there are certain things requiring plenty of attention, the most important being the lack of accommodation. It is a disgrace to the Government, if they do not take immediate steps to reform that condition.

The Premier: Do you mean the Government of six years ago, or the Government of six weeks ago.

Mr. PICKERING: It does not matter. If the present condition has existed for six years, it should be remedied at once. It has been stated that the asylum is practically rendering the inmates incapable of recovery. That is an appalling thing to be said, yet apparently it is a fact, and the sooner the country awakens to the gravity of the position the better for the country. We have heard a very capable address by the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) to-night, which I venture to say was fully warranted. It is of vital importance that immediate steps should be taken to remedy the position. Then there is the condition of the fire appliances. Can anyone conceive a more appalling position than that which might arise at the asylum at any time through the neglect of any observances for the safety of the patients? The condition of the fire appliances, as shown in the report, is appalling. Yet it means only a trivial expenditure to put them right. We are not told that that is to be immediately rectified, or at all events the assurance of the Minister has not been definite enough. The report is very clear upon the unsatisfactory condition of the system of alarms in the institution. That also should be immediately remedied. Regarding the use of croton oil at the institution, there is obviously a big discrepancy between the quantity issued from the store and the quantity which the doctors said had actually been administered to patients. Of course the balance may have been administered or not. That cannot be proved, but the recommendation of the select committee that croton oil should be administered only under direct instructions from the doctors, is a good one, and it should be observed. I do not think I need delay the Committee on this question.

Mr. Nairn: No.

Mr. PICKERING: If the hon. member is so satisfied about that, it shows he has a realisation of the appalling conditions prevailing at the asylum. I think it behoves every member to express his views on this matter. I feel very strongly on it, and I hope the Minister will give effect to the very reasonable recommendations given in a most temperate way by a most impartial select committee.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	..	19

Majority against .. 7

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Collier	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Jones	Mr. O'Loghlin
Mr. Lambert	(Teller.)
Mr. Lutey	

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Broun	Mr. Money
Mr. Brown	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Draper	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Durack	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. George	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Maley	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Mr. Lutey: Mr. Chairman, I think you might have allowed members to resume their seats after the division before putting the vote.

The CHAIRMAN: I waited till hon. members had got to their seats.

Mr. Lutey: There was not one member seated when you put the vote.

Postponed Vote—State Children, £73,091—agreed to.

Business Undertakings:

Postponed Vote—State trading concerns, £8,443:

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [10.22]: Last night I promised to obtain information regarding this vote. The amount of £8,443 is made up of two items, loss on trading meat distribution £224, and shipment of cattle from North-West, loss on trading £8,219. I should like to explain for the information of the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) that the item could not appear as trading concerns and be written off against revenue.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How could it be a loss against trading concerns when £20,000 is received and £12,000 expended?

The PREMIER: I have a statement regarding the shipment of North-West cattle which the hon. member may see. In 1916-17, there was a profit of £24,187. In 1917-18, there was a loss of £39,909. On the completion of operations on the 28th February, 1919, the final loss was £15,722, which includes departmental and other charges.

Hon. P. Collier: Does £8,443 represent the loss for the last financial year?

The PREMIER: No, that was really on the 1917-18 trading. A thousand of these

cattle were sent to Yandanooka for fattening, and were not cleared off until January, 1919, but they belonged to the 1917-18 shipment.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This is the balance of the loss on the old concern.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What was the total loss on these shipments?

The PREMIER: It was £15,722.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not by a Labour Government either.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no item for this year?

The PREMIER: No, the shipments ceased in 1917-18, and this is to clear off the debit.

Vote put and passed.

This concluded the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year.

Resolutions as passed in Committee of Supply granting supplies amounting to £3,778,684 from Consolidated Revenue and a further sum of £232,448 from the sale of Government property Trust Account were formally reported.

On motion by the PREMIER, report from Committee of Supply adopted.

Committee of Ways and Means.

The House having resolved itself into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Foley in the Chair,

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [10.27]: I move—

That towards making good the supply granted to His Majesty, a sum not exceeding £3,778,684 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Western Australia and a further sum not exceeding £232,448 from the sale of Government property Trust Account.

Question—put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Foley in the Chair.

Vote—State Ferries, £6,039; Hon. F. T. Broun, Minister.

Mr. JONES: I should like an explanation from the Minister regarding this vote. This trading concern seems to have no balance sheet or report, and we are told nothing about it. It might be a ferry across the Styx for all we know. We are supposed to vote this sum of money without being given any particulars regarding it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is an increase of £30 over last year's expenditure. The balance sheets have been prepared and have been laid on the Table of

the House. Departmental charges amount to £125,—in previous years this has been £205—and interest on capital invested to £574 2s. 8d. The total cost of the ferries was £12,758. The sinking fund which has been paid on the ferries reduces the amount to £9,573 12s. 7d. The contribution to the statutory sinking fund amounts to £49 7s. 5d., and the depreciation written off is £507 0s. 7d. The profit for the year ended June 30th last was £1,095 2s. 9d. The accumulated profits since the ferries commenced operations in March, 1912, amount to £3,461 14s. 9d. For the year ended the 30th June, 1913, covering a period of 16 months, there was a profit of £1,250. In 1914 this fell to £1,150. In 1915 there was a loss of £396 10s. 11d., and in 1916 a loss of £355 17s. 3d. In 1917 there was a profit of £37 0s. 9d., and in 1918 a profit of £680 19s. 5d. The total profit was, therefore, £4,214. Interest and sinking fund is provided for and the ferries, after allowing for depreciation and sinking fund, cost £9,573. The service so far as I know is satisfactory. An application will shortly be made for an extension of the service to Queen-street, but that has not yet been taken into consideration. I hope to go into the matter soon, and if it is possible to give the increased service I will do so. The "Perth" is not satisfactory because she is too costly to run between the Barrack-street jetty and South Perth. She consumes a large amount of coal and we are unable to use her outside the Swan River waters because she is not built to go under the bridge for pleasure purposes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The traffic is not sufficient for her.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No. She is used for pleasure purposes on the river, but we cannot use her outside, which is unfortunate. It will be necessary before long to have another boat. The "Duchess" which is very useful is getting old. She is still very servicable and will last a number of years. By the time she is out of commission, the whole of the capital value of the ferries will be very much reduced.

Mr. Lutey: This year an amount for depreciation of £570 is shown and for last year this was £542. Is this based on the usual 10 per cent. depreciation?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The depreciation is based on the capital value, which is £12,000 odd. I cannot tell the percentage of sinking fund, but it is very low, although quite sufficient.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—State Hotels, £29,068.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I will divide the Committee unless I get a promise on the matter about which I am going to speak. At present, when there is keen interest being taken regarding profiteering, the Government should not set a bad example.

The Colonial Secretary: They are not.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister visited the Dwellingup State hotel with me two or three weeks ago.

The Colonial Secretary: In regard to beer?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In regard to both beer and whisky. At the State hotel one has to pay 12s. 6d. a bottle for whisky, whereas it is only 8s. in Perth. Beer at the State hotel is sold at 1s. 3d. a bottle.

The Minister for Mines: We guarantee it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Swan beer is the same wherever it is sold. It can be bought at one of the mills for one shilling a bottle. At the Marrinup mills Charlie Carter is selling it there every day at one shilling a bottle.

The Minister for Mines: At a store?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: He sends it from Perth for 48s. a case, freight paid.

The Minister for Mines: He has no hotel.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No. He does not pay a license fee, nor does the State.

The Colonial Secretary: Is he selling without a license?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: He has a gallon license in Perth. I admit that an hotel must employ a staff in order to provide for the convenience of the public. I want the Minister to explain the discrepancy between the shilling and the 1s. 3d. The threepence, or portion of it, will have to come off.

The Minister for Mines: Carter will have to come off. A gallon license in Perth does not entitle him to sell beer there.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Any person with a gallon license can sell beer anywhere.

The Minister for Mines: We will have to alter that.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is the law to-day, and as long as a citizen is carrying out the law that is sufficient. In every Government department we are profiteering in the sale of liquor.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A grocer has not the same expenses as an hotel-keeper.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I grant that, and I am prepared to allow the hotel-keeper a margin, but 3d. on every bottle of beer is too much. I am determined to debate this matter at considerable length unless I get an assurance from the Minister that there will be a reduction. I do not like to appear as an advocate of liquor selling, but beer is necessary for some workers, as was recently proved in England. A bottle of beer is a necessity to many men after their day's work; it is part of their living expenses.

The Minister for Mines: We do not want a bottle trade at the State hotels.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is nearly all a bottle trade at the Dwellingup State hotel. I do not want to move a reduction in this vote until the Minister has had the opportunity of making a statement. In its first year the Dwellingup hotel, showed a profit of over £1,000, and it has made considerable profits since. The State hotel should not be made a drinking den, but neither should it over-

charge. Licensed victuallers are carrying their beer 269 miles from Perth and selling it at 1s. 3d. per bottle. This State hotel is only 70 miles from Perth, and beer is practically the only liquor consumed there. I have talked the matter over with the Colonial Secretary, who points out that there are breakages, and this, that, and the other. But these things also apply in the case of the private trader. The freight on four dozen bottles of beer to Marrinup is now only 4s.

The Colonial Secretary: Distance does not affect freight much.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But 269 miles is considerably farther than 70 miles. The Railway Department will not carry the freight the other 200 miles for nothing.

The Colonial Secretary: The freight is not on a mileage basis.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The State hotel alone is allowed to sell at Marrinup. A private trader would sell beer at less than 1s. 3d. per bottle there.

The Minister for Mines: But he would not allow anything for the returned empty bottles.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In Perth whisky can be bought at 8s. or 9s. per bottle.

The Colonial Secretary: What is the quality?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not know one whisky from another, but we all know that there are recognised brands of whisky. The same whisky as is supplied here in Parliament House can be purchased in Perth for 3s. or 4s. per bottle less than the whisky at the Dwellingup State hotel. I understand that building operations at Dwellingup are being pushed on. I am glad of the assurance I have received in that respect, because the condition of affairs was dreadful. Personally I think the expenditure being incurred is somewhat too great, but it is not my place to object to the opinion of the Government experts on that point. I do, however, object strongly to profiteering in the liquor trade by an establishment which was not designed solely for the purpose of trading in liquor. I await an explanation from the Colonial Secretary before I move a reduction of the vote.

[Mr. Stubbs resumed the Chair.]

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have already explained the matter of charges at the Dwellingup State hotel to the member for Forrest. I paid a visit to Dwellingup in company with that hon. member, and discussed the subject with him and others there. As regards whisky—

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I will let the whisky slide. I am not a judge of that. Come to the beer.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: As regards the beer, I know that private buyers can obtain beer in Perth for 9s. 6d. per dozen, and that the freight to Dwellingup on that quantity is 1s. That is all right for a trader selling by the case.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But you charge 15s. a dozen.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If customers will come to our Dwellingup hotel and buy beer by the case, we will sell it much cheaper.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: You charge 1s. 3d. per bottle if a customer takes away a dozen.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Distance does not make much difference as regards freight. Throughout the country towns beer is sold at 1s. 3d. per bottle. That is the price at Beverley. I want the member for Forrest to bear in mind that there is a staff employed at the Dwellingup State hotel.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Produce the statement of the profits made by that hotel since its inception.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I admit that the profits have been good; but is that any reason for reducing the price of beer?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: You could get £10,000 for that hotel if you sold it to-morrow; and it is only a shell.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I know it is the best State hotel we have. I will talk the matter over with the hon. member. I do not want to make a definite promise just now, but I will see what can be done.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am dissatisfied with the whole management and conduct of State hotels. Last year we had a discussion on State hotels and their mismanagement, and the appointment of the accountant in the Colonial Secretary's Department to take control was hotly criticised.

The Colonial Secretary: The hotels are very much improved now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Mr. Underwood, who was Honorary Minister last year, said that the appointment of a general manager was contemplated, but no change appears to have been made. Who is the manager now?

The Colonial Secretary: Mr. Campbell.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The accountant in the Colonial Secretary's office. Objection was taken before to the fact that a man occupying the position of accountant and who had no experience in the management of hotels should be appointed to such a position.

The Colonial Secretary: But he is not accountant now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: What is he?

The Colonial Secretary: He is in control of the State hotels.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Last year the leader of the Opposition moved for a reduction of the vote as a protest against the appointment of this officer. I have no objection to Mr. Campbell. I hope he is doing his best, but an undertaking was given that a general manager would be appointed, and the opinion of the House at that time was that a qualified man, one who had had experience in the management of hotels, would receive the appointment. I am inclined to think that the public are not getting that satisfaction that they are entitled to receive. The Minister now gives the same old stereotyped reply that we always receive from Ministers in connection with the price of beer.

The Minister for Works: I have paid 1s. 6d. for it in Bunbury.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Then they must have seen the Minister for Works coming. I am surprised that he allowed himself to be imposed upon. This particular hotel was purchased for £2,000 and has shown a handsome profit ever since, and if it were in the hands of a private individual the trade would be considerably increased. I object to this profiteering in State hotels. It is a bad example for the Government to set. I want a statement from the Minister that the price will be reduced.

The Minister for Mines: They can refuse to drink it at the price.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The hon. member knows human nature as well as do most men. Since the Minister will not give an undertaking that he will reduce the price, I am going to move that the vote be reduced by £10. I took a prominent part in the establishment of that hotel, which has brought in a handsome profit to the State. The gentleman who erected those premises would have made £40,000 or £50,000 had he secured the license, but as one in favour of State hotels I hawked a petition round the district for the establishment of a State hotel.

The Premier: It would be better for the Committee to reduce the vote than to have the price of liquor reduced.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is unfair to be overcharging 3d. on every bottle of beer. Why cannot the Minister give an undertaking to reduce the price of the single bottle?

The Colonial Secretary: I will effect a reduction of one penny per bottle on half a dozen bottles, but we cannot reduce the price of the single bottle.

Mr. LAMBERT: From a comic opera point of view the debate is the most successful we have had; from a serious point of view it is one of the most diabolical discussions that have ever taken place in this Assembly. If we have arrived at that stage when Ministers and members bargain across the House as to the price at which a bottle of beer shall be sold in State hotels, the sooner we put up the State hotels to public auction the better. For a long time I entertained the idea that when State hotels were established some little standard of conduct would be shown in the control of them. It is pretty near time the Minister controlling, and the Cabinet generally, outlined a clear policy regarding State hotels. If the hotels have not performed that function which those who instituted them thought they would, the sooner they are put up to public auction the better.

Mr. O'Loghlen: I think they are performing it.

Mr. LAMBERT: I hope that in the hon. member's electorate they are. The first function of a State hotel is, not to provide cheap beer, but to provide reasonable accommodation and, further, if there is any profit from the State hotel it should go to lessen the consumption of liquor.

Mr. O'Loghlen: By charging exorbitant prices.

Mr. LAMBERT: No. This country must realise, and it is not a wowsler who is speaking, that the biggest problem facing Australia is that of the liquor traffic. When liquor is used in moderation no exception can be taken to it, but its excesses and the evils that excesses bring in their train are responsible for the harm. Thoughtful men should consider the position not in an attitude of cowardice or wowslerism, but from a common sense viewpoint. In Western Australia particularly, the consumption of liquor is infinitely too great. By means of education, recreation and the betterment of economic and social conditions, men must be helped and taught to refrain from ruining their health by over-indulgence in liquor. I hope the Minister will consider this question. The Minister for Works is considering a proposal to sell the State sawmills. We know the attitude of the Government towards State trading concerns. I do not regard State hotels solely as a State enterprise. There is a great moral principle underlying the policy of the party who launched out in this direction. If I thought I had to advocate the excessive use of alcohol because of State hotels, I would be prepared to give up my seat to-morrow. The attitude of nine-tenths of the members of Parliament on this question is one of absolute cowardice.

The Minister for Mines: Because you have a patent medicine to put on the market.

Mr. LAMBERT: This is not a question for levity. Throughout the world, it is being discussed by thoughtful men. It would ill-become one to speak from a wowslerish point of view but, for the future good of the country, the problem should be tackled courageously. I take exception to the appointment of Mr. Campbell as general manager. We should run the State hotels on business lines and, to do this, a man cognisant with the whole of the ramifications of public house keeping should have been obtained.

The Minister for Mines: But you said you wanted some reforms.

Mr. LAMBERT: So I did.

The Minister for Mines: Then you would not expect to get them if you appointed one familiar with the whole of the ramifications of public house keeping.

Mr. LAMBERT: I prefer knowledge to ignorance, and I have yet to learn that Mr. Campbell has any knowledge of the public house business. I do not wish to speak disparagingly of Mr. Campbell.

The Minister for Mines: What does the member for Williams-Narrogin know about running hotels, and he holds a position higher than Campbell.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know anything about the private affairs of the member for Williams-Narrogin.

The Minister for Mines: Campbell, as general manager, is not called upon to conduct an hotel.

Mr. LAMBERT: He should have a thorough knowledge of the whole ramifications of the business.

The Minister for Mines: Oh, go on!

Mr. LAMBERT: It is all very well to excuse the appointment on these grounds. This is one of the most critical departments we have and, if we are going to retain these hotels and run them on proper lines, we should have the services of the best man procurable. There are men in the liquor trade who are a credit to the State; some of the finest citizens in the Commonwealth are hotel-keepers.

The Minister for Mines: You are trying to get sweet again now.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not wish to get sweet with anyone. I accept the fullest responsibility for what I say.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We can hardly believe that.

The Minister for Mines: Sweetness is forced upon some people evidently.

Mr. LAMBERT: We have State hotels, but I do not know that they are altogether a credit. There are State hotels which are run on very good lines and some of the sub-managers are absolutely conscientious. They have a full knowledge of the trade and its ill-effects, and are giving good service to the State. I repeat, the Government should obtain the best man available for the position of general manager.

The Colonial Secretary: He has been appointed for some time.

Mr. LAMBERT: Since the passing of last year's Estimates. If we floated an internal loan compulsorily to buy up the hotels and place them in the hands of the people, it would be a good thing for the people. To run five or six State hotels is merely tinkering with the question. Parliament should show a desire to take a national interest in this all important question. It is a ticklish question for, every time a man speaks on it, he is misrepresented by the unthinkable wowsers.

The Minister for Mines: Do not look at the member for North-East Fremantle.

Mr. LAMBERT: I was not looking at him. While I would not disparage the liquor trade or anyone connected with it, the responsibility is upon Parliament to show a national attitude towards this all important question.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The speech which has been delivered by the hon. member would be excellent on a licensing Bill. I take exception to his opening remarks in which he deprecated bargaining with the Minister across the Chamber. If that remark was applied to me I must say I resent it. If a public institution is established in my district. I have as much right to ask for fair service from that institution as the hon. member has to approach the Minister for Mines for a reduction in the battery charges in his electorate. We are satisfied with our State hotels, and what we want is reduced prices, which the Premier has promised to give. I

hope the member for Coolgardie will not hold up his hands in holy horror at my effort to get relief for my constituents. I have every right, without any imputations being made that I am bargaining with the Minister, to expect and demand adequate service from the public institution which is under notice to-night.

Mr. LAMBERT: I should like to make an explanation. I have no desire to impute any motive to the hon. member. I only said that the discussion which was such that Parliament itself should resent it. It is not the desire of the hon. member to have the cost of liquor reduced in his own district.

Mr. LUTEY: The member for Forrest is to be commended for his action in attempting with all his force to have prices reduced. When men are working hard, it is a great concession to them to be able to get a bottle of beer if the price is reasonable.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Nonsense. I work hard and I have no desire for a bottle of beer. It is all bunkum.

Mr. LUTEY: Then the hon. member has missed much in life. He knows nothing about it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I know what hard work is.

Mr. LUTEY: I was anxious to hear something about the Gwalla State hotel. There has been a good deal of trouble in the district of late and I should like to know more about the position there. The member for Coolgardie referred to this "diabolical discussion." There should be some standard of comfort and reasonable accommodation at State hotels. After listening to his speech, in which he faced both ways, I cannot understand now where he stands. When I consider that there is such a large number of opponents to the liquor trade, who are interested in tea shops, I wonder whether, with the hon. member's extensive knowledge of chemicals, he is not preparing some patent drug to put on the market. This perhaps is the reason for his hostility towards drink in any form.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—State Implement Works, £84,563, Hon. W. J. George, Minister.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I should like to tell hon. members something of the State Implement Works. Up to the end of October, 1918, our sales of agricultural machinery totalled £9,500. For the four months to the end of October last the figures were £21,000. The business is extending rapidly, and during the last year the average number of men employed was 202. The State Implement Works have been referred to by hon. members representing the farming districts in this House as being the farmers' own works. Notwithstanding that, the works have not received that support from the farming community that they should have done. Our competitors in the trade—McKay and others—have during the last season tried to undercut us by offering bigger commis-

sions to the country co-operative societies. It does not reflect much credit upon the body of men who regard these works as their own that they should have allowed them to be undercut in this way. If it had not been for that circumstance, instead of the State Implement Works employing 202 men they would probably have been employing 2,000 men.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: These works are turning out better every year. I agree with the Minister in what he said regarding the lack of support of the works on the part of the farmers. There is one thing I should like to mention in regard to the Royal Show. There was an exhibit of machinery manufactured at the State Implement Works presented there in the name of the State Implement Works. There were also other items of machinery put there for other business undertakings in this State. We know that the State Implement Works do not manufacture engines and yet mixed up with the State Implement Works was an engine styled "The State Imp," and the implication was that it had been turned out by the State Implement Works. Anything like that is wrong. We should not show machinery that is supposed to be manufactured there and induce people to believe that it is.

The Minister for Works: Engines may be manufactured next year.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I told people that it was not manufactured at the State Implement Works, and that it was an imported article. It might be a bad engine and might spoil the sales of our own machinery. I do not know what it is like but it gives people a bad impression of the State Implement Works. We are paying a fairly good commission, and the Minister is not satisfied with the action of some people who are importing a large number of Acme binders. The State has to pay for these binders. They were bought because it was necessary to run them with their other machinery. What does the State get out of them after paying commission?

The Minister for Works: I assure you there is a profit on them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know there cannot be much left. The price is cut low. By acting as agents for these implements the Government are merely assisting the Western Farmers Ltd. I should like to mention the question of the payment of the apprentices who went to the Front. I mentioned this to the Minister before. I believe that there is some arrangement of a preliminary nature now made.

The Minister for Works: Have they not been paid?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They were not paid a week ago.

The Minister for Works: I signed the papers a week ago.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then I will say no more.

Mr. PICKERING: The Acme reaper and binder is the only implement of the kind in

which I am particularly interested, seeing that harvesters are not used in the South-West. A great difficulty associated with the use of the Acme reaper and binder is the getting of spare parts. That is one of the reasons why farmers will not avail themselves of that particular implement. On the question of commission, the member for North-East Fremantle has protested on every occasion that the commission to agents is too high.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you want that subject, you will get it. I referred merely to the commission on the binder.

Mr. PICKERING: As the Minister for Works has pointed out, competitors of the State Implement Works are paying much higher commissions. The co-operative societies are doing their best to forward the interests of the State Implement Works in every possible way. Personally, I have always given preference to the products of the State works. But if spare parts are unobtainable, one cannot blame the farmer for not buying that particular implement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At the time the agency for the Acme binder was taken up it was the only binder that could be secured by us for sale in this State. The Acme binder was selected before my time as being a suitable implement and one which would give satisfaction. Regarding spare parts, no agent can afford to carry a heavy stock of these, which run into a great deal of money. A reference to the catalogue of the Massey Harris Company shows that whereas their harvester could be bought for £39, the cost of the individual parts of a harvester would total £250. At present we are unable to obtain Acme binders and have had to take up another make. Our sale of binders is more than we can import. I hope that before 12 months are over we shall be making a binder of our own. I am quite satisfied that Mr. Shaw can make that implement, and at a payable cost. With regard to apprentices who have been away at the Front, I did not know that they had not been paid. Last week I gave instructions that they should be paid. Reference has been made to the subject of the agency for the State Implement Works. The Government made an agreement with the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., 2½ years ago, and at the time it was quite clearly understood that the co-operative societies associated with the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., should sell our implements, and our implements only, except in extreme cases where people would not surrender an old preference. At least six of the co-operative societies affiliated with the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., are to-day selling more of our competitors' implements than of our implements. So much is this competition being pushed that the Government have had to adopt the course of putting on four travellers for the State Implement Works. When the agreement with the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., was entered into we did not expect to have to put on any travellers at all.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., receive commission on what your travellers sell?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is a matter we are debating at the present time. I do not wish to attack the bona fides of the Westralian Farmers, but the agreement made with that company, especially when read in the light of the letters which passed before the agreement was made, shows that the company undertook to push our implements to the utmost possible extent. I consider that the Government have a right to expect the strongest possible support from the people who say they regard these implement works as their own works, and who also express the hope that they will be able to acquire these works some day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They will never do that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That hope has been expressed publicly time after time. I do not say it is a wrong ambition. Another matter I wish to refer to is the establishment of State implement offices and a depôt for spare parts in the Government buildings in Marquis-street. Considerable benefit resulted from that change but we found that we were so far out of the centre of Perth that we lost trade. Accordingly we have taken premises in Murray-street. I referred to the increase in the trade of the State Implement Works when introducing these Estimates. We have an average of 200 men employed at the works, which, however, are large enough to employ 500 or 600. If we had received as fair a deal as we have a right to expect, 400 or 450 men would be working there to-day. Of course, we get complaints now and again, but everybody gets complaints. The work that is being put into agricultural implements at North Fremantle is of a quality that is seldom found in such implements. Really it is engineer's work that is being put into them. I appeal to the members of the Country party to urge their constituents to support the State Implement Works. Though, as members know, I am not in favour of State enterprise, I regard myself as a trustee of the State Implement Works while I hold my present position, and I will accordingly do my best for the undertaking.

Mr. HARRISON: While the State continues to run the implement works I want them to be a success. One of the best means of securing greater success is to appoint to the works a man who knows what he is doing not only in the shop but also on the land where the machines are used. I believe Mr. Shaw to be one of the best managers we could have from an engineering point of view, but such a man as I have described is wanted outside, where the machines are being used in various soils and under varying conditions. We must keep in touch with our producers. All other manufacturers of machinery and sellers of machinery send out experts as well as travellers, and unless we adopt the same expedient we shall never reach the goal at which we are aiming.

The Minister for Works: You are quite right.

Mr. HARRISON: I happened to be at the implement works some little time ago on the occasion of a function and I drew attention to this matter. That is where the weakness lies. The works should keep in touch with the men on the land and show them that the State has as good implements as anyone else, and that if it has not, it can make them. These State implement works are also engineering works and they carry out orders for many of the other departments.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I would remind the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) that I did not say anything about the high rate of interest this year. I dealt entirely with the Acme binder. The Minister to-day is paying cash for the Acme binder, which is brought from America in fairly large numbers. That binder is sold on bills, and unless he alters the price somewhat, by the time he has paid commission he will have nothing left for himself.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—State Quarries, £5,471—agreed to.

Vote—State Steamship Service, £175,250:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Will the Minister inform the Committee when the "Kangaroo" will return to the State?

The Minister for Mines: When she has finished her present charter.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Does the Minister intend to take the steamship service away from the Harbour Trust or does he intend to let it remain there with the new manager appointed in name only, in control?

The Minister for Mines: There will be a complete change.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: While Mr. Glyde, the newly appointed manager, may be one of the best accountants in the service, it would be better to appoint to the position of manager of the service someone with experience in shipping affairs.

The Minister for Mines: Where are we to get him?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Pay a decent salary and you will get him.

The Minister for Mines: The position will not permit of the payment of a big salary.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then there is something wrong somewhere.

Hon. P. Collier: What salary does the present manager receive?

The Minister for Mines: I think it is £725.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the manager knew his work he could save his salary in no time. Mr. Glyde knows nothing about shipping beyond sending out accounts in connection with vessels that have been tied to the wharf. It would be much better for the State if we had someone in charge who had had experience in conducting a business of this description.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—State Sawmills, £252,045:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [11.55]: I have not very much to say with regard to the State sawmills except to give hon. members a little information which I think should be in their possession. We have increased our assets during the past twelve months very materially, approximately, to the extent of £10,000, permanent way material to the extent of £6,000 and a new steam log hauler, £700. That class of machine has been successfully used by a number of the timber companies, and we have purchased the most improved and strongest pattern. It is now being tried and we shall extend the use as occasion requires. But when we do we shall not import any more, but manufacture them at the State implement works and so arrange the design to suit the special needs of our forests.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And infringe the patent rights.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not that I am aware of. We will play fair, but anyhow we will have a go at it. We have built a number of cottages at the Wuraming mill and generally improved the living conditions for the workmen. Unfortunately, in connection with the timber business we have suffered to a great extent on account of the absence of shipping. To-day we have something like 15,000 loads of timber lying at the mills, all sold for export to the Eastern States, and sold at a good price. This timber will in all likelihood return us £80,000, but we cannot get it removed because we are not able to secure the necessary ships. I am sure, therefore, hon. members will sympathise with me in regard to this matter. I feel very strongly on this point. We have about 20,000 men, women and children depending on this industry throughout the State. In January last, when I was in the Eastern States, I had several interviews with Federal Ministers who had to do with this matter, and I did my utmost to secure ships to remove the timber from our State, which timber was very badly wanted in Melbourne and Sydney. In fact, both those places are starving for it to-day, and I am not able to get a single ship. In the presence of Mr. Poynton, the Minister who was dealing with these matters, I told Admiral Clarkson that it was a discredit to those concerned that Western Australian enterprise should be held up in the manner that was being done by the refusal of the Federal authorities to place vessels at our disposal. Admiral Clarkson stated that it paid him better to bring his vessels back from Western Australia empty than to have them loaded at our ports with timber. I pointed out there was more than that in it. I drew attention to the fact that we had stood by our nation's troubles better than any other State of Australia, and that the livelihood of 20,000 people depended on the existence of the timber industry, and that it was a scandal that ships could be sent here with coal and that they should

be instructed to return direct to the Eastern States empty. The ships are doing that to-day, and we have £80,000 worth of timber ordered by the Eastern States awaiting removal. I want the money to pay wages with, but I have to go to the Treasury and ask for an advance or, alternatively, stop the mills. It is the most scandalous thing I have ever met with in my life.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I wonder whether your remarks will be reported.

Mr. Chesson: We ought to have more State steamers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have said that already in the House. The experience of the last five years has had its effect on me. Although I was opposed to State steamers in the past, to-day I think it is the only way by which we can hold our own. I am not ashamed to say that to-night. It is no light matter to consider that the employment of men can be strangled, as it is being strangled in connection with this timber trade. The Manager, Mr. Humphries, reports—

Since the 30th June our stocks have increased by 4,500 loads.

There ought not to be a single stick of that timber in Western Australia to-day. While I was in Melbourne I sold 3,000 loads without any trouble whatever. Yet the contract for this order was not completed, because the Federal Government, in their silliness, stuck 7s. 6d. per ton on to the freight and so made it impossible for the buyer to take the timber. At the same time four large ships, completely laden with oregon, were coming into Melbourne to supply the imported substitute for the timber growing in this State. During the last few days I have been informed that the timber which we have cut at our mills, and which is so badly wanted in the Eastern States, cannot be waited for any longer, and that in consequence the people in the Eastern States have ordered timber from Norway, which is now on its way out to Australia. It is a scandalous state of things. We have to keep employment going. If there are any means by which we can get our views enforced we should take those means. Some Federal candidates were in this very Chamber the other day. I told them straight about this. I said, "You come here for our votes to put you back into Parliament, but what about the men in this State whose very living is threatened in consequence of your neglect?" I feel very strongly on this. When the Prime Minister was in Western Australia I told him what I am saying here to-night. I told Mr. Watt, the Acting Prime Minister, the same, when he was here. I had previously urged it upon him when I was in Melbourne. I do not know whether he thought from my emphasis that I was fit for a lunatic asylum, nor do I care. There is, of course, another question which will affect the financial position,

namely, in connection with wages. The case is now being heard in the Federal Arbitration Court, and it is certain that an advance in wages will have to be given, and will have to be provided. We shall have to see exactly where it leads us to.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The trade is going to be buoyant.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not want my remarks to be construed in such a way as to give the idea that I am against a man getting proper pay, but I say that, occupying as I do the position of managing director of the mills, I must lay before members the fact that we can no longer sell our timber at the old prices if we are to pay the increased wages. In regard to prices at which we have been selling at the State sawmills, I have heard statements made by hon. members whose sense of responsibility I could wish had been keener. As a matter of fact we have not fallen in with other timber merchants in this State. Our prices are higher than they were a few months ago, but still are not as high as those of other mills. If it were practicable, I should keep my timber prices as low as possible; because we have now started a building revival, and anything that tends to check it means that unemployment may come nearer to us. We must not have unemployment. It would pay the State better, and would pay the private mills better, to encourage the building trade until all the workers are fully employed; this would be far more profitable than securing the return of a few thousand pounds extra at the risk of checking building activities. During the year we have cut 35,000 loads of timber, and we have had to purchase 7,335 additional loads of jarrah to make up our orders. This gives a grand total of 42,335 loads of timber that we have dealt with during the last 12 months. Also we have employed 572 men. We have the mills, until we complete the sale of them, and we have to see that those men get employment. Not only this, but we have to assist in the employment of other men in the State. If anything is done by anybody to check the revival of trade, I say those who do it for the sake of a paltry profit are not worthy of respect.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Now save discussion by making a few remarks regarding the proposed sale of the mills. Suppose you adjourn on Tuesday, what is going to be the position?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Hon. members will agree that the information which has been placed on the Table and given through the Press is as complete as it is possible to make it. At any rate they know all that I know. It is for them to use their judgment. We cannot part with the timber mills unless the House agrees.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Suppose we adjourn on Tuesday next?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The present position regarding the mills is that the proposed buyers have till the 30th November to pay in London fifteen thousand sovereigns. It is not yet the 30th November, and we can-

not say anything with regard to what we might be doing until we know that this money has been paid. So far as I am advised at present, I think there is no doubt that these people will be able to come up to the scratch.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Suppose we adjourn on Tuesday, how will you ratify the deal?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Premier informs me that an opportunity will be given, before Parliament prorogues, to have a full discussion on the proposed sale of the sawmills. Therefore, I suggest to members that, instead of having a discussion at this late hour with a sparse House, it would be much better on a matter of such importance to defer discussion until next week. The Premier has given his word that there shall be an opportunity to discuss the question, and members can rely upon him carrying out his word. So far as the Government are concerned, members can rest assured that we have nothing to hide. It is a clean transaction and, if the House does not approve it, out it goes.

General debate concluded; items discussed as follows:—

Item—Clerks, £658:

Mr. LUTEY: This item for four clerks shows an increase of £99. Is that distributed equally among the lot?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot say, I have not the papers. It is sometimes necessary to change the staff. One or two men have gone away, and it is almost impossible to get any two men on the same level. Each represents a different class. Every one of the salaries has to be approved and I do not approve of any alteration unless I am satisfied it is what I should do if I were conducting my own business.

Mr. Lutey: I am not objecting to the rise.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not a question of a rise. A clerk receiving £300 a year may die or go away. These men in the timber trade are skilled men and, to fill a vacancy we might have to pay £350, though we might get a really good man who was cheap at the price.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Wyndham Freezing, Canning and Meat Export Works, £336,473—agreed to.

This completed the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure on account of the State trading concerns for the year.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

BILL—LOAN, £3,339,000.

Message.

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

First Reading.

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [12.5] in moving the second reading said: The amount of this Loan Bill is £3,339,000 and provision is made to reappropriate £85,500. The Bill simply authorises the Government of the day to raise the money. No expenditure is authorised by the passing of the Bill. Every item must be approved by the House under the Loan Estimates before any expenditure can take place. The Commonwealth financial agreement expires in December next.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have just been looking at the support you have on your side.

The PREMIER: I am content to have the hon. member's support. The Commonwealth financial agreement expires in December next. After the 1st January we shall have to go on the London market to raise our loans other than for the soldier settlement scheme, and I think this will be of advantage to us. Soon after I assumed the office of Premier and Treasurer, I communicated with the Agent General and he in turn communicated with the London and Westminster Bank, as a result of which we have an arrangement for temporary finance for loan requirements and sinking fund instalments until it is opportune for us to place a loan on the London market. Nothing could be more satisfactory because this shows that our credit is still high in financial circles in England.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are not the Federal Government finding most of the money?

The PREMIER: I shall explain that when we get to the Loan Estimates.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are finding about two millions.

The PREMIER: I am referring now to loan money other than money from the Federal Government for soldier settlement. Our loan moneys have been well invested. If our loan investments were sold to-morrow, which of course would be impossible, the amount realised would more than pay off the amount we have borrowed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We had better borrow and bust before unification.

The PREMIER: Oh, no! The Loan Estimates are really very moderate. A great portion of the 36 million pounds has been spent in the way I have said, and has been well invested. It is true that £6,689,000 has been spent in unproductive works financially, and these figures include the funding of the deficit. Hon. members realise that we have a sinking fund of greater proportions than the population really warrants. It is £6,139,000. We are owed by the Commonwealth £800,000 on the transfer of properties, and on this amount we collect interest. It is true that the State is not in a position to find interest on any large sum of money from revenue, because the rate of interest is so heavy. The deficit to the 30th June, 1919, was £3,418,480. Of

this amount there was funded to that date £2,766,465, and the balance will be funded when the Bill before the House becomes law, namely, £652,015. The amount involved here may seem large. As a matter of fact, in connection with soldier settlement, the sum of £2,600,000 will be required. We really thus reduce the amount of the expenditure in other directions to £641,000, plus £98,000, to cover discount and flotation expenses. I propose, when I come to the Loan expenditure, to explain that in detail. If hon. members will turn to the Loan Estimates they will find the position in regard to the various loan authorisations. Every detail of expenditure to be incurred is shown. As far as this Bill is concerned, I believe that the revenue will be called upon to bear a very small proportion of the interest and sinking fund. I will explain later why I say that. In connection with the raising of loans, there is always some expenditure and there has been set down a sum of £98,000 to cover discount, etc., based on a three per cent. charge. We cannot go on the open market for very much of this total amount. New South Wales managed to raise three millions at 5½ per cent. and gave a discount of two per cent. In connection with our loan, the charge is generally something approaching three per cent., or would be if we could raise the money. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin debate adjourned.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1919-20.

In Committee of Supply.

The House resolved itself into Committee of Supply for the purpose of considering the Loan Estimates: Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental, £28,430:

The PREMIER AND COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [12.15]: The amount on the Estimates will seem to hon. members very large, namely, £3,189,914, to ask for at this stage of the country's development. I am going to explain why it is so large. It is due to the fact that we are settling soldiers on the land, and that we have a special scheme for financial assistance from the Federal Government. I want to make it quite clear to the Committee what this expenditure will mean and what it is likely to cost the general revenue. We all recognise that there are indirect benefits to be derived from the expenditure of these moneys. If we can get that amount without any debit to the revenue we shall be achieving something.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you anticipate spending two millions this year in land settlement?

The PREMIER: We have authorised the expenditure of £700,000 during the last four months for soldier settlement. Will hon. members keep in mind that for every million spent in soldier settlement the Commonwealth Government allow to this State £125,000 to

cover the lowering of the rate of interest charged to the soldier settler in the early stages of development, and to cover any outside loss. I mention this because it will be patent to hon. members that we cannot have land settled under more favourable conditions. The State always takes the risk of all that it advances. Let us take the life of the Agricultural Bank, of which we hear a good deal, we will then find that we have not lost in this institution £25,000 per annum. The bank has been in existence for many years, and taking into consideration all possible chances of loss, we have not lost anything like £25,000 a year. I doubt if more than that has been lost in connection with both the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank combined. That represents development cheaply carried out. The bulk of the proposed expenditure comes under the heading of the soldier settlement scheme, and the total amount is £2,211,340. This amount will be invested without any risk of the general revenue having to pay any exorbitant interest.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How are you to spend all that this year?

The PREMIER: We will spend a great deal of it this year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: In six months?

The PREMIER: That is to cover the expenditure for 12 months.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You cannot go along at that rate; it is too much.

The PREMIER: We are spending it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How it is being spent?

The PREMIER: We are spending it wisely and well. That amount of two millions odd will be interest-free so far as the revenue is concerned. We are not interfering with the deficit, and will probably reduce it. Other items which will earn interest total £366,950. This item is made up of Agricultural Bank and I.A.B. £158,500, Boya quarries £800, State hotels and tourists £6,500, tramways £46,900, electric power station £35,000, and harbours £119,250. All these amounts should, and I believe will, earn interest and sinking fund. We ask for additional capital to the extent of £155,000 for the Wyndham Freezing Works. That will be working capital and should earn interest. For the State Brickworks we require £2,000, for the Government Abattoirs £81,000, and for water supply for towns £43,000. All these amounts, totalling £281,000, should earn interest and should not prove any burden upon the general revenue. There are some other works which will be a charge upon the revenue, but which should prove remunerative at a later stage. Interest should be earned later on £174,134, made up of new railways £48,760, improvements to existing railways £75,374, rails and fastenings £8,000, and rolling stock £42,000. Thus we have left £156,490 that will not be directly reproductive: or, rather, I believe it will be indirectly reproductive. The amount is made up of—fisheries £7,000, water supply £42,800, mining £20,000, immigration £9,000, roads and bridges £16,000, public buildings £28,000, land resumption £5,260, and administration costs £28,430. I do not ask the Committee to believe that this expenditure of £156,490 will earn interest, but every penny of it will prove indirectly very profitable. We now have a total of £3,189,914. Very little of

this, as I have already pointed out, is expenditure on extraordinary public works.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: An expenditure of two and a-half millions in one year must prove very extravagant, because you will not be able to superintend it.

The PREMIER: Shall I explain the matter to the hon. member again?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We will have it when we come to the items.

The PREMIER: As regards the Land Improvement Loan Fund, hon. members are aware that this fund was created years ago, when we decided to use loan moneys for the purpose of surveying lands. The fund represents survey fees collected from selectors.

Mr. Harrison: Fifty per cent.

The PREMIER: No percentage is stated. The fees have to be returned to this fund, so that the loan expenditure may be re-appropriated by Parliament. On the 30th June, 1918, the balance standing to credit of the fund was £69,978, of which £40,430 was expended during 1918-19, leaving £29,548. This, with £28,558, being the receipts for 1918-19, makes a total of £58,100 available for appropriation. We are transferring from revenue a sum of £15,000 to the fund this year, and thus shall have available for expenditure during 1919-20 an amount of £60,726. This money we propose to use mainly as follows: Development of agricultural lands £24,306, made up of—contract surveys £18,550, wages of staff surveyors £1,800, reclassification of land on railways £200, and timber lands classification £3,756; land settlement of soldiers, survey expenses £17,150. Perhaps it is not necessary for me to give details of the proposed expenditure on the soldier settlement scheme, as the member for North-East Fremantle thinks we are not likely to expend the money this year. As a matter of fact, however, soldiers are being settled on our lands. The total number of soldier applicants to date is 4,041, of whom 228 have been rejected or deferred, leaving 3,813 successful applicants. Of course, when one comes to deal with thousands of settlers a great deal of money is required, especially in the early stages. The total number of certificates issued by the qualification board so far is 2,685, the number of loans approved is 1,472, and the number pending qualification 1,125. Analysing the expenditure on soldier settlement to the 31st October last we find that £288,477 has been spent on purchase and survey of estates, cattle, drainage, and so forth, while £419,050 has been advanced through the Agricultural Bank, making a total of £787,527. The number of soldiers settled to the 31st October is 1,283, and the average advance to them per man to that date is £614. There are other loans accrued to the soldiers for clearing and so on. The total approvals to the 30th June last were £285,175, and during the last four months advances to the extent of £709,000 have been approved, making in all £994,175.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is no difficulty in approving loans when you have the money.

The PREMIER: That is perfectly true. I have heard the hon. member say that any fool can spend money. That also is perfectly true. But those managing the soldier settlement scheme are not foolish men; they are wise men. I hope hon. members will realise just what is happening in regard to settlement of soldiers,

The member for North-East Fremantle says I am asking for too much money. It may be so. But if we can get the labour, there is no reason why a considerable proportion of what I ask for should not be spent. It is better to have the returned soldiers settled quickly, than to have them waiting about. In this House there have been complaints of delay.

Mr. Harrison: A long time ago.

The PREMIER: Yes; and we shall hear them to the end of time. It has been said that we ought to have been perfectly ready for these men. However, we were not, and in consequence there have been delays. But the delays would have been much greater if Mr. McLarty had not been in charge of the scheme during the last few months. During the past week we settled sixty odd soldiers, and that in itself is a fair amount of settlement. If any member will go to an agricultural district and travel over sixty farms he will find that he has journeyed a long way. Complaint is easy, but performance is something different. I have quite recently appointed additional inspectors in order that delays may be avoided, but it is very difficult to get men suitable for making valuations. This scheme of settlement is not an ordinary one, because we are doing so much more for the soldier than for the ordinary settler. The ordinary settler went upon Crown lands, and he went at a much slower rate. His mortgage to the Agricultural Bank averaged little over £300, as compared with over £600 for the soldier. The expenditure authorised for soldier settlement is already £994,000; and that will not be all.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That includes repurchase of land.

The PREMIER: Yes, but it is of advantage just the same. I have explained that settling men on Crown lands is cheaper than settling them repurchased estates, although in the latter case a man can get to work straight away. I have also explained that very little money is being expended on ordinary public works this year. We have down a small item for railways, but we shall not be able to carry on any railway construction work for a time, at any rate not until rails become cheaper.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is an amount of £46,000 down for tramways. You can do without that.

The PREMIER: We have determined that railway construction work will have to wait for a few months.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You will not settle many soldiers by building tram lines.

The PREMIER: I want to make the hon. member understand that ordinary loan expenditure on public works this year will be very low.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why do you not sell the trams to the local authorities?

The PREMIER: The Government would be very glad to sell the trams if the local authorities would pay enough for them. My duty to-night is to tell hon. members what this expenditure means, and I want the fact kept in mind that the general revenue will pay a very small amount indeed in interest and sinking fund on these loans. There never was a time before when we could come to the House and ask for expenditure on land settlement which would cost the State practically nothing. It certainly will not cost the revenue anything for

years to come. That is an ideal condition of affairs and should not be objected to by anybody.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am a little pessimistic about that.

The PREMIER: So long as the hon. member keeps his pessimism to himself I shall not mind. The whole House has agreed that the soldiers shall be settled on the land in these circumstances and since that is the case, the House must vote the money and complete the job.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We will get on to the items later on.

The PREMIER: In connection with a matter of this sort it is the general discussion that counts.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not see more than £1,000 for any big work in my district.

The PREMIER: There is a little for the hon. member's district.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We have a railway bridge that is not safe.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has everything and no place has had so much. I move the first item.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Progress reported.

BILL—DIVORCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Assembly.

House adjourned at 12.37 a.m. (Saturday).

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 2nd December, 1919.

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