

only measure that is likely to take any time is the Vermin Bill, and we do not know what may be the fate of that. We can only await events, and we can only await them in this House. We want to bring the session to a close, and we might sit on Friday to do so.

Mr. Lambert: Can you finish this week?

The PREMIER: I see no reason why we should not. If we do not finish to-morrow we can sit on Friday to finish our labours. I hope members will agree to meet again to-morrow at 4.30 p.m.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.13 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 30th May, 1918.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

Select Committee's Report.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister—East) [3.5]: I move—

“That the report from Committee of the whole be adopted.”

Hon. J. F. ALLEN (West) [3.6]: I move an amendment—

“That the following be added to the motion: ‘and that the report of the select committee on this Bill be also adopted by this House.’”

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.7]: I have no objection to the course proposed by Mr. Allen, though I do not know that it is necessary, since the report recommends that the Bill be passed subject to the deletion of certain clauses and on the understanding that the Government will do certain things. The Government have accepted that arrangement.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: But there is no record of it on the “Minutes of Proceedings.”

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The representatives of the Government could hardly have sat quietly by and allowed the House to pass the Bill under a misapprehension.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: The amendment is absolutely necessary in order that the arrangement may be on the records of Parliament.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister—East—in reply) [3.8]: I accept the amendment, and am pleased that it has been brought forward. A Royal Commission will clear away a great many misunderstandings, and at the same time refute the numerous misstatements which have been circulated among the public.

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

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

MOTION—BOTANIST AND VEGETABLE PATHOLOGIST.

Debate resumed from the 22nd May on the motion by the Hon. H. Stewart, “That, in the opinion of the House, the changes that have taken place since the 25th October, 1917, in connection with the office of Botanist and Vegetable Pathologist, and the transference of the office of Botanist and Vegetable Pathologist from the Agricultural Department to the Mines Department, are not in the best interests of the agricultural industry.”

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.10]: I congratulate Mr. Stewart on the very lucid speech he made in launching his motion. With much that he said I am fully in accord, and if it was really necessary that a testimonial should be given to Dr. Stoward, then Mr. Stewart's observations would represent a very fitting tribute to Dr. Stoward for the very valuable services that gentleman has rendered to this State. At the same time, I consider that Mr. Stewart's object in moving the motion has already been achieved. Whilst it is most regrettable that the stringency of the finances caused the Government, in their wisdom, to see fit to dispense with the services of various valuable officers, I contend we should support Ministers in the action that is taken in the interests of the country generally. I secured the adjournment of the debate for the purpose of allowing other members an opportunity of speaking to the motion. My own suggestion to Mr. Stewart would be that he should withdraw the motion. I am sure no good would result from pushing it, more especially as Dr. Stoward has secured a better appointment than that which he held in this State. I believe he is now in the Commonwealth service, where his scientific abilities will find a wider scope than here.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan) [3.13]: I hope, on the other hand, that Mr. Stewart will not withdraw his motion. If ever there was a motion that required carrying, it is this one. Whether good can or cannot result from its being carried, I hope it will have some deterrent effect on this Government and future Governments. The underlying principle of the motion is that the Government of Western Australia should recognise to a decent extent—I do not ask them to recognise to the full extent, because I know that is vain—the possibilities of applied science in the Government departments. Mr. Stewart and I, soon after the hon. member was returned, soon after he made his first speech in this House, were discussing the question of applied science and the part science was going to play in the history of nations and, I hope, in the history of Australia. It is a peculiar thing that both Mr. Stewart and myself had noticed in the London cablegrams the remark of a leading English scientist to the effect that the

greatest difficulty he had encountered in his scientific career was that of talking down to the level of politicians. I forget the gentleman's name, but I have no doubt Mr. Stewart will recall it. It is a pity that this should be so; it is a pity that unfortunately it is true. As regards the particular case of Dr. Stoward, it is the worst case I know of, with one exception; and on that exception I also took action in this House. I refer to the departmental murder of the late Chief Protector of Aborigines. It is a very peculiar thing that the perpetrator of that crime occupies a place in the same Ministry with the perpetrator of this one. "Birds of a feather flock together." In the case of Mr. Gale, as I said at the time, we had a gentleman who, I think I am justified in saying, was the best Protector of Aborigines in Australia. Mr. Gale was summarily dismissed at the whim of a Minister who knew very little about departments or about Mr. Gale, and a person who knew nothing whatever about the natives was appointed to take Mr. Gale's place.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: Do you know the whole details?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Do I know the whole details? I know them particularly well. I knew the late Protector of Aborigines for more years than I care to think of. I knew him nearly 30 years ago in the North-West. Yes, I do know the whole of the details. A select committee was appointed by this House to investigate that gentleman's retirement, and a recommendation was made that he should be reinstated. That, however, is by the way. With regard to the case of Dr. Stoward, perhaps it is not so bad as that of Mr. Gale, but it is bad enough. A strange thing is that the gentleman who is at the bottom of the whole matter, Mr. Willmott, has had a most peculiar career in the present Ministry. He is the gentleman who first attracted my attention by the theatrical display he made in another place when he entered the Chamber one day waving the skin of a dingo, and saying "This dingo cost me £150." Mr. Willmott may or may not be a more noble animal than the animal which had been covered by that skin, but he certainly will cost this country a great deal more than £150 before some other gentleman is returned for the Nelson electorate and exhibits Mr. Willmott's political skin in the Legislative Assembly. The same gentleman, Mr. Willmott, when standing for election last October, addressed a meeting, at Balingup I think it was, and at that meeting he threw truth, personal friendship, and loyalty to his colleagues to the winds to gain the votes of a few timber hewers, and it shook my faith in the head of the present Government when I found that Mr. Lefroy sat on the platform and listened to what Mr. Willmott said without uttering a protest. Mr. Lefroy's presence and silence on that occasion did a great deal to shake my 20 years of admiration for him. Then Mr. Willmott further distinguished himself by what I may call this departmental murder. Mr. Duffell when speaking just now referred to the "late Dr. Stoward." I do not think he need have done that, because if ever there was a man departmentally murdered in order ostensibly to effect economy, that man was Dr. Stoward. It

seems to me that a man like Dr. Stoward, who has made himself thoroughly familiar with the scientific conditions of the State and who endeared himself to that very community who elected Mr. Willmott, should not have been dismissed on the score of economy. Economy was the pretext in the case of Mr. Gale, and in that case, as in the case of Dr. Stoward, it was decidedly false economy. I knew Dr. Stoward for many years. I had been associated with him a great deal as a layman in the work he was carrying out. I was associated with him on committees, and I know what a painstaking worker he was and I can endorse every word of the minute which Mr. Sutton wrote on the question of Dr. Stoward's retirement. That minute was sound, inasmuch as it came from a reliable source, more sound, in fact, than the recommendations of either the Public Service Commissioner or the Government Analyst, Mr. Mann. After all, the presence of Mr. Mann in this connection is most peculiar. Mr. Mann appears to be a sort of departmental stormy petrel. Whenever we see Mr. Mann chipping in there is bound to be trouble. It has been so in relation to whisky, and in relation to departments. And for the Honorary Minister in this House to say that it is advisable to remove the department of botany and vegetable pathology from the Department of Agriculture to which it properly belongs, to the office of the Government Analyst is nothing less than absurd. I am sorry indeed, personally, politically, and in every way, that Dr. Stoward has been retrenched from the service of this State. We have lost a man who, so far as worldly affairs were concerned, was the most simple-minded man I met in this State. He was in receipt of a remuneration vastly below the value of the services he was rendering, but that did not concern him because he was enamoured of his scientific surroundings, and because he saw in Western Australia a field which gave him scope to achieve what meant success to him. His desire was not the acquisition of money, but the acquisition of knowledge, which would be of use, not only to himself, but to the community generally. And that it should be possible for his career to be nipped in the bud, for the success he aimed at not to be achieved, was extremely lamentable. For the good of humanity, I hope there will always be many Dr. Stowards; unfortunately, we know there will always be many Mr. Willmotts. There is something bad in the political system which places a man of the attainments, character, and ability of Dr. Stoward at the mercy of a man of the proclivities of Mr. Willmott. I hope the hon. member who moved the motion will not withdraw it. I hope, also, that the Government will not commit any more of this class of misdeeds. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-West—in reply) [3.32]: I do not intend to take up much of the time of the House in replying. If hon. members thought that I brought forward this matter in order to clear Dr. Stoward's professional character, I can assure them that nothing was further from my mind. I thought I made it clear that there were a number of principles involved, the

main one being that there was bad administration of the department, and when I criticised the department I pointed out the folly of having a highly technical man entirely at the mercy of those who were quite unable to estimate the value of that officer's services. It was entirely false economy to retrench an officer like Dr. Stoward, and I think I have made it clear that the authority of this House was flouted, in that when the papers were laid on the Table it was found that they were not complete. Further, the replies which were given to the questions I asked in this House were misleading. Then the replies which were given by the Honorary Minister did not weaken any of the points which I set out to establish, and which I think were fully proved. So far as the reply of the Honorary Minister goes, it simply went over the ground that I covered. The Honorary Minister quite evaded the point that the technical officer who was senior to Dr. Stoward was never consulted with regard to the matter of Dr. Stoward's retirement. We are told that there was a conversation between the Public Service Commissioner and the Honorary Minister, and other verbal communications may have taken place between the Public Service Commissioner and other officers. There was another point which needs emphasising, and it is that after Cabinet had approved of the decision to retire Dr. Stoward, Mr. Mann was called in to report on what was purely administrative work, and the Government were not able to say that Mr. Mann had the scientific qualifications which entitled him to deal with the professional aspect of the department which had been under the control of Dr. Stoward. Mr. Mann controls a department which is an entirely independent branch of science, and his report was to a large extent one criticising the work of a scientist about whose work he had no scientific knowledge himself. His report, therefore, might have been that of a layman and consequently it should not have been regarded as sufficient. Mr. Kingsmill referred to a remark made by an English scientist to the effect that he found it difficult to talk down to the level of politicians. That scientist was the Director General of Army Medical Services and this is the statement he made—

It is a regrettable thing to find amongst Ministers great administrators, and people in high positions, no knowledge whatever of elementary facts of science and nature. When we had to place scientific questions before them we found it difficult to get low enough to reach their level.

The reason I want the House to carry this motion is to bring home to the Government and make them realise that when they are endeavouring to effect economies in Government departments, and when they are dealing with men whose qualifications they are not in a position to properly estimate, they should consider well whether the action they are about to take is not one of false economy, and I sincerely hope they will be

very careful where they seek advice in the future.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—BRUNSWICK STATE ORCHARD, TO INQUIRE BY ROYAL COMMISSION.

Debate resumed from the 28th May on the motion of Hon. E. M. Clarke: "(1) That in the opinion of this House, the Government should appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into and report on the inception and working of the State orchard at Brunswick Junction, and the circumstances under which a portion of the same was destroyed on the instructions of the Acting Minister for Agriculture. (2) That all members of the Commission so appointed shall agree to act without remuneration."

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [3.28]: I regret very much that hasty action was taken by a Minister of the Crown in connection with the orchard which had been established for some years at Brunswick. Undoubtedly that centre must feel that a great blow has been dealt to it, a blow which will react upon the whole district, and I consider an inquiry such as that proposed by Mr. Clarke will help to satisfy many of those who have a doubt as to the wisdom of the action of the Minister, and who are familiar with the locality and know what it is capable of producing. Therefore, I think that we should support Mr. Clarke in his endeavour to bring about an inquiry. I understand that from several who know this subject well there have been reports condemning the whole country from Perth to Bunbury between the coast and the hills as a fruit-growing area. But while those condemnations stand, there are dotted about that area many flourishing orchards in which in the aggregate something like £100,000 has been invested. It is depressing to think that the whole of that area should have been condemned, while at the same time there are contained in it many successful orchards from which magnificent results have been secured. No doubt that area is like so much other country in Western Australia, where the good and inferior land run in belts, where in other words the country is very patchy. I have heard that description applied to even the Harvey area, so favourably noted in the main for its oranges; I have been told that at the Harvey, side by side with successful patches of trees, are to be found other patches of trees which should never have been planted where they stand. I can quite understand that the Brunswick State orchard may have been planted by the department as an experiment, as a guide as to what trees to grow and what not to grow in that locality. I know of several growers in the district who have experimented at their own expense, and who, on finding that a particular variety of tree has not proved commercially successful, instead of grubbing up the orchard in the drastic manner of the Honorary Minister, have had their trees grafted with some other kind of fruit. By these means they have saved the situation;

the previous expenditure incurred by them has not been wasted as seems to have been the case when the Honorary Minister so rashly grubbed up the Brunswick State orchard. It would be interesting to know whether the trees in that orchard could not have been converted into some more successful variety. Again, I think an inquiry would do good because it would place before the country the very grave position, and would determine the rights of an Honorary Minister. An Honorary Minister who would so ruthlessly uproot an orchard might next be found pulling down some important public work without reference to those whose money was embarked in it—for it must be remembered that the Brunswick State orchard was essentially the property of the people. It seems a drastic action for an Honorary Minister to so suddenly take upon himself the prerogatives of judge and arbiter and order the indiscriminate destruction of public property of which he was for the time being the custodian. For these and other reasons that have already been put forward, I will support the motion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.35]: I trust the House will not agree to the motion. I do not intend to discuss the merits of the case in respect to the uprooting of the orchard, because my colleague, Mr. Baxter, has already done that. I propose to deal simply with the proposal that this matter should be at this stage referred to a Royal Commission. It is not very long since members of varying shades of political opinion in this House were reproving the Government for having appointed two Royal Commissions to do certain things. Now we have the House asking the Government to appoint three Royal Commissions in as many days. One of these Royal Commissions, that regarding the marketing of wheat, the Government have agreed to, because we feel that there are grounds for hoping that an inquiry in that case will do good. Another Royal Commission was asked for by this House only a few days ago, and asked for by a majority in spite of my statement, which I do not think hon. members doubted, that the very matter which was to be referred to that Royal Commission had already been closely investigated by another Royal Commission. One of the matters at issue in that connection was a dispute between the Government and certain settlers in a particular district and, that matter having been thoroughly investigated by a Royal Commission which had the services of the Engineer-in-Chief and the right to call any other evidence they liked, this House approved of the suggestion that it should be again investigated by a Commission on which the dominating forces would be the Parliamentary representatives of the people concerned. In regard to that Royal Commission and the motion carried by this House, it will be my duty to make a recommendation to Cabinet, and I propose to make a recommendation to Cabinet in accordance with what I believe to be the wishes of the majority of the members who took part in that division. I want my words to be very clearly under-

stood, because I do not wish to be told afterwards that I promised to recommend that a Royal Commission should be appointed, and that in fact I did not make any such recommendation. What I say is that I intend to make a recommendation in accordance with what I know to be the wishes of the majority of the members who took part in that division.

Hon. J. Ewing: Is not that a reflection on those who voted in that division? I take it that every member who registers a vote in this House does it in accordance with his conscience. The inference contained in the Minister's statement is that that particular vote was not given in accordance with conscience.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have no desire to reflect on anybody. We were assured that that Commission, if appointed, would bring in a satisfactory finding. Satisfactory to whom in a dispute between the settlers and the Government? A previous Commission, not of the political representatives of the people interested in the dispute, a Commission of entirely disinterested people, have already reported on that matter, and that report will be considered by the Government in due course. In this particular case I have to congratulate the mover of the motion on a modesty in pleasing contrast to that of his colleague in the representation of the province, in that he has not nominated the Commission, but has left it to the Government to select such a Commission as they might think fit. But he has placed on the Government the condition that the Commission must act in an honorary capacity. Surely that is putting the Government in a very difficult position indeed. This Commission, if it is to serve any purpose at all, is to decide between the conflicting views of experts; it is to decide whether Mr. Price, a recognised orchard expert in this State, and certain expert advisers of the Government, are right or whether other people, perhaps the mover of the motion—I do not know what his personal views are—and certain residents of the district take the sounder view. For this very difficult task of deciding between two opposing sets of expert opinion, we have to get someone who will do the work without remuneration. It is somewhat difficult for the Government to select men with such knowledge as would justify them in pronouncing a definite opinion as between those two conflicting pieces of expert evidence and advice and say to those men, "You must give us a report, but we are not going to pay you anything for it." Personally I think the labourer is worthy of his hire, and I am somewhat at a loss to understand what is the theory underlying this idea of honorary commissions. Is it the assumption that men may be trusted to investigate an important problem and arrive at a decision which may or may not involve the country in a good deal of expenditure, may be trusted to weigh the evidence carefully and sift it, but cannot be trusted not to prolong the Commission in order to benefit themselves by getting increased fees. Is that the theory? If it is, I think it is a very improper one. As a matter of fact, in respect of a Commission which

conducts its work expeditiously, the item of fees would not be by any means the largest portion of the expenditure, and if we do appoint this Commission, it is idle to suppose that it is not going to cost money. It must cost money, and I cannot see that it is going to do any good. I appeal to hon. members, in view of their criticism of the Government in the past in respect to the appointment of Royal Commissions, to refrain from carrying this motion. It is obvious that the proposed Royal Commission can do no possible good. It will be necessary to charge them with a good deal of power, they are bound to incur a good deal of expenditure, and I say we should refrain from appointing a Royal Commission unless we are satisfied that the Royal Commission is likely to be of benefit to the country.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [3.43]: I intended to vote for the appointment of the Commission, for two reasons. The first was that in accordance with paragraph 2 of the motion the members of the Commission were to act without remuneration. I felt that if it was a sufficiently interesting study for hon. members to go into this question, and cost nothing, there would be no harm in appointing the Commission. In the second place, I thought the Honorary Minister (Hon. F. E. S. Willmott) would welcome an inquiry of this kind. There has been a great deal of conflicting opinion expressed in regard to his action in the uprooting of the orchard, so I thought he would welcome an inquiry which, if the Honorary Minister be in the right, must serve to clear him from any imputation of having done wrong. On those grounds I did feel inclined, and almost intended, to vote for it, but after hearing the remarks of the Colonial Secretary I am perhaps a little doubtful. The leader of the House infers that although the members of the Commission may act for nothing there are incidental expenses which may mount up to a large sum. What these incidental expenses may be I know not. Perhaps Mr. Clarke, when he is replying, will tell us. At all events I thought it was our duty, if the Honorary Minister was as innocent in the matter as it is claimed he is, that he should be given an opportunity of proving it.

Hon. J. A. GREIG (South-East) [3.46]: It was not my intention to speak on this motion. I cannot see that a Royal Commission would do any good. A Royal Commission whose findings would be of any value, would require to be made up of experts. I do not think the Government should appoint a Royal Commission consisting of members of Parliament to go into the matter. There is a paragraph in the motion to the effect that the members of the Commission are to act without remuneration. It is hardly reasonable to expect that we could get outside experts to go fully into this matter without being paid. If they were paid I presume the State would have to provide the money. I sympathise with the mover of the motion, because I realise that a great mistake was made in the manner in which the orchard was destroyed. Had the Minister first formed his

own conclusions and then notified the fact to the public, and said that unless better results were obtained within 12 months it was his intention to destroy the orchard, a Royal Commission could then have gone into the matter before the damage was done. This would have been of value to the State. I cannot see the value of a Royal Commission at this juncture. It would be a difficult matter for any body of men to go over the ground where these trees once grew, and say what the results would have been had they been left in. Practical experience in Western Australia has led me to believe that we may have trees doing well on one piece of ground, and on another piece 100 yards away have a complete failure. Because a particular piece of ground is no good for fruit trees, it is no proof that the ground half a mile away would not be suitable. Because this orchard was grubbed up, even if it was a failure as the Honorary Minister says, this should not condemn the whole district. I do not think it does so. There are men situated not very far from this orchard who are growing first class fruit to-day.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: What do they say about this orchard being rooted up?

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I have not heard their opinion in the matter. They say that their orchards are good, and that they are growing good fruit.

Hon. J. Ewing: What about Mr. Price?

Hon. J. A. GREIG: That is all I have to say in the matter.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.50]: I am intensely interested in the fruit-growing industry. The more information we can get on the subject the better. I know a little about this orchard business. I would not set myself up either as a scientific or a practical orchardist, for my interest in the industry is commercial and aesthetic. We have a great deal to learn in this country with regard to fruit growing. I am not in favour of State orchards, but here was a State orchard in existence. We orchardists know that we can learn a great deal from our failures as well as from our successes. My criticism of the Honorary Minister is the ignorance of the person, and the hastiness of the Minister in dealing with this question. I give him credit for wishing to foster the industry, and I ask him to give me some credit too. The only difference in our method is that my method of fostering the industry will not be so disastrous to the finances of the country as his method was. He had no more right to destroy that orchard without giving the fullest opportunity to those people interested to consider carefully the matter, than he had to start this wretched jam and canning business.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: I thought it was done for economy.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: There is economy and economy. I sympathise with the leader of the House. He made a powerful criticism of this business. I would not like to load up the Government. It goes much against my grain to load up the Government with

a Royal Commission at a time like this. But when we see this tomfoolery going on, and thousands of pounds being frittered away by these incompetent Ministers, I cannot understand why the Government should object to this Royal Commission which will not cost one hundred guineas. The industry is a most interesting one, and could be made a very important one to the State. We want a great deal of information regarding it and a lot of experimental work done. I do not expect a great deal of information to come from this Royal Commission. Even if the report was not of great value it would be of some value, and probably worth the money we would spend on it. I have made a special study of these Agricultural Royal Commissions, and believe that the best of them all was that which was appointed in 1886, when the late Mr. Charles Harper was chairman. If this particular Royal Commission could put on paper one tenth part of the valuable information which was given in 1886, it would be well worth the money. I hope this motion will be carried, and that the leader of the House will take this back to his colleague, that so far as a few guineas are concerned on experimental work and on educational work, this Chamber will not grudge the money. So far as the stimulating and fostering of industries by the establishment of this tomfool business in connection with the jam factory is concerned, not only the people inside Parliament but those outside are opposed to it. Surely the Honorary Minister can himself see the danger and the foolishness of his conduct.

Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister) : May I ask if this motion has any connection with the jam factory?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It is closely allied to it. I do not want to be drawn into the jam factory business here, because I am going to deal with that outside. So far as this motion is concerned, and the criticism of the leader of the House, the opinion of the Colonial Secretary will no doubt carry great weight. It is probable that because of that criticism, and the appeal which has been made by the leader of the House, this motion will be rejected. I would just point out to those who have not yet made up their minds, that in the hands of a practical man like the mover and some of the experts that we have—and I would recognise Mr. Price at once as one of those experts, he himself having condemned this orchard—we shall have an opportunity of having put down on paper some information on the subject which should be helpful to the fruit growers, who are determined to tackle this question of fruit growing in Western Australia in a proper and modern spirit, with as much science and work as they can put into it, and as much experimental work in the orchard, as possible. I trust the motion will be carried and that the report which is brought in will be of some assistance to the fruit-growing industry of this country.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [3.55]: I sympathise to a large extent with the attitude

of the Government. Like Mr. Greig, I do not see that this Royal Commission, now that the orchard has been destroyed, can obtain anything in the nature of really valuable evidence, for we shall only have the word of one section of growers against the word of another section. I wonder if the Royal Commission on agriculture which dealt with agricultural matters in the south-western portion of the State, and among others with the Harvey irrigation scheme, the potato growers in the Albany district, and the dairying industry of the South-West, has not given some time also to the investigation of the Brunswick State orchard and, in relation to it, the destruction of the trees there. It must involve a considerable amount of expense even if the members of this Royal Commission are to give their services in an honorary capacity. There is also to be considered the appointment of a secretary and his salary, the travelling expenses incurred in the work of the Commission, and the printing, and I fail to see that the result will warrant that expenditure. There is also the time that will be involved in considering the nature of the evidence which is likely to be obtained.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West—in reply) [3.57]: The Colonial Secretary seems to regret that such a motion as this has been brought forward, but having brought it forward I should fail in my duty if I did not see it through to the bitter end. We have the position that a Minister of the Crown deliberately set to work, without consulting any of the representatives of the locality, to grub up this orchard, and he evidently took fright at his own action and called in an expert to report on the facts after he had committed, so to speak, this murder. In order to carry my case I must read what the hon. member read regarding the statement of Mr. Price—

I hope people who contemplate planting in the coastal areas will take a friendly hint and not plant apples, pears, or plums even if the soil is good. They will never be profitable. What I mean by the coastal areas is all that land between Perth, Bunbury and the sea-coast.

I submit first and foremost that there are thousands of acres along that coastal area that Mr. Price has never seen, and I do not believe he has ever heard of. He condemns people a little further on for growing crops. I call the Minister's attention to the fact that there are, on the Murray river, people producing some of the best sultanas and raisins that are to be seen anywhere in the Commonwealth. All down that coast-line, which is of considerable extent, for some 10 or 12 miles inland from the coast there is to be seen some of the finest land for growing grapes and making wine anywhere in Western Australia. It was only a few years ago we were told that we could not grow oranges anywhere south of Perth. My answer to that is that people could not do very much in that way until they did go some distance below Perth. I am speaking from experience. This is my point, that the thing is done, and to justify this action the Honorary Minister deliberately proceeds to curse this part of the State, to use a Biblical term. He condemns the whole of the country from Perth,

right away to the sea-coast. Below Busselton there is first class land, and first class orchards can be made there. It is true that people are not carrying them on, because it is not a paying proposition to do so. Orchards are not a paying proposition anywhere except in a few places. The expert is only called in after the deed is done. I should like to take Mr. Willmott and Mr. Price and show them some orchards in the South-West, when they would be astonished by the size of the fruit. To call in a man to say that the whole of the country between the coast and the hills is useless for fruit growing is to do something outrageous. Mr. Price cannot have seen the country he has condemned. Here is another quotation from his report—

The Agricultural Department should do all in their power to see that prospective fruit-growers should get into the right locality to grow fruit. Apricots, peaches, nectarines, oranges, lemons, and Japanese plums can be grown successfully in the coastal area, provided sheltered spots, with good soil, are selected.

That is really tantamount to saying that prospective fruitgrowers should avoid the whole of the South-West. Could anything be more damaging to that vast area of country? Mr. Price further states—

You did quite right in grubbing up the drying grapes; the situation is too far south to produce a good dried article.

Notwithstanding that assertion of Mr. Price, I say that Mr. Cox, of Murray, has raisins than which there are no finer to be found in the country. I venture to say also that Mr. Baxter has come across some of those grapes. I am sorry to have to push this motion, but I should be failing in my duty if I did not call attention to the matter. It is absolutely false to say that the South-West is unfit for fruit growing; and I know every yard of that country. Although this matter has already received considerable publicity, my motion should be carried. The Minister who grubbed up the orchard has given away the whole show in first doing the thing, and then asking for a report when it is too late to rectify the mischief.

Question put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	..	12

Majority against 1

AYES.

Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. W. Kingsmill
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. W. Hickey	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. F. Allen	Hon. R. J. Lyon
Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. H. J. Saunders
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	Hon. J. Duffell
	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

MOTION—REPATRIATION SCHEME, CONTROL.

Debate resumed from the 28th May on the motion by the Hon. J. Ewing "That in the opinion of this House the settlement of soldiers scheme should be controlled by one Minister and a responsible officer."

Hon. E. ROSE (South-West) [4.8]: My object in moving the adjournment of this debate was to afford hon. members an opportunity of learning what had already been done and what was being done in the way of repatriation. On making inquiries I find that we have here a committee attending to the subject as regards land settlement. I believe the committee are a very capable body. I have not ascertained what Minister controls the scheme. The returned soldier goes to Mr. Camm first, and then with him to another officer, and any papers required in connection with land selection are fixed up, and there is little trouble in obtaining what is required. It would be a good idea to keep repatriation altogether outside politics and under one Minister. A small committee in control of such a scheme ensures a more continuous policy. In the past Ministers seem to have undone what their predecessors did and that has been to the disadvantage of the State generally. We have already thousands of returned soldiers in Western Australia, and they must be either settled on the land or placed in other lines of business. The returned soldier should not be allowed to remain in the City without occupation. No matter what sphere of life he wishes to enter, he should have advisers upon whom he can depend. Regarding settlement of returned soldiers on the land I have previously urged in this House that the Brunswick State Farm should be converted into an agricultural college, where the soldiers could obtain six or 12 months' useful instruction. It is all very well for the Minister to say we have an agricultural college already at Narrogin. The conditions in the Narrogin district are altogether different from those of the South-West. Before settling in our wetter areas where dairying is practicable, the soldiers should be given suitable instruction, instead of being allowed to embark on farming on their own account with the risk of waste of time and money. Speaking as an old experienced farmer I feel strongly on the point. I have seen people waste thousands of pounds in farming without any good results whatever. As to turning the Brunswick State Farm into an agricultural college, the buildings are there already, and also the necessary facilities for training men in agricultural pursuits. I believe the adoption of my suggestion would result in benefit to the State as well as to the returned soldiers. I do not agree with Sir Edward Wittenoom's statement that there is no land worth taking up between Bridgetown and Nannup. If Sir Edward will travel through that country and keep his eyes open, he will see thousands of acres, unfortunately heavily timbered but nevertheless most suitable for either fruit growing or dairying. The South-West is almost useless for wheat growing, but

in other forms of agriculture the people there are making a good living. If the Government would appoint a board to take the scheme thoroughly in hand, ground could be partly cleared and cottages built in advance for the soldiers, and that would be a great assistance to them. It is no use waiting until they have all returned and are on the spot without anywhere to go. Experience tells us that men remaining in the cities without employment go downhill very rapidly. I have no intention of speaking at length on this question, but I do consider the Government should get more land for the settlement of returned soldiers. It is not likely that one-half, or perhaps, even one-tenth, of the soldiers now fighting will go on the land; but I think the great majority of those brought up on the land will want to get back into the open air again. My opinion is that we should start them in groups, so that they could help each other and have plenty of company. Certainly, that would be much better than settling one here and one there. The South-West affords an opening for the settlement of thousands of men on the land, and I hope the Government will make a move and get farms ready. I understand it is not the Government's intention to repurchase estates for this purpose, although there are several estates on the market to-day at a cheap figure which would be suitable for cutting up. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [4.14]: Had this motion come forward a couple of weeks ago, I would probably not have spoken on it, but since then I have found that the carrying out of the Government scheme has not been what we have been led to expect. During the recent election I endeavoured to make the people of the South-East Province fully acquainted with what is being done in the matter of repatriation, both by the public and by the Government, and I claim a proper knowledge of the subject. In many instances, where the people were unfriendly critics of the Government, their attitude changed after they had heard what I had to say. I find now that there are considerable difficulties experienced in helping the returned soldier. I think there are difficulties in connection with the administration, and while realising that in connection with matters like this, the scheme has been drawn up to benefit all who are fitted for agricultural pursuits, yet it is made extremely difficult for those who are away from the centre of civilisation to participate in the benefit which by right they are entitled. We should endeavour to get an alteration in the administration, so that it may be possible to extend the benefits of the proposal to all who are justly entitled to them. I am aware that repatriation in connection with the settlement on the land is the only branch of repatriation for which the State is responsible. I am aware of the policy outlined by the present Government, which I think is sound, and that is to endeavour to keep on the land all the people who are at present on it, and rather than relieve any of them by purchasing their properties on which to settle returned soldiers, the Government should endeavour to find suitable areas for

the returned men in localities where those men will not be subjected to undue hardships, and under conditions which will enable them to make a comfortable living and rear a family. When the representative of the Government is replying to this motion I would like him to state what position Mr. Camm occupies. As outlined by the Minister for Industries some time ago, settlement on the land is provided for by the establishment of two boards, first, the returned soldiers' settlement board, consisting of the Surveyor General, the Chief Inspector of the Agricultural Bank, the Conservator of Forests, and Mr. Morris, of the Lands Department. That board, I understand, have been making inquiries into the vacant lands situated within nine miles of a railway, reviewing those lands, and setting apart 122 locations for mixed farming, and intense culture. There were 132 applications received by the board, and 101 were granted, while 17 were held over. Then there is also the land classification board, which consists of Mr. John Robinson, Mr. McLarty, and Major Milner. That board review the qualifications of each returned man who applies for land on which to settle, and it is their duty to find out whether the applicant is suited to the life, and, secondly, if he has had the necessary experience. I understand that if he has not had the necessary experience arrangements are made for him to get that experience at one of the State farms or with an experienced and successful farmer, and under suitable conditions of living and housing. That is the scheme which has been outlined by the Minister for Industries and it stands to-day. I will give some instances. A returned man is in a district, say, like Marradong, on the western boundary of the South-East Province, and adjacent to the province represented by Messrs. Clarke, Ewing, and Rose. That man at Marradong does not want to settle on a wheat area, but wants to settle amongst his own people, who may be elsewhere. One would expect that with the many properties in the hands of the Agricultural Bank the individual in question would be furnished with a list of them. I asked that a returned man should be provided with a list of properties available in the Wagin district, so that he could go and inspect them and see whether there was anything to suit him. I understand from the Minister for Industries that where a returned man or any member of the community wants a farm which has reverted to the Agricultural Bank, a farm on which money has been advanced, and which has fallen into the hands of the bank, and probably has become depreciated in value, the bank are prepared to consider an offer. One would think that there would be available to send to returned men a list of these properties in the localities in which the men are situated. Then these men could inspect the properties and submit an offer. I find, however, that that is not done, and here the Government assurances fall short of fulfilment. In support of my statement I will read a letter which I have received from Mr. Camm, as follows:—

With reference to your request to the manager, Industries Department, that a list of land set apart for returned soldiers in the Wagin and Marradong districts, should be sent to Messrs. Gladstone and Wells, and which request has been passed on to me, I beg to inform you that there are no vacant Crown lands within reasonable distance of the railway in those localities which are considered suitable for the settlement of returned soldiers, and therefore no Crown lands have been made available. There is a number of abandoned properties in the hands of the Agricultural Bank, but this office is depending upon the Agricultural Bank for advice as to what is suitable in that respect. So far the bank has not published any list of properties suitable for soldiers, but when individual soldiers make application to take up particular blocks thrown on the bank's hands, the bank is communicated with and asked whether they have any objection to the returned soldier being allowed to select the property. The trouble with regard to bank properties is that in most instances money has been advanced for improvements which have deteriorated, and as the former holder generally owes a considerable sum for interest the bank is unwilling to allow soldiers to take over these properties unless they assume the full liability, which of course a soldier is not prepared to do, and it necessitates a revaluation of improvements, and a writing off by the bank of a certain sum in every case.

We want suitable settlers. I believe it is a fact that the Premier gave an assurance in another place that if the case of any returned man who had not received what seemed to be fair and proper treatment was brought under his notice it would receive sympathetic attention. I have also interviewed the Minister for Industries in connection with this matter, and he indicated that everything was all right, and that returned men had only to take the proper steps in order to receive the consideration to which they were entitled. Returned soldiers must apply either by letter to the land classification board or personally, and prove that they are suited to the life which they propose to embark on. Also that they possess the necessary knowledge, or that if they do not possess that knowledge arrangements can be made for them to get experience at one of the State farms, or on the farm of an experienced farmer. Those statements have been made by responsible Ministers, and I expect to see them fulfilled, and any pertinacity I possess will be manifested in trying to get for any returned man that treatment which has been promised him by the Government. I contend that the letter which I received shows that there is something in connection with the administration which requires to be rectified. If the bank want to get rid of the properties they have, there will not be much work involved in having a list of them prepared. If a man who has offered his all in response to the call of his country comes back and makes a request that he shall be shown

in his own district what land is available for selection, he should be promptly supplied with a list, either by the soldiers' land settlement committee or the Agricultural Bank, and the man should be able to see for himself what properties are available, and make his offer accordingly. In Katanning and in Wagin we have had for the past two years two associations which have been looking after the interests of the dependants of those who are away, and have been endeavouring to help to settle those who have returned. Those associations have experienced difficulties somewhat similar to those which I have indicated. In connection with the inspection of properties, the Wagin and Katanning associations go to the extent that they will allow returned men so much out of the local funds for expenses, and these are funds which have nothing to do with the Federal or the State Government; they amount to thousands of pounds and have been raised locally. The men are thus able to inspect the properties, that is, if it is known where the properties are. Surely under those circumstances, it is not too much for the Government or the department or the committee controlling this work to see that the men are supplied with a list of properties which are available. In many instances no doubt they will not find properties which will suit them, but, in order to bring about that condition of affairs which the Government want, that is, to get the forfeited farms taken up again, the conditions must be such that those properties can be readily inspected and be made available at present values. It should not be necessary for the returned men to have to wait and indulge in considerable correspondence, or even take trips to the City to get the information they have a right to receive. I know in many directions the Government and the people who are dealing with returned soldiers are endeavouring to do the best they can, but I think that at the present time the machinery is not as complete and as satisfactory as it should be.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [4.30]: Unfortunately, I have no practical knowledge of the subject, and therefore my remarks may be considered superficial and suggestive rather than thoroughly practical. I have neither had the privilege of discussing the matter with any returned soldier nor with anybody in authority who may have been appointed to carry out the arrangements. The first thing I would like to find out is the number of men desirous of going on the land. I cannot think they are very numerous when we remember that in the great majority of cases the men who left Western Australia carried with them promises that their positions would be kept open for them until they came back. I happen to represent five commercial institutions in this City which employ in the aggregate a large number of clerks, and in all cases it was part of the understanding when they went away that their positions should be kept open. With the deepest regret I have to say that a great many of them will not come back. But those who do will have the option of taking up

their old positions. In the country districts, I understand, the same rule obtains. I do not believe that very many proprietors of farms have gone away, although probably our soldiers comprise a good many young fellows from farms, and under the present condition of labour I am quite certain that those of them who come back and care to resume their old positions in the agricultural industry will be heartily welcomed. Therefore the question arises, for what number of men shall we have to provide fresh land? It is difficult to find out. I endorse the remarks of the mover as to the way in which he would go about putting the returned soldiers on the land. I have always considered that the first necessity is a training establishment for the young fellows who desire to go on the land. We all know what going on the land means. We have seen men in our employment; we have seen them take up land, and we have seen them farming, and we know that many of those who have taken up land have tired of it and gone away, while others bound to it often wish they, too, could get away. Therefore, I think there should be a probationary period before any of these men are definitely settled on the land, and in conjunction with this I advocate the establishment of training schools or colleges, call them what you will. I would take Yandanooka, a splendid estate of something like 200,000 acres, which would make an ideal training area for grazing and farming. Then there is Avondale, which could be made another good training ground, and again, we have Brunswick where we might have a school for dairying and poultry and pig raising. With those three properties we could make a start, and the soldiers could go to one or the other of them for 12 months, at the end of which time it would be decided whether or not they were suited to the life. At the end of 12 months, when a man determined that he would like to continue in his new avocation, it would be for the Government to say where he should go. I remember talking to Sir Harry Barron on one occasion. He was most anxious to put men on the land, and he remarked to me that the difficulty was to get men to leave the towns. We have to consider that aspect of the question. Therefore, I think a probationary period should be passed before any large expenditure is incurred in settling men on the land. I understand that in New South Wales they are actually doing this, and I am not sure that it is not being done in South Australia also. As I have said, when a man shall have passed his probationary period, it will be for the Government to find him a farm. It occurs to me that the abandoned farms on the hands of the Government could not be better utilised, for it must be remembered that a farm is not necessarily abandoned because the soil is no good. In the great majority of cases it is for quite other reasons. Of course, if there is a large debt on the farm, it will have to be written off, for these men must be given a clear start. Mr. Ewing, the other day, men-

tioned some good land he knew where the soldiers could be placed. Mr. Dodd said that this was in contradiction to what I had said about the land along the railways. I still maintain that the land I referred to along the railways would not keep one soldier to the thousand acres.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Have you been down at Preston Valley?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I do not know anything about Preston Valley, but I know the land along the railway lines. Some people say that the land along the railway lines is so valuable that the owners are keeping it for the unearned increment. If that is so, let the Government resume it and put the soldiers on it. The poor devils would starve on it at one to the thousand acres.

Hon. J. Mills: You must be referring to Crown lands.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: No, I mean land that some poor wretch has inherited. I have known men who have been left thousands of acres which they would give away if they could. I myself actually paid a man 30s. to take over a suburban block of land in the Midland district, on which I would not pay the roads board rates. It only shows that Western Australia, like other places, is made up of good land and poor land, and the good land has been taken up and occupied. Therefore we have to look around for good land for the returned soldiers, and I say these abandoned farms would be the very thing, for the men who originally took them up did not spend four or five years on them without effecting some improvements. I do not anticipate that there will be any emigration after the war, because neither the British nor the French nation will be able to spare emigrants of the class we require, for they will want them all for themselves. Then there will be all those returned soldiers who will not go on the land. It will be necessary to start them in other directions, and for this purpose of course the repatriation committee will have to reserve sufficient money. Those who do go on the land will never make a success of it unless they first pass a probationary period, and now is the time for those in authority to get two or three places ready in different parts of the State, places at which these men may secure their training. By having these training establishments in two or three different parts of the State we shall be giving the men a chance to choose the climate and locality they prefer. I will support the motion.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.43]: I am not exactly sure of the extent and purpose of the motion, but I take it that it is designed to further the interests of our returned soldiers. Mr. Ewing is a champion of the cause of our returned soldiers, and I am sure that all members are desirous of assisting them in every possible way. I for one will be glad to give my fullest support to anything which has attached to it this object and this purpose. I have been associated with the work of repatriation, and have assisted in various movements connected with the returned soldiers, and whatever I can do to assist the object I shall be only too willing. I have

listened with interest to the views that have been expressed by various members in regard to the settlement of returned soldiers and I endorse much that has been said as to the importance of men being provided with land in suitable areas near to the railway line, and not placed on areas far removed from those connecting points with centres of civilisation. It is of the greatest importance that these men should be assisted in every possible way in establishing homes in districts where they can be settled with the greatest degree of comfort, and where there is a likelihood of prosperity. Some men might prefer to be engaged on wheat areas. As to these men, therefore, it would be necessary for the department controlling that particular work to see that these men have allotted to them suitable farms in a district suited to the purposes of the kind of farming they wish to undertake. The men who desire to undertake another branch of work, such as is adapted to the South-Western district, should have lands set aside for them for their particular purposes in a suitable area and near the railway line also. I believe there is a board—the Colonial Secretary, I am sure, can inform us if it is actually in existence—and it is under the control of the Minister for Lands, I believe. I am sure a motion having for its object the promotion of the interests of returned soldiers will meet with hearty support.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (North-East) [4.47]: I listened with considerable interest to the different speeches which have been delivered on this motion, but I have not heard yet any reason why the soldiers' settlement scheme should be controlled by a Minister and a responsible officer. I fully expected some of the speakers would have pointed out to the House the reasons why we are asked to depart from the present control. As I understand the position, the Minister is assisted by a board, acting with him and responsible to the Minister, and I desire before casting my vote to have some information and some knowledge of how the position is at present. Why is there a desire for any change? No doubt Mr. Ewing, in replying, will be able to furnish that information, but unless that information is forthcoming I shall find it difficult to cast my vote. On the other hand, if the motion was submitted by Mr. Ewing for the purpose of discussing the soldiers' settlement scheme, I cannot understand the position. I am in the dark entirely in which direction to cast my vote, unless I know the position as it is to-day. Not one of the speakers has informed the House why we should depart from the present administration—the Minister and a board responsible to the Minister. To my way of thinking the Minister assisted by a board would be considerably better than the Minister assisted by one, and only one, responsible officer. I ask Mr. Ewing, when replying, to make the position clear.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES (North) [4.49]: I am pleased that Mr. Ewing has given us an opportunity of discussing this matter. The motion refers to the settlement of soldiers scheme controlled by one Minister. I presume it refers to all the soldiers, not only those who wish to settle on the land, but any class of soldier. Has the State anything

to do with settling the miner who has gone to the Front and returned? Could he not be assisted; also the pearler? Those are the men I would like to see provided for. If these men wish to go back to the industries they have left, they should be assisted. I think the Minister, if we carry the motion, could well take on the work of assisting men back to the mining industry and the pearling industry, and not only that, I think if the motion is carried, while the House is in recess the Minister might consider the taxation which these returned soldiers will have to pay. It is all very well to talk about loyalty to King and country, but if we are not loyal to the men who have gone to fight for us, we are not loyal to our King and country. It is either fight or pay. Those who have not been able to go and fight must bear the taxation to finance those who have gone. As I indicated the other night, I think it is the duty of the Government in recess when framing the taxation measures, for next session, to see that an exemption is provided for returned soldiers. They have given their all; they have risked their lives for us, and those of us who have not been able to go to the Front should pay, and I believe all are willing to pay more taxation to assist those who have gone to the Front. I support the motion.

Hon. J. MILLS (Central) [4.51]: My idea in regard to settling men on the land is that the land must be made more attractive. At the present time a returned soldier who desires to go on the land is faced with heavy land rents and much heavy taxation. The man who has fought for our country is deserving of every assistance, and I think it is only fair to him that he should have some land given to him. I am speaking now particularly of those who have been in the firing line. I do not mean those men who had some defect and only discovered it when they got to the Front. If a man wants to follow the avocation of farming, I think he should be billeted with some practical farmer for six months, and if he is then satisfied with the land, we should give him absolutely the freehold of a block of land 1,000 acres in extent. It should be made free to him for all time. Some men, perhaps, are unhinged in their minds and may commit some act rendering them liable to the law, therefore these men should be looked after. We should give the men who wish to go on the land the freehold of a block of land; I would make it for the period of the man's life and for his wife's.

Hon. J. Nicholson: And not to be transferred?

Hon. J. MILLS: I would not say that. I would give it to him. If he has fought for the country, I do not care what arguments are used, the man having fought for this country is entitled to his share of it. He would have in addition to the land rent, taxes to pay, and probably more taxes to come. If a man got a daily wage of 8s. or 10s. he might prefer it to going on the land, where he does not see any silver at all. I repeat, it is one of the greatest benefits, if

a man is satisfied to settle on the land and work it. We should give him a block wholly and absolutely to the extent of 1,000 acres, and assist him to develop it. But to talk to placing soldiers on abandoned farms is not right, because many of these farms have been abandoned for good reasons—bad roads, bad land, the distance from a railway, shortage of water, and so on. There is generally a substantial reason for a farm being abandoned. At the present time, if a man makes an application to the bank for a farm, he is met with huge liabilities, which have accumulated—land rents and so forth—and, as one member has said, a man is kept hanging about the City or towns for days or weeks before he can get a reply from the department. That is no good.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.54]: I am very glad the member brought this motion forward and I thank him and other members for the spirit in which they have conducted the debate. Many suggestions made will be of considerable value to the Government. All I propose to do is to state the facts in regard to one or two points that have been brought out. First of all, Mr. Ewing made reference to the plans supplied to the Agent General in London and suggested that, compared with the plans used for soldiers' settlements, they may be regarded as misleading. Before tabling the plans in this House, I was careful to have the minutes that accompanied the plans to the Agent General copied and I will read these to members, so that members will see that no attempt has been made to mislead anyone. These plans were prepared by the late Surveyor General, Mr. Brockman, and anyone looking at them without the explanatory minutes might jump to a wrong conclusion. One might think that he was suggesting settlement in areas removed from settlement and where there was a doubtful rainfall. He says—

In accordance with the instructions of the Hon. Minister for Lands, I have had a set of plans prepared, in duplicate, one copy of which should be supplied to the Agent General. 2, These supply complete up-to-date information with regard to our present provision by survey of lands suitable for selection, either by returned soldiers, or other class of selectors. 3, Upon the index plan, drawn to the scale of 10 miles to the inch, will be found, shaded in green, the area included within the South-West division, which I consider should be accepted as the "Wheat Belt proper" at this date. 4, The North-Eastern, or outer boundaries of this area, I have arranged, after some personal examination and the collection of much data from authorities as being the inland boundary of the area within which we may encourage settlement for the purpose of cultivating such varieties of cereals as already are known to the State. 5, The South-western boundary of this area is that already accepted as being the inner boundary of the "Wheat Belt proper"—the area lying between that boundary and the coast line, being more suited for the cultivation of products other than wheat, though a great proportion of this is capable of pro-

ducing wheat at a much higher yield per acre, though probably of inferior quality to that produced within the "Wheat Belt proper." 6, In the figures supplied herewith, the area shown in green on the index plan, is that referred to as the "Wheat Belt." The boundaries of this area where they occur on the detail maps, are shown by blue lines.

The plans put up by the Surveyor General are in no way misleading and could not lead anyone astray if they followed the minute put up along with the plans.

7, Upon the detail maps, all vacant Crown lands which have been surveyed into farms for selection are shown in red and green colours, red being used for the northern and green for the southern portion of the division. 8, Areas which are now being subdivided for repatriation purposes are shown coloured yellow on the detail plans Nos. 1, 7, and 9/300. 9, An area which is still under consideration for the same purpose is shown emerald green on the plan 8/300. 10, The areas of the repurchased Harvey, Avondale, and Yandanooka estates, which it is proposed to set apart for this purpose, are shown coloured blue upon plans 8, 21, and 37/300 respectively. 11, The total numbers of surveyed and unselected farms are:— (1) Within the wheat belt, 1,499 locations; (2) To the eastward of the wheat belt and probably unsuitable for selection by returned soldiers by reason of the light rainfall, 630 locations; (3) And between the Wheat Belt and the west coast, 1,400 locations, a large number of which are at present reserved for timber. 12, Having regard to the fact that we propose to provide only of our best for the settlement of returned soldiers, the position to date, may be summarised as:— (a) 34 locations have been gazetted open exclusively for settlement by returned soldiers. The positions of these have not been indicated upon the plans for the reason that they will probably be largely, if not wholly, selected before these plans reach London. (b) Of the 1,500 vacant locations within the wheat belt, about 500 could be set apart as a first selection for repatriation purposes. These have not been specially set apart for returned soldiers only, but since there is complete stagnation in selection at present, the position with regard to them is not likely to materially alter for some time to come. (c) Of the 1,400 surveyed and vacant locations, situate between the wheat belt and the coast, about 400 can be allocated as a first selection for soldiers and the work of allocation is now proceeding. These locations are of an average area of about 250 acres each, and are principally suitable for dairying and mixed farming. (d) The areas shown coloured yellow on the detail plans and upon which the subdivision is now proceeding, are estimated to provide at least 450 farms suitable for repatriation purposes. (e) The survey of about 30 locations within the Harvey Estate has now been completed. These are

cleared, ploughed, and drained and it is proposed to provide irrigation. These have already been set apart for returned soldiers and will be thrown open for this purpose at an early date. In addition to this the survey of about 20 unimproved locations in the same estate, designed for soldiers, is proceeding. (f) The portions of the Avondale and Yandanooka estates that are to be allocated for soldiers have not yet been determined. Both of these estates are being at present cultivated and used for grazing purposes by the State. They are already largely improved and fit for immediate occupation and the portions to be devoted for returned soldiers can be readily set aside when a demand arises. (g) Within the unsubdivided lands of the wheat belt there are many areas suitable for selection before survey, though of insufficient extent to justify a scheme of subdivision, it is probable that 500 selectors could locate themselves in this area with the advice of the district inspectors. (h) The Agricultural Bank has a large number of farms in hand which are not included in the figures supplied. These number upwards of 800, and it may be estimated that at least 200 are suitable for soldiers. A small number of returned soldiers have already been located on such locations. (i) In the extreme South-West end of the State, between Cape Naturaliste and Albany, a district specially suitable for dairying and fruit-growing industries, there is room for extensive provision of farms for returned soldiers, if some reasonable line of demarcation between timber reserves and agricultural land can be determined. 13, It must be borne in mind that to make the areas referred to in paragraph (i), and also a large number of those referred to in paragraph (c) and (d) fully suitable for the purpose of repatriation, further railway construction will be necessary. 14, The data supplied in the foregoing report are only intended to represent our present position not our total capacity for placing settlers upon the land.

That is Mr. Brockman's minute which is intended to accompany and govern the plan sent to the Agent General. I have here the plans at present being used. These show that in the wheat belt for wheat and sheep about 70,000 acres have already been set apart in different places for returned soldiers, divided into 80 farms; for dairying, etc., in the South-West, 600 acres have been set apart at Kojikup for 25 farms, 700 acres at Manjimup for 50 farms, 551 acres at Lake Sadie for 10 farms, 300 acres at Denmark suitable for three farms, and in connection with poultry raising at Osborne Park 82 acres have been set apart suitable for about 16 poultry farms. In connection with mixed farming in the South-West 1,687 acres have been set apart suitable for 10 farms. The total area now ready in addition to those settled is 73,913 acres, comprising about 194 farms. In addition, two very generous gifts have been made to the State for the benefit of returned sol-

diers. One was by Mr. Sewell of a farm at Greencough River of 5,320 acres, no doubt a very valuable property, and also a farm of 1,300 acres with horses, house, machinery, etc., which has been given by Mr. Gillam. I have no doubt we shall have other equally generous gifts. A reference has been made to the necessity for a special Act regarding soldier settlements. The necessity is admitted although it is not so essential as it was in the other States. I have no doubt that in the other States it has been found essential to have this legislation, but in Western Australia we have generous conditions in regard to land settlement, and these were specially amended for the purpose of returned soldiers to enable the work to go on. However, the need for special legislation is fully recognised and a Bill has already been drafted. Had it not been for the very disturbed nature of the present session the Bill would have been presented during this session, but personally I am inclined to think that the withholding of the Bill and making it the first Bill of the coming session will be an entirely wise procedure, because we are more likely to get into trouble over soldier settlement schemes by going too fast than by taking our time. The work is going on and we are putting it on a permanent basis and a basis which will be entirely safe. After the Bill has been revised by Cabinet there will not be the least objection to hon. members seeing it, so that it may be well considered when it comes before Parliament next session. The motion of the hon. member affirms the desirableness of placing the scheme under one Minister and a responsible officer. I do not know that the hon. member is bound to the wording of his motion. I take it that the general principle is that the scheme should be under one Minister. That is a wise proposal. The course followed in the past has had good sound reasons behind it. Two departments have been dealing with returned soldiers; the Lands Department have been finding the land and the Agricultural bank have been finding the money, and these two departments are under two Ministers. We do not want unnecessarily to build up a new department, and we do not want to deprive the soldier settlement scheme of the services of the officers of the Agricultural Bank, because those services can be rendered with very little, if any, increased cost to the State. Whilst it is our idea to place the scheme under one Minister, we still think that the greatest use should be made of the Agricultural Bank inspectors, and indeed all the officers of the different departments, so as to get the most efficient work with the least possible cost. After the Lands Department has found the land the next thing is to find the money, and that is a matter for the Agricultural Bank, which is under the control of the Minister for Industries, but I do not think that presents any insuperable difficulties to the proposal of control by one Minister, and I have no doubt if there are any, they will be overcome before the Bill is presented. Then there is the question of the contrast made between the Acts of the different States. I really do not think—I have

not had an opportunity of going into the matter exhaustively—that any of the States are doing very much better than we are. Queensland was quoted by Mr. Ewing as treating the returned men exceptionally well, and he instanced the fact that advances in Queensland were made on a pound for pound basis.

Hon. J. Ewing: Plus £700.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The pound for pound basis is up to £500, which means that if a man has £500 of his own, the Government will advance him £500 and then he may have further assistance, but a scheme, the foundation of which is a pound for pound basis, can hardly be considered liberal as compared with the scheme in operation in Western Australia. However, I do not know that I am in a position to speak definitely in regard to the Acts in force in the Eastern States because I have not had time to compare them. I think, however, our terms are on the whole generous, although I quite agree they cannot be too generous to meet the claims of returned soldiers. One matter which is being given careful attention at the present time is the establishment of group settlements. There is a great deal to be said in favour of such settlements, but they require to be carried out with care. We do not want to rush into experimental settlements without knowing that they are going to be carried out on thoroughly sound lines. At the present time some consideration is being given to the proposal for the acquisition of property to start group settlements in currant growing. These settlements will absorb returned soldiers in addition to those actually taking up land for currant growing. On the matter of repurchasing estates for the purpose of soldier settlements, it is hardly right to say that the Government will not repurchase estates. The position we take up is that we are going to be very careful about the matter of repurchasing estates, and I think there is ground for exercising care. Mr. Ewing has referred to the interest charges. I am not quarrelling with his idea that the State should pay the interest for the first few years, but there is not the slightest doubt that it was a definite arrangement between the Commonwealth and the States that $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. should be charged in the first year rising each year at the rate of one half per cent. until the interest reached the amount at which the money was borrowed, and the difference between the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and the rate at which the money was borrowed should be paid by the State and the Commonwealth. I have not had an opportunity of ascertaining the position so far as South Australia is concerned, but whatever arrangement is made in this matter it should be uniform. It will not be a good scheme for the States to be bidding against each other in the matter of the rates of interest. In some of the other States, compulsory purchase has been decided upon and I have no doubt attention to that phase of the question will be given in the Bill when it is presented to Parliament. I do not altogether like the sound of the phrase

“compulsory purchase,” but I do think in cases of this kind there may be ample justification for the compulsory purchase of estates not being used. With regard to the question of funds, no funds have yet been placed at the disposal of the State by the Federal Government. The Federal Government refused to place a sum of money at the disposal of the State, but they undertook on the Auditor General’s certificate as to the correctness of the amount, to refund to the State any expenditure incurred. That is how the position stands at the present time.

Hon. J. Ewing: It is very unsatisfactory.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is now being fought out with the Federal Government and I have no doubt a solution will be arrived at and a reasonable sum of money will be placed at the disposal of the Government for this work. The fact remains that at present no funds are being provided by the Commonwealth. Until we get some funds it is rather difficult to start on the work of providing for the training of soldiers, as suggested by Sir Edward Wittenoom. His idea is a good one. There is also a lot to be said in favour of the system, which is being employed at present, of trying to induce soldiers, who could not yet go in for land settlement, to go on to a well-conducted private farm, where the farmer is prepared not merely to make use of their labour but to train and instruct them. I am inclined to think that a good many will find that almost as advantageous as a school. I have no doubt that a school will be necessary, and it is intended to make such provision. Fairly extensive provision has already been made for the training of and educational facilities for returned soldiers, who because of wounds or ill-health find themselves unable to follow their previous calling, and wish to undertake a new avocation. This is being done on a generous scale by arrangement with the repatriation board and the State Education Department, and will be extended no doubt in the near future. The Commonwealth Government have already entered into an agreement with the State Education Department, and they are prepared to find the money. We, as a State, will, I am sure, co-operate with them heartily in doing anything that is possible to enable returned soldiers to fit themselves to do something else, because their injuries prevent them from following their usual avocation.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: I do not think it will ever work, their going on a farm to learn.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It may not do so on a large scale. I quite agree that a training farm will be absolutely necessary. So far as the terms for repayment by returned soldiers are concerned, under our present Act, regarding Crown lands, these terms are pretty liberal. They pay no rent for the first five years, and there is a period of 30 years given for repayment. With regard to repurchased estates, it will undoubtedly be necessary to give longer terms than those provided in that Act. Until the recent passing of the amending Act the Government were obliged, in selling

a repurchased estate, to get a certain price in order to receive their money back. It was realised that this was no longer possible, and an amending Bill was passed through Parliament empowering the Government to cut up and sell these estates, even if they did not realise the amount for which they had been purchased. Hon. members will realise the force of my statement that the Government must be careful in repurchasing estates, when I tell them that our present advice is that if estates like the Yandanooka and Avondale estates are cut up for settlement of returned soldiers, they will be cut up at a large loss to the State. In the case of the Yandanooka estate, it is estimated that the loss to the State, if it is cut up for settlement by returned soldiers, charging the returned soldiers what is considered a fair thing to enable them to make a success, will amount to £12,000. In regard to the Avondale estate, the loss is estimated at £29,000. That is rather a serious position, for these losses are not incurred because the estates are to be cut up for settlement by returned soldiers, for it is not that we propose to make a gift of these estates to them, but it is because the estates are not altogether suitable for cutting up at all. They were purchased by the Government for cutting up for settlement. The opinion of departmental officers, who have inquired into the matter, is that if we cut them up for settlement, whether for returned soldiers or not, we cannot put them up at a price which will give the settlers a chance of making a success without losing £12,000 and £29,000 respectively on the estates.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Use them as educational places and make them pay.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No doubt they might be made use of, and also made to pay, as big farms. I do not know that the price given for them was excessive. I am not talking from that point of view. But I am merely pointing out that they are unsuitable for cutting up. The reason, particularly in the case of Avondale estate, for this unsuitability is that the building and other things on it are so expensive, that it would be a difficult matter to cut the land up without involving the State in this loss. The following will give some idea of the present position. There are altogether 400 names on the register, that is the names of persons who have made inquiries into land settlement. It would hardly be correct to say that these were all applicants, for some of them are only inquirers. Of these, 95 have been settled. I maintain that if those 95 have been settled satisfactorily and have been given a good chance of success—and I am sure that is the case, for great care has been taken in the matter—it is a better record than if, under a less careful system, we settled 500 or 600 men. It is not the number of men that we get on the land that matters, but the number that we satisfactorily settle in such a way that they can make good. In addition to those applicants actually settled, there are 160 specific applicants. The remaining 145 must be regarded as more or less inquirers. Fifty-nine of the specific applicants want wheat and sheep farms, 62 want dairying and mixed farming, 10 want pastoral holdings, 25 pig and

poultry farms and intense culture, and four desire to carry on currant growing. All these are at present under consideration by the board and by the department. It has to be remembered that of the returned soldiers coming back now a great many are physically unfit to tackle virgin land, and require to be settled somewhere near a fairly large centre of population. In those cases it undoubtedly will be found necessary to make some repurchases of suitable estates. Before anything of the sort is done special legislation, to which I have referred, will be placed before Parliament, and then no doubt Parliament will be able to assure itself that the system is on a satisfactory footing. As I explained to Mr. Miles, the repatriation generally, apart from land settlement, is a Federal matter, and the Federal Act governing it has only just been proclaimed. A local board has been appointed, and I believe is doing good work. In its establishment it has the hearty co-operation of the State Government, and, I am sure, of the people generally. I hope that from one end of the State to the other it will not be many months before every district has followed the admirable example set by such places as Katanning, Wagin, and Northam, in establishing local repatriation committees. No matter what the State Government or the Federal Government may do in the matter of the repatriation of soldiers, it will not be satisfactorily carried out unless it has behind it the enthusiastic support of the great body of the people. If in every district a live and active committee working in co-operation with the two Governments in this matter is formed, I am sure that very great good will result. I cordially welcome the hon. member's motion, and am glad that he brought it forward.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: Do you intend to say anything about the exemptions from taxation of returned soldiers?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That can be put into the Bill when it comes along, if thought desirable.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West—in reply) [5.27]: I must express my thanks to the leader of the House for his kindness in allowing this motion to be so satisfactorily debated. I am satisfied to take his assurance of the determination of the State Government to do all they can in the direction I have pointed out. My reason for moving this motion was really the statement made by the Agent General in London. The Minister has explained that satisfactorily, except for the fact that it appears to me that if those plans were received in London without the explanation, which has been given, being forthcoming to the man who was coming to Western Australia, it might happen that some misapprehension and misunderstanding might occur. I thought it my duty, therefore, to bring this matter under notice. I am sure that those who desire to see that people, who come to the State, come here under proper conditions, and that they are told what they might expect when they arrive here, will agree with the justice of my remarks. The special Bill referred to by the Colonial Secretary will be welcomed by mem-

bers of the House, and I am satisfied to leave the salient points of it to the House to determine. It is not necessary to go in for any lengthy explanation of my views, which have already been put forward and will be as far as possible explained further when the Bill mentioned comes before the House. I am satisfied to have obtained the statement I have from the leader of the House that one Minister is going to be put in charge of this matter. The Colonial Secretary said he agreed to the motion, and therefore it need only be taken in abstract form. For the benefit of Mr. Cunningham, I would say that my reason for moving this motion was that I know that three or four departments are interested in the returned soldier when he comes back. First of all, there is the Lands Department, which has to find the land, then the Minister for Industries takes possession of the land in connection with the Agricultural Bank; then something else happens in regard to the Agricultural Department, and the Minister for Agriculture takes charge. I can assure hon. members that I am satisfied, with my knowledge and experience, that a great deal of trouble exists at the present time. I want to concentrate the entire control in the hands of the Minister for Lands, because I think he is the right man to have the matter in hand. I do not quite agree with the Colonial Secretary in his statement regarding further dual control. I want a board appointed, and a superintendent directly under the Minister. If it is necessary to consult the Agricultural Department or any other department the board can do so, and thus the control will be absolutely concentrated. Unless this is brought about nothing of a satisfactory nature will be forthcoming for some considerable time in connection with this matter. One hon. member spoke of pearling, and mining, and other industries connected with repatriation, but these matters are more or less in the hands of the Federal Parliament. Notwithstanding this fact, it will be competent for the Minister controlling repatriation in this State to do what he can to assist in these matters. We can always do what we can in the matter of repatriation, and the fact I have mentioned will not prevent us from extending help to those who wish to go in for mining, pearling, or any other occupation. Whether a man is going in for pearling, mining, or agricultural pursuits, or for any other walk of life, let us make his avocation as attractive as possible, so that the man concerned will get the best possible return from his labour and money. If we do that, and the men are satisfied with what they have got, it will be a considerable help to the recruiting movement. I hope that in the near future we shall have a statement from the Premier that he has appointed one Minister to be in absolute charge of this department. That Minister should give almost his full energies and time to this important matter. Sir Edward Wittenoom has some doubt, which I have not, in regard to the settlement of people on the land. The only way to get them there is by making the scheme attractive. The Minister responsible for the scheme will see to that. I welcome the reply given by the leader of the House, and I thank him for it. I am satisfied

that when the Bill, of which he has spoken, comes before us next session, it will meet with a hearty reception at the hands of hon. members, and will do much good in regard to land settlement and repatriation.

Question put and passed.

BILL—DIVIDEND DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

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

In Committee.

Resumed from 28th May; Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair, the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported, and the report adopted.

BILL—LAND TAX ADJUSTMENT.

All Stages.

Received from the Legislative Assembly, and read a first time.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.37] said: In moving the second reading of this Bill I am pleased to inform hon. members that it is the last measure which will be received from another place during this session. It is a Bill practically of one clause, and it is the measure which I promised to hon. members an evening or two ago when the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment Bill was being debated. As I explained on that occasion, when the Amending Act of 1917 was passed, bringing our period of assessment into uniformity with the Commonwealth period, this House, instead of putting into the taxation Bill itself a provision making the necessary adjustment, put into the assessment Bill a proviso which made the adjustment so far as the payers of income tax were concerned, but not so far as the payers of land tax were concerned. In view of the financial position of the State, the Government proposed, instead of making an adjustment for the payer of land tax, to impose for the purpose of the present financial year an additional impost on the payer of income tax and also on the payer of dividend duty. Had that been agreed to, there would have been no injustice in the payer of land tax being called upon to pay, as was the case under the measure we passed, three years' land tax in 2½ years. In another place, however, the proposal to impose a super tax on the income taxpayer for the present year was negatived. It then became necessary to amend the Dividend Duties Act so that companies also should not pay increased taxation until the expiration of the present year, as I explained at the time. The view taken by all hon. members was that as a matter of com-

mon justice a similar adjustment should be made in regard to the payer of land tax. Clause 2 of this Bill reads—

Subject as hereinafter provided, the Commissioner of Taxation shall place to the credit of every taxpayer one-half of the amount of land tax paid by him under the Land Tax and Income Tax Act, 1917. (No. 2), and shall apply the amount so placed to the credit of the taxpayer towards the land tax or income tax payable by him under the Land Tax and Income Tax Act, 1918: Provided that all necessary adjustments shall be made by the Commissioner of Taxation in regard to the abatement of income tax allowed under section seventeen of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907, for the eleventh year of assessment, as if the rate of land tax under the Land Tax and Income Tax Act, 1917 (No. 2), had been fixed at one-half the rate thereby imposed.

I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Adjustment of land tax:

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: Is it proposed that the Taxation Department should make a refund, or that the department should make a corresponding allowance when getting out new assessments?

The Colonial Secretary: The latter. It is not proposed to make refunds.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and passed.

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

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

In Committee, etcetera.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Title—agreed to.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and passed.

BILL—DIVIDEND DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and passed.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Assembly's Message.

Message received from the Assembly notifying that it had made the amendment requested by the Council.

In Committee, etcetera.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Title—agreed to.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and passed.

BILL—VERMIN.

Second Reading.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister—East) [5.50]: Some few weeks ago this House gave consideration to two measures, namely, the Vermin Bill and the Rabbit Bill. Those measures were in due course transmitted to the Assembly, where they were referred to a select committee. That select committee recommended that the two Bills should be incorporated in one. This has been carried out, and the incorporation has produced a Bill of such magnitude, containing 128 clauses, to which a number of amendments have been added, that it is not deemed advisable to attempt to deal with it in the dying hours of the session. It is considered that the better plan would be to treat the Bill as a lapsed Bill under Standing Order 426, which reads—

Any public Bill which lapses by reason of a prorogation before it has reached its final stage may be proceeded with in the next ensuing session at the stage it had reached in the preceding session if a periodical election for the Legislative Council or a general election for the Legislative Assembly has not taken place between such two sessions, under the following conditions:—(a) If the Bill be in the possession of the House in which it originated, not having been sent to the other House, or, if sent, then returned by Message, it may be proceeded with by resolution of the House in which it is, restoring it to the Notice Paper. (b) If the Bill be in possession of the House in which it did not originate, it may be proceeded with by resolution of the House in which it is, restoring it to the Notice Paper, but such resolution shall not be passed unless a Message has been received from the House in which it originated, requesting that its consideration be resumed.

We shall then be able to proceed with the Bill next session.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.52]: I suggest that we should arrive at that end most readily if I formally move the second reading and some member move the adjournment of the debate. If I move the second reading the Honorary

Minister, who will be in charge of the Bill next session, will be able to speak to it when it comes forward again. I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

On motion by Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6 p.m. to 8.55 p.m.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS, CLOSE OF SESSION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [8.56]: It is my intention to move that the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday, the 19th June. Between now and that date a proclamation will be issued proroguing Parliament. Before submitting the motion, I would like to express my deep indebtedness to hon. members for the kindness, consideration, and assistance that I have received from all sides of the House during what has been a long, and I am sure, a very trying session for all. Perhaps it would not be out of place if at this moment of great crisis I should express the hope that it will not be long before those members of this Chamber, who are serving the Empire on active service, having completed their task will be back amongst us, and on behalf of the House I express to you, Sir, the hope that the brief period of rest and refreshment will be both pleasant and beneficial. I move—

“That the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday, the 19th June.”

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan) [8.57]: I should like to support the remarks of the leader of the House by congratulating him upon the capable way in which he has laid the business of the House before hon. members, more especially when we consider the trying nature of the task which he has had in a session, which began so long ago that the beginning of it seems to be lost in the dimness of ages. I confess that I utterly forget when this session did begin, and I am only happy to remember that it ends to-night. I might now be allowed to wish you, Sir, in the brief holiday that we are to have, good health, and express the hope that you may return to preside over us invigorated by the rest even though it may be a brief one. I have pleasure in supporting the motion, and in echoing the wishes of the Colonial Secretary that those who have gone from among us in this Council, in common with all our brave soldiers, may come back to us as soon as possible, victorious after this fearful battle they are now engaged in.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (North-East) [8.59]: With other hon. members I also appreciate the kindly remarks of the leader of the House. I am not in the habit of indulging in undue laudation of my fellows, but at the same time I think we all agree that honour should be given where honour is due. Politically, the Colonial Secretary and I do not agree, but that does not prevent me from realising the heavy

task he has to carry in presenting the business from practically all departments to this House. I was wont to sympathise with Mr. Drew. During his term of office he had a particularly hard lot, and this must also be realised by the present Colonial Secretary. As a matter of fact, that hon. gentleman did not make it easier for Mr. Drew. At the same time, although on practically all occasions the leader of the House and myself are opposed politically, speaking personally we are friends. I also think that we realise the particularly hard task that the Government have had in carrying on the affairs of the country under present conditions. I do not think there has been during this session any carping criticism. It is necessary, of course, to keep every Government up to the scratch. Such criticism as has been offered from my little corner has, I maintain, been intended to be of a helpful nature. It may not have been received in that way, but I assure the Colonial Secretary that this was our object, and that none of our criticism has been of a personal nature, particularly so far as the Colonial Secretary and his departments are concerned. I have much pleasure in acknowledging the kindly remarks of the leader of the House.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th May, 1918.

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

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

QUESTION — AGRICULTURAL ROYAL COMMISSION, DISTRIBUTION OF REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

Mr. HARRISON (without notice) asked the Premier: It seems that numbers of copies of the report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, which has been somewhat costly, have been issued to members of Parliament and departmental officers. Would the Premier supply any surplus of these copies to mechanics' institute and libraries through the country districts? Will the evidence given in that report be accessible to people in the country?

The PREMIER replied: I shall have pleasure in acceding to the hon. member's request. It is only right that this report should be in the hands of all those who are primarily interested in the matter. I shall be pleased to have any surplus copies distributed in the manner requested by the hon. member.