

heard such an answer. That was when the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) asked a question about a picture film illustrating the electrified railway service of Victoria.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you not think a Minister ought to say as little as possible in answer to questions?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: On many occasions the less said the better. I have no knowledge of any improper answers put up by officers. Sometimes members ask questions with the object of creating consternation in the department. In such instances those members may see in the replies an unkindness which does not really exist. When last I spoke on the Address-in-reply, I was privileged to touch upon a variety of subjects which perhaps would be improper now. I should like to say how greatly I appreciate the offer made by the Premier of assistance to the fruitgrowers. The Premier has definitely promised that when a practical scheme should be submitted for marketing, drying, dehydrating or in other way dealing with fruit, he would give liberal financial assistance to the growers. To me, as the member for Swan, that is extremely gratifying, and I hope that within the next few months there will be evolved a scheme of great and permanent advantage both to the State and to the growers. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation of the kindness extended to me as the "baby" Minister of the House during the past 12 months. I trust that for many years to come that kindly spirit will continue.

Mr. HERON (Leonora) [9.25]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	12
Noes	21

Majority against .. 9

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Munroe
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Wilcock
Mr. Durack	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Heron	(Teller.)
Mr. Hughes	

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mann
Mr. Carter	Sir James Mitchell
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Davies	Mr. Piesse
Mr. George	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Latham	Mr. Underwood
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. Mullany
Mr. H. K. Maley	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-reply adopted.

—> BILLS (10)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Anzac Day.
- 2, Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act Amendment.
- 3, General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act Amendment.
- 4, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
- 5, Redistribution of Seats.
- 6, Land Tax and Income Tax.
Introduced by the Premier.
- 7, Inspection of Scaffolding.
- 8, Pingarra-Dwarda Railway Extension Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Works.
- 9, Electric Light and Power Agreement Amendment.
- 10, Firearms.
Introduced by the Minister for Mines.

House adjourned at 9.38 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 23rd August, 1923.

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

QUESTION—HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE.

Mental Patients.

Hon. J. CORNELL (for Hon. J. F. Dodd) asked the Minister for Education: 1, Have the Government decided to build a receiving home for mental patients on a Class "A" Reserve at Point Resolution? 2, Can this reserve be utilised for such a purpose without the consent of Parliament?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, No.

QUESTION—TAXATION OF LAND.

Hon. J. CORNELL (for Hon. J. E. Dodd) asked the Minister for Education: 1, Whether the Federal and State taxation departments have adopted a uniform scheme for the valuation and classification of all taxable and non-taxable land in the State? 2, If so, have the various road boards accepted the scheme? 3, When are the valuation and classification likely to be completed?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Since the amalgamation of the Federal and State departments the valuations have been brought into harmony. 2, The department's valuations have been adopted in the majority of instances. 3, The revaluation of the State's lands has been in progress for some time, and it is expected to be completed within five years.

QUESTION—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ESTIMATES.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay upon the Table the file containing the correspondence that has passed between the President, the Colonial Treasurer, and the Public Service Commissioner relating to the draft Estimates of this House for the year 1923-24?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Yes.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eleventh Day—conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. W. CARROLL (East) [4.30]: It was not my intention to take part in this debate, being but a new member. Yesterday, however, Mr. Kirwan made some complimentary remarks regarding myself, and I feel it would be ungracious of me not to acknowledge them. I deeply appreciate the honour paid me by the electors in selecting me to serve their interests in this House. I have taken note of the spirit referred to by Mr. Kirwan as pervading this Chamber. I assure members it will be my endeavour to see that the traditions and dignity of this House do not suffer at my hands. Mr. Kirwan said that mining had apparently been neglected by the Government. I am an old goldfields resident, who has spent the best years of his life on the fields. Any measures that are brought forward on behalf of the goldfields will have my support. It will be recollected that the Government appointed a Commission to select a site suitable for an agricultural college, when it was decided to build one. The Commission selected a site which was recommended to the Government, but nothing further has been done. When that matter comes before the House, unless some good reason is given why the recommendations of the Commission should not be carried out, I shall strongly support the establishment of a

college on the site selected by the Commission. I can best explain my attitude towards State trading concerns by relating an anecdote. A famous Scottish judge had a case brought before him, wherein two men were charged with cruelly ill-treating a farmer's cattle by cutting off their tails. There was not sufficient evidence to convict the two men, and upon the Scottish verdict of "not proven" being returned they were discharged. The farmer appealed to the judge to find out what he was to do with the cattle. "My dear man," said the judge, "the only advice I can give you is that you should sell them wholesale, because it is impossible for you to re-tail them." That is the advice I desire to give the Government in the matter of State trading concerns. I thank members for the reception they have given me, and trust neither they nor I will regret my election to this Chamber.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. Ewing—South-West) [4.40]: I also desire to congratulate Mr. Carroll upon his election to a seat in this House. I am sure I am echoing the sentiments of all when I say we extend to him a hearty welcome. He will find this a nice House to be in, and one in which a vast amount of good work is done. I am sure too that good work will be done by the hon. member, and that the longer he is here the better he will like his duties. With all the power in me I wish to express my sincere thanks to members for their generous congratulations to me upon my elevation to Cabinet rank, to the position lately held by Mr. Colebatch. There is no doubt as to the generous feelings of members towards me. Whatever my shortcomings may be I believe members are satisfied I shall do my level best to fulfil my duties in the interests of the State. My task will be made easy by the kindly feelings existing between members and myself. That being so I shall have the greater confidence in facing the work I have in hand, and in carrying out the functions of office in a proper and laudable manner. The position I now hold was held by Mr. Colebatch for seven years. During that time he showed his ability, tact and wonderful knowledge, which make it difficult for me to follow in his footsteps. The standard he set was so high that it would be hard to find any man in this State who could fill the position as he did. Mr. Colebatch was most generous to me in endeavouring to place within my reach all the knowledge he possessed. I was not able to assimilate all that he told me in the short time at my disposal, but I cannot help feeling grateful towards him for his kindly assistance. To Mr. Colebatch the task I have taken on was mere child's play.

Hon. J. Cornell: You will rise to the occasion.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: He was extraordinarily well versed in the intricacies of State Government. He had

seven years' experience of Ministerial life, and other years' experience as a private member. This stood him in wonderful stead. I can now see what a good man he was. He took office just about the time when I became a member. He seemed to know as much then as when he relinquished office. It seemed to be no trouble to him to carry out his duties as Leader of the House. In my case the position is somewhat different. In the new sphere in which he finds himself, I am sure he will do equally good work for Western Australia. Although members will feel his loss considerably, they must realise that he will still do wonderful service for the advancement of Western Australia in the Old Country. There have been 24 speakers on the Address-in-reply, and they occupied 20 hours of sitting. It falls to my lot as Leader of the House to endeavour to answer all the points raised by members. Everyone has brought forward something of absorbing interest in connection with his particular province. It will be my duty and pleasure to endeavour to answer every question that has arisen during the debate. I hope members will be satisfied when I have finished that I have taken a note of every important matter brought forward. It is not my intention to mention hon. members so much by name, but I will endeavour to lay before them the facts as they appeal to me in connection with the work of the Government and the position of the State. I trust they will recognise that the points they have brought forward are being attended to. I have already sent on to Ministers some of the ideas that have been put forward by members, and I am sure they will receive the attention they deserve. I will endeavour, for the benefit of hon. members, "a plain, unvarnished tale to unfold, nothing extenuating, nor setting down aught in malice." In connection with the financial position, it is not incumbent upon me to deal with that phase at length, because the Premier, in his capacity as Treasurer, expects to deliver the Budget speech on Tuesday next. I cannot anticipate his remarks, and I have not his knowledge of the financial position. Hon. members will realise that if I do not speak much on that question, it will not be that I wish to evade it, but I trust they will be satisfied when they read the Treasurer's statement. When Mr. Holmes was speaking the other night he talked a great deal about the deficit. He said it was an appalling one. We know the history of the deficit, and hon. members have followed the financial trend with regret during the years it has existed. Mr. Holmes criticised the financial position severely. I will not say he spoke bitterly, for he was not bitter on that occasion; in fact, he was generous to a degree, so far as I was concerned. He, however, criticised the Government of which I am a member. I have a vivid recollection of the occasions on which he had strenuous contests with the late Leader of the House. He has always criticised the expenditure. He understands the position, and I want him to

give the Government credit for endeavouring to improve the finances. Whatever the deficit may be to-day, it has risen, year by year, to serious proportions. In the year 1921-22 it was £732,135 and in 1922-23 it reached £405,351. That shows a decrease of £326,784.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Due to the fact that the Government collected £300,000 more than in the previous year.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Yes, from taxation.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I was waiting for that interjection. What was the reason for that difference?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You have taken money from a profitable avenue and put it into an unprofitable one.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It means that the people are working, the public utilities are being used more, and that the general development of Western Australia is extended. Will not the hon. member rejoice with the rest of the people, and with the Government, at the fact that the State is progressing and improving, rather than criticise the Government, who, during the last 12 months, have shown an improvement in the finances to the extent of £326,384?

Hon. A. Lovekin: It does not mean more improvement; it means more taxation.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Mr. Lovekin does not worry about the country. He moves in the circumscribed area of Perth. If the hon. member travelled around the country and saw the work that was going on, he would change his mind, and recognise that the improvement was due to the developmental policy of the Government. When the hon. member was speaking I interjected that the expenditure was less for last year than for the previous year to the extent of £26,399. He retorted that that was a mere bagatelle; it was nothing! As a matter of fact, it is something. It shows the desire of the present Government to economise.

Hon. J. Cornell: Give it to me and I will be satisfied.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: So would I be. But Mr. Lovekin says it is nothing.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is nothing when you are handling millions.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: It is nothing to the hon. member, that is what he means.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: It is good if that can be done year after year.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Mr. Holmes knows the position thoroughly. He knows that although the expenditure was greater, the Government were able to save £26,399 more than in the previous year. I mention these figures in order to ask hon. members to take cognisance of the fact, and to endeavour to thoroughly understand the position. I know that Mr. Holmes understands finance better than I do, but let him be liberal and a little more generous in his references to the financial position of Western Australia. Let him rejoice with the people and the Government in the improved position.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Do not camouflage it to members.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is not camouflage. It is a plain statement.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It means that the Government have had £300,000 more to spend, and the public £300,000 less.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That position has been created by the increased development of the State, due to the policy of the Government. I ask hon. members to give due consideration to that position. When the Appropriation Bill comes down—it will be before us earlier this year than previously—every opportunity to discuss the financial position will be afforded. The Premier was determined to have his Budget ready for delivery this year as early as possible. He was prepared to deliver it as soon as the Address-in-reply was finished. In fact, he has been waiting a week for that debate to conclude. Had he known that the debate would have been finished last night, he would in all probability have delivered the Budget speech to-day.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We have had the Budget delivered in June.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know of any such instance. I have been in public life for the past 22 years—I was out of Parliamentary life for some period—and I remember no occasion upon which the Budget speech was delivered earlier than will be the case this year.

Hon. J. Cornell: Will the Appropriation Bill reach us any earlier?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We will be able to deal with the Appropriation Bill much earlier this year than hitherto. That is a matter for congratulation. In common with other members I have criticised past Governments for bringing the Bill forward so late in the session. I believe that hon. members will have a much longer time this session to engage in a debate upon the financial position of the State and they will be able to deal with everything from A to Z. I shall endeavour, with the resources at my disposal, to answer all questions that may be raised regarding the finances.

Hon. J. Cornell: If you do that, you will have won your spurs right away.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: At any rate, that will be my endeavour. A full discussion will take place and if I do not go into the intricacies of finance at the present stage, hon. members will know why I do not, as I have already explained the position to them. Speaking on the Supply Bill a little while ago, Mr. Lovekin made a statement which I desire to show was incorrect. He said that on account of taxation revenue being paid in one lump sum during the year, instead of in two moieties as formerly, a considerable amount had been collected in 1923 which would not have been received had the payment in two moieties been permitted. He said that the land and income tax collected amounted to £106,000 more than in the previous year, because it had been collected in a

lump sum, whereas the taxation revenue for 1922 had been paid in two moieties. The explanation is that a considerable proportion of the extra £106,000 is accounted for by the shortage in the payments as at June, 1922, owing to late assessing. The excess was on account of the reduced receipts in 1922. The fact that the tax was paid in one sum is not the reason for any great excess in 1923.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I got that information from an officer of the Taxation Department.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am giving the hon. member the deduction I drew from what he said. The Commissioner of Taxation will tell any hon. member that, so far as the respective methods are concerned, there is very little difference in the collections if the collections are made in one or two moieties.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Ask the Taxation Department officials and see what they tell you.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is impossible for the hon. member or the Taxation Department to so dissect the position and analyse the figures as to say what revenue was collected in 1923 more than was collected in 1922, when the two moieties were permitted. Yet Mr. Lovekin says definitely that the excess amount was £106,000 and he denies that the Government should take credit for that improvement, contending that the extra money was wrongly collected during the year 1922-1923.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I say a responsible officer of the Taxation Department made that statement to me.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am only making my own statement. I assure the hon. member that it is, in my opinion, nearly impossible to say what the difference was. It might have been great or small.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It was bound to be substantial.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That may be so. For any hon. member to say that it was £106,000 and to endeavour to take the credit for the position from the Government, is quite unfair.

Hon. J. Cornell: Even if the statement were correct, would the departmental officer be likely to father it?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not suppose so. The loan expenditure from 1911 to 1916 amounted to £12,738,000. The total advanced for agricultural development out of that sum was £2,012,000. That means that 16 per cent. of the borrowings during that period was devoted to land settlement, which makes for so much prosperity in Western Australia. I may be asked how the rest was expended. I have not gone into that question, but we know that during that period State trading concerns were started. A large amount was expended in that way. At the same time, when the Labour Government assumed office, they built a number of railways, the construction of which had been authorised by previous Parliaments. In addition, they had a strenuous year in 1914. Taking all those things into consideration, the fact

remains that only 16 per cent. of the total borrowings during that period were devoted to agricultural development. During a similar period, namely, from 1918 to 1923, the total amount expended was £12,399,867. Of that, £7,660,000 was spent in connection with agricultural development.

Hon. J. Duffell: And yet they are not satisfied!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The interjection is apt, because, as hon. members realise, it is practically impossible to satisfy everyone in Western Australia. Even if the Government do their best, they cannot satisfy the farmers, the goldfields people, and everyone else. The Government can only do their best. A very large proportion, indeed, went towards agricultural development.

Hon. J. Cornell: And then they ask for more!

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: How much has been spent on mining?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I will come to mining later. I do not want to get off my track because the position is difficult enough for me as it is.

The PRESIDENT: I ask hon. members not to interrupt the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Of the total borrowings during the period from 1918 to 1923, 61 per cent. was spent on agriculture. If agricultural development succeeds, as we know it will, that money will come back to us, plus interest. Hon. members will see that is a good investment. It is much better than State trading concerns.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: While we have spent that money, we see the farmers and wheat growers improving the assets of the State and generally leading to greater development. The money is not lost; it comes back to us with interest. The expenditure of this large sum of money has brought into production land that has not hitherto been producing. It enhances our assets and improves the position of our public utilities. This is the answer to Mr. Holmes, that the expenditure has been along directions that will bring prosperity back to the State. Because of the expenditure of that money on agriculture, our railways and tramways are busy and people are far more prosperous.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Due to bringing loan moneys into revenue.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Of the loan expenditure last year totalling £3,644,699, 65 per cent. was spent on the development of agriculture. Whatever loan money may be spent to assist other industries, I hope the Government will continue to make money available for agriculture in order that we may still reap the very satisfactory results being obtained at present.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is, so long as you can get loan money.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member knows my views on that point. We have to borrow money and take our chances of making money with it.

Hon. A. Lovekin: When I suggested £16,000,000 in five years, your predecessor said it was stupid.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Before I have finished I hope to be able to satisfy the hon. member on that point. Mr. Kirwan last night referred to a matter that had formed the subject of combat between himself and Mr. Colebatch on several occasions. He said it was absurd to contend that Western Australia was not receiving a fair deal from the Commonwealth. If the hon. member can analyse the position in such a way as to convince me of that, I shall be very glad. There is no greater believer in Federation than am I. We are striving to get a fair deal for the State. We want to ensure that the State does not suffer too severely on account of Federation. It is the duty of the Government to endeavour to get a fair deal for the State. From the figures I am about to quote, the hon. member may be able to realise that the view I take is the correct one. The surplus revenue exceeds £7,000,000, and Mr. Kirwan said it had been utilised to provide old age pensions. Why did not the Commonwealth adopt direct taxation to provide old age pensions and carry out the intention of the Constitution when Federation was inaugurated by returning the surplus revenue to the States? The surplus revenue has not been returned to the States. The Federal Government have tied this money up and when an appeal was made, the High Court upheld the Federal Government. This money will never come back to the States as it should. It is of no use talking about the Premier's attitude at the recent Conference in Melbourne. The time must assuredly come when the Government of this State, with the Governments of other States, will confront the Federal Treasurer in order to get for the States some better treatment than was offered at the Premiers' Conference. I have taken our figures showing the value of imports from the Eastern States during the last three years, and I have been astounded to find the position so serious. I have dealt with goods, most of which should be produced in this State. In 1919-20 we imported £7,409,269 worth of goods; in 1920-21, £7,619,703; in 1921-22, £7,729,638, a total of £22,758,610. We exported to the Eastern States in 1919-20 £1,196,173 worth of goods; in 1920-21, £1,361,786; in 1921-22, £2,261,247, a total of £4,819,206. During the three years the balance of trade was against us to the extent of nearly £18,000,000, equal to about £6,000,000 a year. What are we going to do about it? What will happen if this state of affairs continues?

Hon. J. Duffell: It is due to the higher taxation. The income tax here is 4s. 7d. as against 6½d. in Victoria.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I shall refer to that later on. Dealing with the items imported, meat and fish were valued at £141,699; beer, wine and spirits £245,798; bacon, hams, tongues, butter, eggs, milk, and cheese, £894,153; wearing apparel, £2,177,891. It may be argued that wearing

apparel should not be included. We are going to have woollen mills at Albany.

Hon. J. Cornell: You should not have included fish, either.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Surely we can supply our own requirements of fish.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The absence of textiles here is largely the result of taxation.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: These lines should be produced in Western Australia. Here are some other articles that contributed to the total:—timber, cement, furniture, £221,655; machinery, £907,434; wheat, flour, oats, oatmeal, malt, bran, pollard, potatoes, onions, £202,047; jams, jellies and fruits, £254,927. Surely these are things that could be produced in Western Australia. They represent a value of £5,238,569.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Is it not the fault of Western Australia that it does not produce those things? Why blame the other States?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If the hon. member can put up some other proposition later on, I shall be glad to hear him. Other articles imported amounted to £2,682,434, made up of overseas as well as interstate goods, but a certain proportion must be included in the category of goods produced in the Eastern States.

Hon. J. Cornell: The trouble is that a great proportion of overseas goods are landed in Melbourne and then brought here.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is so. The outstanding point is that we are not self-supporting. Yet members talk about lack of markets and ask where we are going to dispose of the produce of the group settlements. Here is a market at our very door. If we produce the goods and offer them at a reasonable price, we should be able to overcome the difficulty. There is no doubt that Western Australia is a dumping ground for many of these lines. When the market in the Eastern States is overflowing—and we must remember that production there is much easier than here—it is possible to swamp our market with cheaper goods.

Hon. J. Duffell: What about the fruit being produced here?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The fruit trade in England is in a serious condition.

Hon. J. Duffell: There was a report in this morning's paper referring to the heavy charges on dried fruit exported.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Something must be done to improve the position. I do not see what can be done. We have interstate free trade; there is no possible chance of our imposing a protective tariff.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It must be so when our taxation is 4s. 7d. as against their charge of 6½d.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member will insist on harping on that point. Mr. Burvill referred to the bonus system under which dairying in Victoria was built up. It is an excellent system.

If we could apply it to Western Australia, it would be a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. We could then protect our farmers and give them an opportunity to profitably market their produce.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That would be a breach of the Federal Constitution.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Quite so; the Commonwealth must treat all the States alike. If a bonus were granted to Western Australia, it would have to be granted to every State of the Commonwealth. Where then can we get protection? The position is exceedingly difficult, but I trust a solution will yet be found in order to give us the benefit of our own market.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Cannot the Government go another way round?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member may know of some such way. Some very clever people have been trying to find a solution, but so far without success. Mr. Kirwan referred to the portfolios that the Premier has placed under my control, and he seemed to think that the responsibility was too much for any man. Regarding the Department of Justice, the Chief Justice remarked on one occasion that he would not be satisfied until we had a lawyer as Attorney General. During the six or seven weeks I have been in office, I have not experienced any difficulty in administering this Department, because of the excellence of the staff. It is satisfactory to be able to say those in charge of the Department have such a thorough knowledge of their work that it merely remains for me to maintain a clear conception of what justice is. I have to administer the Electoral Department and other departments mentioned by the hon. member, and I have paid the closest possible attention to the details. But I consider myself fortunate in having such competent men to assist me. Some of the other States have a Minister for Justice and the heavens do not fall there; justice is done. If one looks at things fairly and squarely with a determination to do his duty, the administration of justice need occasion no alarm. One of the most important of my portfolios is that of education.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: You had better be careful about the North-West.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am pleased to follow such a man as Mr. Colebatch in the Education Department. Notwithstanding the criticism he received regarding excessive expenditure, he did very good work. He was responsible for the establishment of High Schools in the country districts, and those schools are proving successful. When my predecessor made a statement of this kind, he was careful to give every detail, so that nothing would remain unanswered; and in pursuing a similar course I may therefore be compelled to keep hon. members somewhat longer than I otherwise would like to do. In the Education Department we have 750 schools educating 51,000 children. Hon. members are well aware that

owing to the development of the country and the group settlements, our schools are increasing very rapidly indeed.

Hon. J. Duffell: How many schools are there with 20 scholars or less?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am glad the hon. member made that interjection, because I feared that the details I was giving might be uninteresting to the House. The development of the country necessitates the building of small schools, which do not cost a great deal per school, but which mount up to a considerable total of expenditure when one has to build 40 or 50 of them every year. The increase latterly has been at the rate of 40 or 50 schools per annum, and I believe it will be greater soon. The Royal Commission who reported on the education system of this State are to be congratulated on the way they did their work. I have read the Commissioners' report with great interest, and am glad to learn that in their opinion things were well administered in the Education Department and the expenditure was not excessive. The Commissioners considered the position of the Education Department very creditable to the State of Western Australia. They also recommended many things that the State is not in a position to do, though they are things which would be of great advantage to the education of the children. As Mr. Colebatch has said here, the difficulty is to get sufficient money to do the work that is necessary in the Education Department. I believe that as prosperity comes to Western Australia, so will our education system advance and the recommendations of the Royal Commission come into effect.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: You want more money for the inspection of State school children.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am glad that interjection was made. I think there is on this year's Estimates provision for another medical inspector. That, however, is only a drop in the ocean. I have tried to work out a system by which the inspection of school children could be done by the district medical officers, but people who know more about the matter than I do have informed me that it cannot be successfully done. I have had to leave the matter at that, in the hope that the Government will be able to find the necessary money for an assistant to Dr. Roberta Jull in the work she is doing. As I say, I hope the Estimates will make provision for another medical officer. The administrative expenditure of the Education Department for last year was £563,182, exceeding that of the previous year by £14,207. This year there will be a further increase in the expenditure. I have no apology to make for that, because when I have thoroughly gone into the working of the Education Department, I shall endeavour to keep the expenditure down to the lowest possible limit, but I shall not do it at the sacrifice of the education of the children of the State. Although I desire to be careful, I will not do anything that will prejudice the rising gen-

eration. Mr. Duffell interjected an inquiry, in reply to which I have now to state that last year 66 schools averaged an attendance of over 200, the cost being £8 1s. per child; 109 schools averaged an attendance of between 50 and 200 scholars, whose education cost £9 8s. 6d. per child; 128 schools had average attendances of between 20 and 50, the cost being £12 1s. 8d. per child; and 385 schools had average attendances of under 20 children, the cost per child being £18 14s. 8d. It will be recognised that this State is under great disabilities in the matter of education. The scattered nature of our settlement compels us to provide numerous small schools in outback centres, and this makes the cost of the system very heavy indeed. Hon. members should realise that where there are eight children it is necessary to have a school, though the parents are called upon to find the building. When the number of children rises to 10, the department have the full responsibility of educating the children. We are endeavouring to overcome the difficulty as to building schools by driving allowances. This means driving the children in some cases many miles. The cost of the driving allowance for last year was £14,000. From that fact alone it can be realised that Western Australia, with its limited population, is doing good work as regards education. I do not think that anywhere in the world there are conditions similar to those obtaining in Western Australia with regard to the primary education of children. Of the £563,000 spent in administration, 58 per cent. is paid out in salaries, 4.3 per cent. in exhibitions, scholarships, and driving allowances, and 7.7 per cent., which makes up the 100 per cent., in stock, furniture, etc. The teaching staff, of course, are the greatest cost.

Hon. J. Duffell: I suppose you still support the theory of free education from the kindergarten to the University?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do. Of the incidental expenditure 23 per cent. goes back to Government departments as revenue in railway fares, etc. The total expenditure, including buildings, etc., and amounting to £660,000, is subject to a deduction of £16,000 for revenue. Hon. members are aware how that is derived. The net expenditure therefore is £644,000. That is equivalent to £1 18s. 6d. per head of the population. New Zealand spends on primary education £2 5s. per head, and on education as a whole £2 15s. The London County Council's expenditure on education amounts to £3 11s., that of England to £3, and that of Scotland to £2 10s. per head. In America the population of Wisconsin, numbering 2½ millions, and settled on an area of 56 square miles, expends on education no less an amount than £3 14s. per head. That is double what we spend on the education of our children.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is Wisconsin a dry or a wet State?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I cannot say. In view of the figures I have

given, it will be admitted that we are not unduly expending money in the Education Department. The expenditure is in a laudable direction. I have found that considerable improvements are needed in the system, but the essentials of education are so great that it is difficult to know where to get all the necessary money from. I have endeavoured, however, to make provision for all that is really essential. The difficulty in the city and suburbs is very great. On the group settlements there are now 25 schools, with more to come. I think there are hundreds more to come. We are spreading the advantage of the correspondence classes, so far as we can, to the people in the country districts. The correspondence classes represent a very excellent and very cheap section of the Education Department.

Hon. A. Burvill: Do the correspondence classes embrace secondary education also?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Not at the present time. Mr. Colebatch, during his tenure of office, initiated the establishment of rural schools. His idea was to bring country schools into closer contact with country life, such schools as would give the pupils attending them a greater desire to go on the land. Mr. Colebatch established one rural school at Toodyay, which, before he left, he told me I was to visit as soon as possible. Unfortunately I have not had time to go there yet, but I shall do so shortly. I believe it is a very good school indeed, and quite a revelation in the way of showing the great advantages of rural education in Western Australia. So far as I can, I shall extend that system through the country districts. We are, however, confronted with one great difficulty, which is that we have not teachers who have been trained in that class of work.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: It shows how wrong the old system has been.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Mr. Colebatch saw the error before he went. I can see it clearly now. For whatever length of time I do happen to occupy my present position, I shall work in the direction of giving country schools all the advantages that it is possible to give them. I shall make no mistake about that. I shall not give the schools what they are not entitled to, I shall only give them essentials, but I shall see that the essentials are sufficient to enable country children to obtain, as far as possible, an education equal to that which we give to city children. In connection with the work of education in the country, we have high schools. I need not dwell upon them, except to say that they are similar to the Perth Modern School, and have been established on the Eastern Goldfields and at Northam and Bunbury. I shall add that tenders have been called for the high school at Albany. For this work tenders were called once, and were not satisfactory. Therefore, fresh tenders have been called, and I am pleased to be able to tell hon. members that attached to those tenders there are no conditions which would give any benefit to the State trading concerns.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: That is a step in the right direction.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It has been decided by the Government that any contractor tendering for any Government work shall have the full advantage of buying where he likes, in the cheapest market. Therefore whatever may have occurred in connection with the building of recent schools, will not apply to the building of schools in future.

Hon. V. Hamersley: If the contractor goes outside for his supplies, he will be put on the black list.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: At Geraldton arrangements have been made to give the lower part of the high school course. There are other towns which are approaching the stage of requiring a district high school. There is an agricultural school at Narrogin attended by 60 pupils. Later I shall have something to say about agricultural colleges. In the continuation classes which are open in larger centres for children leaving at the age of 14 we now have 3,000 pupils. Mr. Moore last night mentioned that Mr. Colebatch had been in favour of extending the compulsory age from 14 to 15. I am not going to commit myself to that in any shape or form, but I will say that correspondence and continuation classes are available for children who leave school at the age of 14. In those classes the children receive all the advantages that we can give them at the present time. Outside that it is considered the State cannot go at this juncture. I am inclined to think that view is a wise one. Mr. Kirwan spoke of technical education, or trade classes, and pointed out that such classes were provided in Queensland and New South Wales.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Trade schools.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is a new idea to me, and I am desirous of studying it. I will ascertain what has been done in Queensland and New South Wales, and see if it can be applied here. I realise the difficulty of the position, and my desire is to give boys a technical education as far as possible, so that they may go to work well equipped.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: The technical schools need overhauling and improving.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If that is so, I shall see what can be done in the course of the inquiries I propose to make. Hon. members will understand that I could not go into technical education and all the other branches of the department during the six weeks I have been in the Government. There has been a very serious lack of teachers, but we are improving the position this year. Each year three groups of teachers, men and women, are transferred to country work. The men, when they have completed their ordinary course at the Training College, have to go to an agricultural school for some three months in order to get further knowledge of rural education. The women have to put in a three months course of household management.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Is the pay attractive enough?

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is not bad now. Indeed it is very fair, and I think the staff are satisfied. I have already visited a number of schools, not only in the metropolitan area but in the country districts, and to me those visits have been most entertaining and instructive. One thing I most fully appreciate is the wonderful work being done by the parents and citizens' associations. They are working splendidly. The department can give to the children everything essential to a sound education, but cannot give what the parents and citizens' associations are giving.

Hon. J. Cornell: They constitute a great improvement on the old boards.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: A wonderful improvement. Parents and teachers are joining together with the one object of doing something for the children at school. They provide all sorts of benefits for the schools, including pianos, improvements to play grounds and a hundred and one things which it is impossible for the department to provide. I have been asked to furnish pianos for certain schools in the group settlements, but to my regret I have had to refuse, because with the money at my disposal I cannot give the schools anything but essentials.

Hon. J. Duffell: I thought pianos were usually provided from entertainments.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: But some of the group settlers are not yet in a position to do that. Still they are holding entertainments and dances, and so forming funds with a view to providing pianos as early as possible. I want to record my high appreciation of the work being done by those people. Mr. Stewart said that at Denmark there were 20 or 30 children without any school, and that on Group 41 no children were taught at all. When I came into office on the 11th July, 25 of our schools were closed because the teachers had not been drafted from the Training College, and in addition there was a good deal of sickness about. I am happy to be able to say there are now only three existing schools closed, two for want of accommodation for lady teachers—which is about to be supplied—and one on account of sickness. So it will be seen that the department is doing its best to keep the schools open. We have in vogue a system which I have not yet thoroughly gone into, namely, the exchange of teachers with the Old Country. We have four or five visiting teachers here at present. I do not know exactly what the position is, but I am looking into it. My desire is that everything possible shall be done for education in the different centres, especially the country districts.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why not begin at home and exchange teachers with the Eastern States?

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, I like that idea. I know there is a difficulty, although not through any want of desire on the part of the department to do the right

thing. With the restricted amount of money available, we are in a circumscribed position. It is different to being in London, where teachers can be satisfactorily exchanged within the city's limits. At any rate, I intend speaking to the Premier to see if he will not give me a small vote to provide for these exchanges.

Hon. J. Cornell: In view of your earlier remarks upon Federation and the East, it would be a good idea to get some Eastern States teachers over here.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I think it would be. Now we come to the all important question of State trading concerns. I thoroughly appreciate the kindly spirit in which Mr. Holmes brought up this matter, and the sympathetic words he used. He and I have been lifelong friends, and nothing in politics can change our relationship. It is the one saving thing in politics that members can have differences of opinion within the four walls of the Chamber, but remain good friends outside. The hon. member read certain extracts from speeches made by me when a private member. They certainly appeared to be of a somewhat damaging character, but I think when I have finished the hon. member will see that they were not at all damaging. My attitude to-day is exactly the same as it was when I was a private member. I was then opposed to trading concerns. I have often said in the House that I cared not whether the trading concerns were making or losing money, that on principle I was opposed to them. So I am opposed to them to-day. I have always taken the position that the Government have no right to trade in opposition to private enterprise. It is damaging to the country and to the private competitors.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Well, what are you going to do about it?

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If the hon. member will wait till I have finished, he will see. The policy of State trading concerns is no part of the Government's policy. The Government were in no way responsible for the introduction of those concerns.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Their policy is to get rid of them.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: They were in no way responsible for their coming. The Mitchell Government have been opposed to trading concerns ever since they came into office, and are opposed to them to-day.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Their policy is to get rid of them.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Verbally they are opposed to the State trading concerns, but not otherwise.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: All the members of the present Government are opposed to State trading concerns.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Then why not get rid of them?

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I want to ask Mr. Holmes whether he does not think that, as Cabinet Minister, I am in a better position to do my duty to the State

than I would be as a private member. The hon. member smiles. It has to be remembered that Parliament has refused to give the Government the right to sell the trading concerns.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We were never asked. The Government saw to it that the Bill was lost.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We here passed a Bill giving the Government the right to sell the trading concerns, but that Bill was sent to another place, where a division was taken on the principle and the Bill defeated by one vote. Who voted against the Bill?

Hon. A. Lovekin: The Government put it 39th on the Orders of the Day, and let their supporters go away.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Government are anxious to sell the State trading concerns, but Parliament has refused them authority to do so.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Then why not reintroduce the Bill?

Hon. J. Cornell: Who were responsible for the Bill—the forbeers of the Government.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It was brought down by Mr. Lovekin.

Hon. J. Cornell: I meant the Act.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If all the Ministers are opposed to the State trading concerns, it is their duty to bring in another Bill.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: They have no authority to sell the State trading concerns.

Hon. A. Lovekin: They are letting a private member in another place bring in a Bill now.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: As a Cabinet Minister I have greater opportunities for carrying out my duty to the State than I could have as a private member. Do hon. members wish to sacrifice the State trading concerns?

Hon. J. Duffell: Do you consider the Wyndham Meat Works would be sacrificed at £480,000?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I should think it is a long way below the capitalisation of the works.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister is speaking with a sense of responsibility. He should be allowed to make his speech without interruption.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: All I can do in the direction of selling the State trading concerns without sacrifice I will gladly do. We have to get the right from Parliament to sell those concerns. While that right is refused, it is our duty as Ministers to see that the best business acumen is employed in the conduct of those concerns.

Hon. A. Lovekin: On August 9th you told us you were in favour of continuing them.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It was an oversight on my part that I did not eliminate that remark from "Hansard," because I never said anything of the kind. I was never so foolish as to make such a statement. So enamoured am I of the attitude

taken up by Mr. Holmes, Mr. Duffell and others, that I could not have made such a statement. As a Cabinet Minister I am in a better position to protect the interests of the State than I would be as a private member. I thought over the question of State trading concerns before joining the Ministry, and I asked the Premier what his attitude was in respect of them. He said, "I am opposed to them. I wish Parliament would give me the right to sell them." He cannot do that, for Parliament has refused its authority. The Bill was lost, but another election is coming along, and what the result of that election will be, I do not know.

Hon. J. Duffell: We would go to the country on the question.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: You are prepared to go to the country on the one question, and prepared also to condemn the Government on that question.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You were returned on this very question.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The position is more difficult than the hon. member realises. It was very easy for me as a private member to say, "Sell the trading concerns at any price." Perhaps the advice was good. As one of the custodians of the affairs of the State and as a responsible Minister, having control of one of the trading concerns, I am going to act in what I think are the interests of the State, and I will see that the particular enterprise is worked as well as it can be worked until Parliament gives me the right to sell it. Mr. Holmes was pretty severe, though I must say he was not bitter. At the same time he condemned me wrongly.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I did not condemn you at all.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member did. He declared that before joining the Ministry I should have made it a *sine qua non* that the trading concerns should be disposed of. He knew perfectly well that Parliament had refused to give the Government the power to sell the trading concerns. In view of this fact why should I not consider the virtues of the Premier and the wonderful work he is doing for Western Australia? What reason would there have been for my refusing to join his Government when he extended the invitation to me?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: But why do you carry on the trading concerns when you know that a majority of the people are opposed to them?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We shall be able to judge better whether that is so at the next general election.

Hon. J. Duffell: The handwriting is already on the wall.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Mr. Holmes told the House that I was already politically dead if I did not make good on this question. I am prepared to be politically dead, or to die so far as politics are concerned.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Do you think you can do better work as a Minister in the way of getting rid of these concerns than you would have been able to do as a private member?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Most decidedly.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Then if a policeman found you on licensed premises after hours, you would say you were there for the purpose of reform.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I was aware when I joined the Ministry that the Premier was in favour of the disposal of the trading concerns, and I thought that it might be possible for me as a Minister of the Crown to do more than I could do as a private member. The hon. member knows that there is safety in the position I occupy inasmuch as he need not fear the possibility of increasing the number of State enterprises.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: How can they do that, when you say that three-fourths of the people of the State are against State enterprises altogether?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am giving the hon. member my views. Does he want to assist to bring into power a Government that would extend these concerns? The present Government will certainly not do that. It is not their policy.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Get rid of them before another Government comes into power.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We have to be very careful in the disposal of any of these concerns. If we cannot sell the assets of the State we certainly do not want to give them away. Hon. members would not expect the Government to sacrifice any of the enterprises.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If you sold the Wyndham Meat Works for 2s. 6d., as was suggested two years ago, you would have saved half a million of money since then.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: With regard to Mr. Holmes's castigation of myself—

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I did not castigate you.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Well the hon. member criticised me, and he did that very severely. All the same I appreciate the way in which he did it, and I am quite satisfied to take any criticism that may come along, that is to say any political criticism. If hon. members have anything against the Government, let them bring it along and I will fight them as much as I can in the interests of the Government. The policy of the Government is so good, and their actions and motives are so pure that it will be an easy matter, I am convinced, to secure the support of this House.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You said last year that there was a pernicious influence at work.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Did I?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Yes, it is in "Hansard."

Hon. A. Lovekin: It led to the defeat of the Bill which the Government were supposed to want.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not think any good can come by further alluding to the question. I am going to be politically dead if the hon. member wishes to kill me on this question. The Government are honest and straightforward and will do their duty, and will not do what Parliament has denied them the right to do. Speaking of the trading concerns, I am not in a position to give hon. members balance sheets to the end of the recently closed financial year. I can, however, say that the timber mills and the brick works have shown a considerable profit.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Surely you must have the balance sheets to the end of June?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am sorry that the figures are not available. The balances have not been struck, but I assure the hon. member that he will get the figures in September. The two concerns that I have mentioned are paying very well.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to remind hon. members that the Minister is under no obligation to supply the figures which are being sought. He will be in a position to give them no doubt when the Estimates come forward.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I feel, Mr. President, that I have a duty to perform to-day and with your permission I will perform it. I have no desire to shirk any part of it. I know that hon. members wish to have all the information that I can place at their disposal, and being here in a responsible position, I intend to let them know everything that it is in my power to disclose. The Boya quarry has not paid owing to slackness of trade and to plant difficulties. With regard to the Wyndham meat works, the position at the end of last December was as follows:—The liabilities to the Treasury amounted to £1,222,580 and to sundry creditors £131,338, a total of £1,353,918. The sundry creditors include an amount of £117,080 due to the Treasury for interest.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The State has to pay the interest.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The assets include buildings and machinery £737,756 and products and materials, £113,243, making a total of £850,999. Sundry debtors, cash, etc., represent £45,196, a total of £896,195. The losses to the 31st December last amounted to—Interest £244,232, and working account £213,491, a total of £457,723. Thus we get a total capitalisation of £1,353,918. If we wish to sell these works we must know what they have cost us.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: No, what they are worth.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If we have a liability, it does not matter how we try to hide it, it still exists.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Do you expect to sell the losses?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It should be shown clearly and definitely that

the Wyndham meat works have a capitalisation of £1,353,918.

Hon. J. Duffell: You will never get rid of them if you do that.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The more you pile up the losses, the less chance you have of selling.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We cannot deceive the people. Are we going to put that capitalisation into the deficit?

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: I hope you will not wait until the capitalisation is reduced before you attempt to sell the works.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No. Mr. Lovekin said that we should not capitalise the loss. If we do not we shall still have to pay interest. What the hon. member objects to is that it shall be known as capital. Personally I can see no objection to that. It remains there all the same.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No one will ever make you an offer for those works with that capitalisation.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If Parliament is satisfied to create a suspense account, and revalue the works, and put into suspense all that is over capitalised, then we might work the concern profitably, and it might be better for the State. It might then be possible to make a profit on the works, and as the years go by extinguish ultimately the suspense account.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why will not the Government do what Mr. Bruce did with the Commonwealth ships—write them down?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member will agree that the liability will still be there. It would be better for the management to work on that capitalisation. Interest and sinking fund would be earned, and whatever profit followed, it could be used towards reducing the capitalisation. There is an amount of £62,000 which represents interest on money expended in the early period of the construction of the works.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Mr. Allen told the select committee that he could have put up the works for less than half a million.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If any concern incurs a loss, that loss has to be met. We might cut our losses now.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And let the people know what the true deficit is.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: But you have said that there is only one thing to do, and that is to sell the trading concerns.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Wyndham Meat Works are not a disadvantage to the North-West at the present time.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You have said, "It does not matter a rap, it is a matter of principle."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member would not regard the meat works in the same light as the timber mills, for instance.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: The one benefits the community and the other does not.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: In 1922 the Meat Works purchased 21,830 freez-

ers and 832 wasters. The wasters were purchased to absorb the waiting time of the men and keep them employed. The total number of cattle purchased was 22,670, at a cost of £63,000. Every vendor of a representative mob of freezers, that is the class of cattle that can be frozen and exported, received last year £3 19s. 2d. per head. That was something they would not otherwise have obtained. The Federal subsidy of one half-penny per pound amounted to £9,741.

Mr. Holmes: The grower did not get that.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: He got part of it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Government took it.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: They got some of it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: No.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: In 1922 the Estimates were based on an anticipated export freight surcharge of one-eighth of a penny per lb., but this did not materialise. We actually paid one farthing per lb., which represents an excess of £4,870 over the Estimates. The debit balance on the 1922 profit and loss account was £11,698, and interest due to the Treasury £76,743, or a loss for 1922 of £88,431. Included in this is a sum of £11,704 paid to State steamers for fares and freights, and £7,762 to the Harbour and Light Department for the Wyndham jetty dues.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is not profit.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I understand that. I merely mention the matter. There may be something in it, because it would not cost all that to carry out these particular services.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Probably it has been added to the loss on the State steamers.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I wish to mention everything that is within my knowledge. There is more virtue in these works than many members may suppose. For the 1923 season the killings to the 18th of this month totalled 20,072 head. The estimated total killings for the season are 29,500, and the estimated payment to growers is £114,000. That is a considerable increase over the previous year. Better work has been done this year than last. The select committee of this House went closely into the question. Its members did excellent work, and a great deal of credit is due to them for their report. They said the Government should endeavour to lease or dispose of the works at once. The Government took the view that it was impossible to dispose of them at that time, because there were no buyers. To do so would be to give away an asset unduly cheaply, and this could not be done.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: What about the offer that was made?

Hon. A. Lovekin: You will see Borthwick's offer to purchase and Birts' offer to lease, on the files.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You said last year the Government had never made any effort to sell.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : There is an old saying "Be ye sure your sins will find you out."

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do you mean the sins of the Government?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You said the Government had made no effort to sell.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : That is the position now; they cannot sell. The price of meat was low and the position was bad. Any attempt to sell would have meant offering an asset for far less than it was worth.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It would have been better than losing all this money.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : The select committee recommended that operations at the works should be indefinitely suspended.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And a lot of money saved.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : The Government went into that aspect of the question, and decided it was not in the interests of the State to carry out the recommendation. Had they done so the works would have been lying idle, and there would have been great deterioration, which would not have been in the interests of the State. From 20,000 to 30,000 head of bullocks are waiting in that country for treatment. It is not satisfactory to growers to send their cattle away by steamer because the export trade is too precarious. The loss, therefore, would fall upon the growers. The Government thought it would be in the best interests of the State and those engaged in the pastoral industry to continue the work.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Messrs. Copley, Emanuel and others did very well before the Wyndham Meat Works came along.

Hon. J. Duffell: Things have altered since then.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : As a result of this year's operations £114,000 will be distributed amongst the pastoralists in the North.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And how much do the taxpayers pay?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : The pastoralists of the North cannot greatly extend their overseas trade in live stock, so that some good has been done by the works.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It would have been better for the taxpayers to give a subsidy of £2 or £3 a head, than kill the cattle.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : For the 1919-20 season there was a tremendous slump in the meat export trade. It was the worst that has occurred in the history of the world for 30 years. Canned meats fell from £5 5s. a case in 1919 to 18s. in 1920.

Hon. J. Duffell: That was largely due to the influence of other countries.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : Freight rates are still 100 per cent. more than the pre-war freights.

Hon. A. Lovekin: But the meat works can only make 6-lb. tins.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : The high freight and the low price of meat

make it impossible to get an offer for the works at present. Mr. Holmes spoke about the agency of the works in London. If there is one thing I regret in his speech more than another it is his remarks on that subject. There was a sting in them, and the inference that the Agent General had done something by which certain people had secured the agency and that he himself would benefit. The inference was that the Agent General (Sir James Connolly) would be rewarded for something he had done by being made a director of the company when he ceased to be Agent General. The hon. member said a good deal about me from the political point of view. I have never impugned the honesty of any man inside or outside this House, but the hon. member has certainly impugned Sir James Connolly. I regret it, and I am sure he too must do so. I appreciate Sir James' work for Western Australia, and consider he is above that kind of thing. If he is not above it, it is a bad thing for public men in this State. I am sure that every member of this Parliament is perfectly straightforward and honest.

Hon. J. Duffell: Those who have been in London during his term of office realise the value of Sir James Connolly's services to the State.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : The Government, who hold Sir James Connolly in high esteem, also regret the statement. I want to give the hon. member the exact position so that he may know how the appointment of the new agents was made.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Why was the selling agency changed?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : I do not know. Messrs. Brown and Dureau had it, but I think they did not want to continue.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Did not the Agent General's office handle the products for a time?

Hon. J. Duffell: No.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : No. Messrs. Sheed, Thomson and Co. were selected by the Premier when in London to be agents for the works. This firm was strongly recommended to him.

Hon. J. Duffell: They have a large continental connection.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Are they in the frozen meat trade?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : They enjoy high standing in the meat trade in the Old Country.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Or the canned meat trade, which?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : They are handling meat. They do not in any way represent our competitors in the meat trade. Financially they are very substantial. Mr. Doherty, who has big meat interests in Western Australia, said the appointment was the best that could be made.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Why did Messrs. Brown and Dureau give up the agency?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : I do not know. It may be asked "In the event

of the Government desiring to sell these works would the agreement stand in their way." I answer that in the negative. There is nothing in the agreement to prevent the Government selling at any time.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What about the handling of the proceeds?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know about that. Mr. Holmes asked if the agreement would stand in the way of the selling of the works?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I said if you tie up the products of the works for five years there is no chance of selling to other people.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Government have not tied up the products for five years. We shall not be prejudiced by the agreement in the event of the Government desiring to sell.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Will you put the agreement on the Table of the House?

Hon. A. Lovekin: Is that in the agreement?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is what I am given to understand.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Can the agreement be cancelled if the Government sell?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not think so.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Who will buy the works if the products are tied up for five years?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: They are not tied up. As a State we are not prejudiced by the agreement in the event of the Government desiring to sell the works. Can I be plainer than that?

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Would the agents receive any compensation for breach of agreement if the works were sold?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Will anyone buy the works if they cannot handle the products for five years?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That would be prejudicing the State. There is no difficulty if we can sell the works.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Will you put the agreement on the Table?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If anyone buys the works the purchaser will require to handle the products.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There would be no difficulty in selling the works, and the agreement will not stand in the way. Will that satisfy the hon. member?

Hon. A. Lovekin: Will you put the agreement on the Table?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member can ask for the agreement.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I ask for it now.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The only difficulty is to get a buyer. Sir James Connolly is not a director of the company in question.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Not yet!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member is making things worse. Suppose he did become a director of the company, would it be disadvantageous to the

State if he did so after he left office? Sir James Connolly has been the trusted servant of Western Australia for six years. He has come into contact with certain men, and perhaps he stands high in the opinion of those men—I do not know if he does or not. After he leaves the office of Agent General, and he intends to reside in London, he has to earn his living. If these people did offer him a position as director it would be a good thing for Western Australia.

Hon. A. Lovekin: If they are handling the products at an enhanced commission would you not want to know why?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I would not be one to impute motives. Who would cast a stone at Sir Newton Moore, for instance? He holds many high positions as director and the like. Did he advantage the people he is now connected with before he retired from office. If Sir James Connolly does take up this position after he leaves the office of Agent General, good luck to him and to the State.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Has he the approbation of the Government?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: He has my approbation. He is entitled to take the position if he wishes.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Remember what commission has to be paid.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If Sir James Connolly had been able to look after the interests of Western Australia satisfactorily to the Government and the people for six years, surely if he did join this firm it would not be to the disadvantage of this State?

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

[The Deputy President took the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: When we adjourned for dinner I was about to deal with the North-West. Hon. members, and particularly those representing the North-West, know that that portion of the State represents a vast and unpopulated territory, and that it must give a great deal of concern to any Minister who happens to be administering its affairs. Members representing the North-West and North must know that the Government are giving earnest thought to the problem. No exception is taken to the development of the South-West by members from the North, but they wonder what will happen regarding their part of the State. The condition of the pastoral industry is very satisfactory, and the industry is one of the most satisfactory we have in Western Australia. We all recognise the great possibilities ahead of development there. Mr. Miles and you, Mr. Deputy President, emphasised the fact that it was difficult to get the money necessary to develop the North. That represents a serious problem and, it was suggested, it is one in which the Commonwealth and the Imperial Government as well, might take a hand. The task is to populate that vast terri-

tory, and we know the Imperial Government are interested in that question. It is only reasonable that the Federal Government should take a hand in the work. In view of what the Commonwealth have done in connection with the Northern Territory—I admit that much of the money has been wasted, but, at the same time, considerable sums have been found for the development of that part of the Commonwealth—the question is naturally asked why they should not do something for the northern parts of Western Australia, seeing that we form an integral part of the Commonwealth. The same thing might be said regarding the Imperial aspect. Within striking distance of the North-West, we have vast hordes of coloured people. For the integrity and safety of the Empire, we would be justified in asking that something tangible should be done by the Imperial and Federal Governments to help in this great task. Recently the cotton growing industry has come prominently before us. Everyone is desirous of seeing a second Virginia in the North-West. The American Republic has been built up to a great extent by the cotton industry. Disaster has come upon that industry, with the result that there is a considerable shortage in cotton supplies. The Government desired to make experiments regarding cotton growing here, and Mr. Jones, a Queensland grower and a recognised expert there, was induced to visit the North-West. Mr. Jones examined the country, and advised that work should be undertaken at Derby on Pindan soil. The history of that experiment has been disastrous to date. A number of men were sent there, but the land was not in a proper condition when the cotton was sown. Later, Colonel Evans condemned the whole scheme, and advised that a move be made further north to heavier soil. He considered that the Pindan soil was not suitable for cotton growing. Some settlers have taken up holdings on the heavier soil country, and experiments are being carried out along the lines suggested. We have heard varying statements regarding Pindan soil. Some say that the cotton will grow there after the rains come. I do not know what the position really is, but that aspect has not been gone into for the time being. We are told, however, that the heavier soils give more satisfactory results. Mr. Wise, of Queensland, who is to join the department, has just arrived in Perth. I have been reading something about his doings. He is evidently a highly educated man, and has been through the university. For a considerable time he has been employed in connection with the cotton industry of Queensland. He has been recommended to the Government as a cotton expert, and I hope he will succeed in his work here. He is taking up his duties almost at once. The former Minister for Education (Mr. Colebatch) travelled through Queensland before going to London, and hon. members have probably read his informative articles in the Press. Mr. Colebatch wrote

to me and said he considered Mr. Wise would be a satisfactory officer. I hope such will be the case. Should that prove to be so, we may look forward to new life and energy being infused into the industry here. The Government take up the attitude that we are not prepared to advance any large sum of money until a certain amount of work has been done, and experiments prove satisfactory. The Government have purchased all the cotton available for this season. The bulk of it has been grown by Messrs. Overheu & Hay 50 miles south of Wyndham. The cotton is to be brought to Perth. I have seen a sample and, speaking as a layman, I regard it as very satisfactory. We are collecting all the available cotton in the North-West and it will be sent to London to be ginned. It will be exhibited at the Empire Exhibition in 1924. Hon. members will agree that that is a step in the right direction. The Premier is satisfied that if this venture turns out well, it will prove to be the forerunner of a great industry in the North-West. It has been said by experts that the boll weevil and all sorts of pests exist in the North. I notice that someone has said that pests are sent along to try us and that we must overcome these difficulties, just as we do the difficulties of everyday life. That being so, there seems to be no fear that the boll weevil will be a serious menace in the North-West. At any rate, that is my hope. The Derby experiment was not very costly. About £4,000 was spent by the Government, and we have plant, horses, machinery, and so on which can be utilised in other parts of the North-West. I should not think that the actual loss will exceed £1,000. We all recognise the vast possibilities ahead of the North-West. In an interview appearing in the "Daily News" this evening, Mr. Wise said he was conversant not only with cotton growing, but with tropical agriculture as well. In the course of his remarks he said he looked forward to a period when, about seven years hence, the North-West would be producing not only cotton but tropical products as well. What the possibilities are may be imagined when I say that in the North-West it should be possible to produce tanning bark, fibres, bananas, pineapples, ginger, rice, nuts, sago, sugar, tobacco, cocoa, coffee, and cotton. The mineral resources of the North constitute an unknown quantity. There is a vast field for exploitation. I believe there is great mineral wealth there, and that it will be available when conditions are more favourable for working. The importations of tropical products into Western Australia during 1919-1920 represented in value £2,529,908. That is a large sum to expend in those products, all of which I believe can be produced in the North-West. I have the figures for the 1921 wool clip, which represented 15,000,000 lbs. From that, hon. members will see how important this industry is in the North-West. I suppose there will be a considerable increase shown in later figures.

Hon. J. Duffell: The price for the clip will be considerably increased, too.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : I am sorry I have not the later figures.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I understand from the Governor's Speech that there will be many more sheep there when wire netting is cheaper.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : The hon. member is pleased to be facetious. The position is clear to any undulled brain.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I presume you do not see the point.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The Minister must know he is dealing with dulled brains here.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : There has been criticism of the North-West Department, which I was sorry to hear. I have not been very long in charge of that department, but I know we have capable officers. I have not yet met the Commissioner for the North-West, but he is coming down soon. He is doing a considerable amount of work. The department has charge of all the public works in the North with the exception of the Beadon Point jetty, which will be handed over to us on completion. The North-West Department requires careful organisation and attention, and it will get that from me.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What about your other duties?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : They will not be neglected. I do not see why I cannot do the work. That may be a good deal to say, but I have been in office for some little time and I have not broken down yet. I do not intend to. I will not allow anything to worry me too much. If I find my duties have that effect, the position can be gone into.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: If you take your position seriously, it will worry you.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : The hon. member need make no mistake about that. I have taken on nothing during my life that I have not regarded seriously. If I were not prepared to be serious, and, so far as my ability permits me, to carry out my duties properly, I would not have taken the position I now hold. The Government greatly appreciate the work of Mr. Miles in respect of the North-West. That hon. member has been in the Old Country endeavouring to get capital for the development of the North-West. All the assistance the Government can rightly give him for his schemes will be cheerfully given.

Hon. J. Duffell: He has shown marked ability.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : There can be no question of it. We greatly appreciate the work he has done. The immigration policy has been widely criticised. During the period 1910-16 we received 34,406 migrants. In 1920 we received 1,499, and in 1921 the number was 3,324. During 1922 we received 6,513, including 2,144 third-class passengers who paid their own fares. To the end of this year we received 4,141, of whom 955 paid their own passages. So it will be seen that the position is very satisfactory.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If the Premier were living up to his agreement with the Imperial

Government, we should be getting 25,000 migrants per annum.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : And he will do it. Mr. Stewart could not understand the following paragraph in the Governor's Speech:—

The agreement was signed on February 9th, 1923, and operates in respect of immigrants sailing from England after September 25th, 1922 and, in respect of the financial clauses, from date of signing.

The hon. member wanted a clear explanation. Here it is: September 25th, 1922, was fixed by the Overseas Settlement Committee as the initial date of sailing of migrants under the agreement, that is to say, we cannot include, in our quota of 75,000, departures before that date. The agreement is dated 9th February, 1923, and the financial clauses operate from then, that is, we can make claims after that date in respect of expenditure incurred on migrants who sailed after September 25th, 1922.

Hon. J. Duffell: The Government would be well advised to restrict the number of migrants arriving in June and July.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : Perhaps the hon. member is right, but we hope the existing difficulties will be overcome, and that in future employment will be offering in June and July. It is unwise to break the continuity of the stream of arrivals.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They have to be sent when the ships are ready to bring them.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : Probably that is so. The Federal Government raise loans and advance to the State as required, the State Government undertaking to spend six million pounds in settling 75,000 people, of whom 6,000 have to be placed on the land. The Imperial, the Commonwealth, and the State Governments agreed to pay each one-third of the interest on £6,000,000 for five years from the date of the loan.

Hon. J. Duffell: Is it true that if better terms are secured by any of the Eastern States, we shall be placed on the same footing?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : Yes, entirely so.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Where do you get that?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : The Premier himself has said so, and he is the responsible man.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: It is not shown in the agreement.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No, of course not, and we are not likely to get it.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : I am prepared to take the Premier's word for it.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The agreement should be amended to include it.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : The total saving effected by the State through the Commonwealth Government advertising and paying the passages of the migrants, is worth two millions per annum. That represents money which the State would have to

pay, in addition to what it is paying now, if the scheme were not in vogue.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You are assuming that 25,000 per annum are brought out?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There will be no doubt about that.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If only 5,000 are brought out, the saving will be something like £400,000.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, but the full number will be brought out. If it be found necessary to extend the period, I have sufficient faith in the Imperial Government to believe that they will put no obstacles in the way.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I myself have every faith in the Imperial Government.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Then why not in this Government?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is an entirely different proposition.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: But the Premier has had a fairly wide experience of this sort of thing, and I fully believe he is the man for the occasion.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Virtue has been rewarded once more.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is interesting to know that the average capital of migrants arriving in Western Australia is £26 and of those going to Victoria, £21.

Hon. A. Lovekin: What about all the people going away from here and taking their money with them?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Not so much of that sort of thing is going on as is believed. Now I want to touch on group settlement. There are to-day 69 groups, aggregating 1,340 men, and 5,000 people settled. It is a most creditable performance to have put up in 18 months or two years. The number is being added to weekly, and as time goes on the scheme will be extended. On the groups are 320 migrants brought out under the agreement, the total number of migrants down there being 623. The total expenditure to date is £450,539. I commend to hon. members the return asked for by Mr. Stewart and showing the expenditure to date. In the early years of group settlement possibly the expenses were greater than they might have been, but any hon. member who goes carefully through this return can only arrive at the conclusion that the work as a whole has been cheaply carried out. I am satisfied that the capitalisation will not be anything like as serious as hon. members fear. In my opinion the class of migrants coming out is quite good. Hon. members talk of letting contracts for the clearing of the blocks, in order that the migrants might be settled on land partially cleared. But it must be remembered that the very essence of group settlement is immigration. The best way of carrying out the work on the blocks is the existing method of having a first class foreman to teach the men how to clear their own blocks. From personal experience I know the position is quite satisfactory.

Hon. J. Duffell: Are the settlers satisfied with the prices they are getting for their produce?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: There has been no produce yet.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You mean, are they satisfied with their 10 "bob" a day?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Those who have produced are quite satisfied.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Have you read in to-night's paper that your experts have flooded out a lot of the settlers?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I want the hon. member to cease this carping criticism. He should be lending a helping hand to the scheme, for he knows it is a good one. He tells us the settlers have been swamped out. To a certain extent they have been, because the drainage could not be got through in time.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: But they have been swamped out by your experts.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Only because the drainage is not yet completed. For goodness' sake, give the Government a chance! The making of roads is a national expenditure and will not be added to the burden of the settlers.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You said it would be added to the cost of the blocks.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Here is a return which the hon. member ought to read. It answers all his criticism of the scheme. If he were to read it, it would teach him to give the question fair and impartial consideration, which he has not done up to date.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I am speaking from facts.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I also am sure of my facts. Mr. Baxter wanted us to call a halt in the immigration policy.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I wanted nothing of the sort.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Group settlement is going hand in hand with immigration. If we are to stop development, we must also stop immigration.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Nothing of the sort.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: But it is so. If we stop group settlement we must stop immigration, or we shall have the city inundated with unemployed persons.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are so parochial that you cannot see past yourself.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: What would the hon. member do with the migrants when brought here? Would he put them into the city? We cannot call a halt to group settlement without calling a halt to immigration. Mr. Baxter also wanted to know what the capitalisation of each block would be. There can be no capitalisation charges until the whole of the clearing is done, and the men get on their blocks. So it is impossible to say what the capitalisation will be. However, if the hon. member will read this return, he will see what work has been done for £450,000.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You have 69 groups going; have you one of them finished yet?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If the hon. member would read this return he would see for himself.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You promised to reply to this.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am giving my reply for the hon. member to work out for himself. I have read these papers and come to a fair judgment on them. The hon. member said we had no chance of exporting potatoes to the Eastern States.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I said there was no chance of building up a greater export.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The export trade is there at certain seasons of the year.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: For two or three weeks only!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member also said the settlers should concentrate on dairying. I do not know what the hon. member is thinking of. He does not seem to know what has been done on the group settlements. He knows very little of the South-West. Dairying is the essence of group settlement. Yet the hon. member asks, "Why not go in for dairying?" It is childish criticism. The hon. member, an experienced wheat farmer, does not understand the South-West or its conditions and does not know what is going on there. If he saw the pastures laid down in the last 18 months or two years, he would be satisfied that dairying is going to make the group settlements. One of his statements that I regret and that I think he should be prepared to withdraw was that trades people in the South-West and in the city were ardent supporters of group settlements from the point of gain only.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I said some of them.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have quoted the hon. member accurately; I noted his words at the time.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Look at "Hansard."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is one of the worst things said anywhere in Western Australia. The people close to the groups are giving the settlers the greatest possible help. They are spending a great deal of money to cater for the settlers and, of course, they gain by the development of the country. Would the hon. member have it otherwise? They have been bearing the heat and burden for years. The hon. member, however, infers that the only consideration they have for the groups is for what they can make out of them.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I said no such thing.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member's words cannot be misconstrued and, as a fair-minded man, he should be prepared to withdraw that statement.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Certainly no; I stand to it, but I did not say the "whole" of the people.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The statement does not do the hon. member any credit. The hon. member also said the Gov-

ernment should establish ten groups, secure markets for the produce and then, if they proved successful, should start another ten groups. I have shown that the markets are here, markets for not 10, but 100 groups. There would be no progress at all if the hon. member were in charge of affairs.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You could not get enough cows.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The cows are available.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You do not know what you are talking about.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: To show that I do, the Minister for Agriculture gave me the information to-day. He said, "We are in no way hampered with regard to cows. We can get them whenever we want them."

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I remind hon. members that the debate should not be converted into a dialogue.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member said it was wrong to pay the settlers 10s. a day while on the groups, and he added that, after they left the groups, they would still receive the 10s. a day. That is not so. When they go on to their own blocks, they are supposed to be able to make their own living.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The statement was made that for 12 months after they went on their blocks, they were to get 10s. per day.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Who made that statement?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The Premier.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Premier made no such statement. That is not the policy of the Government. The hon. member also said the scheme would cost sixteen million pounds. That statement does not interest me. Whatever expenditure is justified will be incurred. I must also reply briefly to remarks made by Mr. Rose and Mr. Willmott, though in view of their criticism, I think it would have been only fair had they been in their places to hear my reply.

Hon. J. Duffell: Quite right; you are doing your share.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Mr. Rose said there were great possibilities in the Pinjarra-Bunbury area. The land in this area has been classified and the result is very satisfactory. Mr. Willmott said he did not think there would be more than 5,000 acres of swamp land available.

Hon. J. Duffell: He said "good" swamp land.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: From information supplied to me, he will be very wide of the mark. Mr. Stewart raised the question of soldier settlement and said there were 1,098 qualified men who had not yet got land. The position is that 200 to 300 can be considered live applications and practically all are of recent date. If these men wanted land to-morrow, doubtless they could get it. It was hoped that the interest could be reduced from the present rate of £6 7s. 10d. to five per cent. When the Prime Min-

ister was in Perth he forecasted some reduction, but it has not yet been made. Later on we hope to get a reduction, and it may then be possible to reduce the interest rate to five per cent. Approvals were granted last year to the extent of £635,695; the approvals since the inception of the scheme total £5,025,921 and the total advances to the 30th June were £4,373,757. I wish to make clear the position regarding the Peel Estate. Mr. Baxter does not appreciate the real state of affairs. He said the Peel estate was drifting to a Kendenup end, that over £400,000 had been spent and that he believed the expenditure amounted to a great deal more. Mr. Willmott said the expenditure was £500,000. It is astonishing where some hon. members get their figures.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Are my figures wrong?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I shall quote the correct ones and the hon. member can judge for himself. The expenditure on lands and survey to date amounts to £48,623; and on roads, drainage, etc., £332,120, a total of £380,743. The amount recoverable from plant, tramway, etc., is £20,000, leaving a total of £360,743.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Then the paper that sponsors your Government is wrong. It made the statement.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: All the expenditure on group settlement on the Peel estate will come back to the State.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are more optimistic than the Premier.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Are the settlers thoroughly satisfied with the Peel estate?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I shall deal with the criticism. Mr. Baxter said the estate contained 80,000 acres, 20,000 of which was good swamp land and that the Premier had said the capitalisation was £1,000,000. This meant that the swamp land would work out at £44 per acre. The reply is, that the total area of swamp and wet flats is 25,326 acres after providing for roads, drains and reserves.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You have included the flats.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: All of it is supposed to be first-class land. The Premier stated that the value, not the capitalisation, of the estate when completed would be £1,000,000.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I said value, not capitalisation.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Mr. Baxter also said 42 men had walked off the estate. That is a very damaging statement. The Lands Department have not heard of those men. Forty-four forfeitures were gazetted, but subsequently the General Manager of the Agricultural Bank investigated each case with the inspectors, and 30 of the men returned to the estate and are on probation to-day.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Were not 42 blocks forfeited?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: They were gazetted, but not forfeited.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: When is a block forfeited if not when gazetted?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Forty-two men did not walk off the estate.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What was the new arrangement made to bring them back?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There was no new arrangement. They have to carry out the conditions. As to gold-mining, we all know of what immense value the industry has been to Western Australia. Gold made this State. The great lure of the precious metal induces people to settle in a country and take risks. Some win and some lose. The general result to Western Australia was good in the early days, and I hope it will be even better in the future. The highest yield of gold in this State in any one year was £3,770,719 worth in 1903, but last year it was worth only £2,286,325. The value of the gold production in the State is £149,184,329, and the value of other minerals other than gold or coal is £5,268,000, while the value of coal produced is £3,653,500. Coal mining has been of great advantage to Western Australia, and we hope it will make greater strides in the future. The Government have considered the question of a cheaper water supply for the goldfields. By 1927 the goldfields water scheme will be practically paid for. This will have been done at a cost to the taxpayers of £1,712,556. Members cannot say that Western Australia has not done something for the goldfields. The goldfields water scheme has paid operating expenses and part of the interest, but never contributed to a sinking fund. The taxpayers of the State have paid the whole of the sinking fund and contributed largely to the success of the goldfields.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Look at the revenue from the gold-mining industry?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Seeing that the sinking fund will eliminate practically the whole cost of the scheme by 1927, and that there will then be made available a sum between £40,000 and £50,000, the Government have turned their attention to a reduction in the price of water to the goldfields. That is the policy of the Government subject to a proper arrangement with the people of the goldfields as to the expenditure of money in development work.

Hon. H. Seddon: We were told the matter had been agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It has been agreed to with the exception that certain things have yet to be arranged. I hope they will be satisfactorily arranged. This will help in the working of low grade ores, stop the depletion of the high grade ores, and generally assist in the advancement of the gold-mining industry. Goldfields members have taken umbrage at the very scanty remarks in the Speech concerning the gold-mining industry. Actions, however, speak louder than words. If the Government are prepared to assist the industry in this way it will be more satisfactory to members than

if the Speech contained 10 sheets concerning the industry.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The past actions of the Government do not give the people much encouragement.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Minister for Mines has done a good deal during the past 12 months. The cost of production went up to 38s. 7d. per ton in 1921. The position is, therefore, impossible. It is no use spending money if it cannot be got back. The Government do intend to do something. Last year they assisted 112 prospectors—comprising 67 new parties—with equipment and sustenance, and spent £7,500 in fitting them out. Altogether for that year £62,457 was spent on the gold-mining industry. Members may say that this does not compare with the expenditure on agriculture. The Government are prepared to spend more money on the goldfields provided proper arrangements can be made for the working of low grade propositions. Besides gold, this State contains many other minerals. Members representing the goldfields can disabuse their minds of any want of sympathy on the part of the Government, or lack of desire to assist the industry.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Are you going to afford any relief in the way of taxation.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That has not yet been considered by the Government. We have certain liabilities and there must be taxation, but I hardly think there is any possibility of the Government doing as the hon. member suggests, for some time.

Hon. J. Duffell: Surely you are going to take off the super tax?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I will have to see the Treasurer about that.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What about reducing railway freights?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Government are out to give cheaper freights when it is possible to do so. The railways are doing immensely well at present. The time is not far distant when they will make a considerable profit. Speaking for myself, I would say that when the time arrives no doubt the policy of the Government will be to reduce freights as far as possible. The goldfields are seriously handicapped in the matter of freights. If relief can be given in the way of reducing freights on gelignite, and other mining materials, the industry will greatly benefit. But we have to crawl before we can walk. The first act of the Government will be to assist by reducing the price of water. Later on perhaps something more may be done. The policy must be a general one, and not one purely for the goldfields.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The re-establishment of the goldfields is one of the most important matters for the Government to consider.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I know the value of the goldfields, and all I can do to assist the industry will be done. Mr. Willmott spoke about fruit. The in-

dustry has suffered badly during the last 12 months through the poor markets. The fruit, however, has been of excellent quality, as is shown by the reports from London. We hope in the future the position will improve. In to-night's paper we have seen the report of the conference with the Minister for Agriculture. The question of administration has been gone into and that of enabling fruit to be carried and sold at a cheaper rate.

Hon. J. Duffell: Very necessary.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This will chiefly affect the metropolitan area. I hope much good will come of the conference. If fruit can be carried at a lower cost the consumer will no doubt buy more fruit. The fruit industry affects my own province. Around Bridgetown, Donnybrook and other places the best apples in the world are grown, not excepting Mount Barker. I know the growers have suffered and are suffering. They have big hearts, and I hope their pockets will be deep enough to enable them to overcome difficulties and get a proper return for their labour and investments. Whatever can be done by the Government to assist them will be done. Reference has been made to the so-called discovery by the Minister for Agriculture in the Esperance district. He has done a great service to the State. He has satisfied himself that the good land is there, and that provided the rainfall is satisfactory the wheat area of the State can be quadrupled.

Hon. J. Duffell: That is the point.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Minister as a wheat farmer knows what he is talking about. He is right to conclude that the land is there, that it is good, and that the rainfall is satisfactory.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: He touched for five minutes on the fringe of it, but I spent months there.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: He may have seen more in five minutes than the hon. member would have seen in five days.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I treat all you say as a joke.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I hope the hon. member will not do so. I certainly am not joking to-night.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: If it is offensive to the Minister I will withdraw it.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I hope he will do so cheerfully. I will not allow any member to say I am joking. If I were joking I would not be fit to occupy my present position. Because I differ from the hon. member and refute his statements, and prove him to be a pessimist in Western Australia he calls me a joker!

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is pretty strong. I have not been proved to be a pessimist.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The hon. member has withdrawn the remark.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Very well. The policy of the Government, I believe, is to have the three million acres referred to by the Minister thoroughly and properly classified. We shall then see whether it exists or not. I believe it does. The settlers of the district are doing well though some members have said they have been neglected. At all events, they will not be neglected in the future. I hope the Government will be able to open up this new large wheat growing territory. There has been a large expenditure of Agricultural Bank money upon the farm land in Western Australia. So far it has not expended enormous sums in the South-West. Nearly all the expenditure has been made upon the wheat areas.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Because they paid the best.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not say that was wrong. The Premier may be said to have forsaken his old love and gone to the South-West, and forgotten the wheat areas. That is not so. Members should analyse the figures and see what the State has already done for the wheat areas. We also hope to spend a large sum of money in opening up the wheat areas in the Esperance district. When this land has been classified and the Government are satisfied that the district is a safe one in which to grow wheat there will be no mistake about the policy of the Government. We have only to remember what Sir James Mitchell did years ago in the wheat belt, when Western Australia was not supplying its own requirements in the way of wheat. Now we are exporting enormous quantities of wheat. I was going to touch upon taxation, but I do not think I will do so to-night. Mr. Boan is not here, and perhaps I shall have another opportunity of speaking on this very important question. I shall endeavour to show that from a close analysis of the position it appears that our taxation is the lowest of any Australian State except Victoria on incomes under £1,000.

Hon. A. Lovekin: On £1,000 our taxation is double that of Victoria.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Victoria is in a totally different position from that of Western Australia. In Victoria, all the water supplies and other works of that kind are either municipalised or are under boards. That makes a vastly different position as regards taxation, the State being greatly relieved. At any rate, Victoria is the lowest taxed State in the Commonwealth. If I had the time, I could easily show hon. members that Mr. Boan is a bit right and a bit wrong. There is a difference between incomes from personal exertion and income from property. Hon. members have not said anything about that. I shall not deal with the subject to-night, but I shall be able, at the proper time, to prove that there is only one class of taxation here on income from personal exertion and income from property combined, whereas in the Eastern States there is one tax on income from personal exertion

and another on income from property. I admit frankly that, combined with Federal taxation, our taxation in this State is too high on incomes beyond a certain amount. But 95 per cent. of our people pay on incomes below £1,000, and they are the lowest taxed people in the world probably. I admit that the remaining 5 per cent. of our people are paying very considerable taxation. I do not see how it is to be overcome at the present time. The Government are confronting the problem.

Hon. A. Lovekin: There are only two States paying higher taxation than we are on incomes over £1,000, and I have the details here.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I will deal with the subject later, and will prove my contentions. However, it is the desire of the Government to see the country go ahead, and it is difficult to obtain the investment of capital when large incomes are so heavily taxed. So far as the State is concerned, the taxation is perhaps reasonable; but the unreasonable feature is that the Commonwealth should step in and tax incomes as it does. That is what the Government of this State are being blamed for. When Federation came in, it was never contemplated that the Federal Government would tax incomes. I hope the day is not far distant when Federal income taxation will be considerably reduced. It must be borne in mind, however, that we have this dual taxation and a dual control of things. The expenditure of the Federal Government is simply appalling. Let hon. members read the newspapers and see what is happening. We see the building up of huge Federal departments; we see what is causing all this trouble. Mr. Macfarlane being here, I will take the opportunity to refer to the subject of metropolitan water supply. That is a matter on which Mr. Nicholson also spoke. Water from the bores has to a great extent proved very unsatisfactory; but it was necessary for the Government, while money was so dear and material so very high in price, to operate in that direction, with the hope of getting satisfactory potable water for the people in and around Perth. The Government were unfortunate in striking bad water in North Perth. They have been attacked right and left for that, but the Almighty put that water there. The Minister for Works did not put it there. Had he been able to do so, he would have put the best possible spring water there for the people.

Hon. A. Lovekin: But you refused a million at five per cent. four years ago.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not remember it, even if the Government did refuse it. However, the construction of works would have been much dearer two or three years ago than it is now.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: But the pumping cost was equal to £50,000 at six per cent.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Government were not in a position then to get the money.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Yes, they were.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We were borrowing money at over six per cent.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I know you were.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Why did not the hon. member offer us money at five per cent.?

Hon. A. Lovekin: The offer was made.

Hon. J. Duffell: There were conditions attached to it.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The position now is that the Government have shown their bona fides in the matter and are going right ahead.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: With a permanent scheme?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. They can now get money more cheaply, and they are making good as far as the metropolitan water supply is concerned.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Where is the permanent scheme?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: At Mt. Hawthorn and Melville Park.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is only construction of storage reservoirs. That does not give the people water. If you had had water last summer, you would not have wanted those reservoirs. It was the water you wanted.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Mr. Macfarlane will be satisfied on this point, that the Government are genuine in their effort to supply water for the city of Perth. The supply is well within reach now. An enormous amount of money will be spent, so as to make provision whereby the people of Perth will never again find themselves in the parlous state of recent years. I have felt sorry for their position. However, the Government hitherto have not had the necessary funds. Now that money is cheaper, they are going straight on with the work, and I believe the result will be that even next summer the people of Perth will have a satisfactory water supply.

Hon. A. Lovekin: By the time you have spent all that money we will be no better off.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There are a lot of pessimists in this world.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No, no!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: At any rate, we will get fresh water.

Hon. A. Lovekin: How much are you going to get?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I think the city of Perth will be thankful to the Mitchell Administration in a very few years for the work they are doing at the present time. Mr. Lovekin says we will be no better off after the work has been done.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We cannot be; not with the volume of water we shall get for the money.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The supply is there, and it will be satisfactory. I thank hon. members very much indeed for the generous hearing they have given me, and for their kind attention. I do hope that I have been able to deal with the multifarious questions that in the interest of the Govern-

ment I have thought fit to lay before the House, in a manner that is at any rate partially satisfactory to hon. members. I hope that the coming session will not be a long one, because the general election is approaching. I am one of those who will then have to face the electors, and I have no doubt all retiring members will confront the position with equanimity. The legislation proposed by the Government for the current session is not voluminous, but it is important in character. There are difficult problems to be solved, and I feel sure that those problems will be solved with advantage to the country and in a manner that will be satisfactory to the people of Western Australia. I trust that as the session proceeds the good feeling that exists now will continue. As Leader of this House, a position which I feel it is a great honour to occupy, I shall take care that no action will ever be laid at my door of disturbing the peace that has for so many years obtained within this Chamber.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-reply adopted.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move—

That the Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the President and such members as may desire to accompany him.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. Ewing—South-West) [8.41]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 11th September.

In suggesting this date I have considered the convenience of hon. members. I have no desire to bring them back when there is not much work to do. Important Bills are to be introduced in another place next week; indeed, I think one was introduced this afternoon. It will, perhaps, be a fortnight before anything of importance comes before this Chamber. After that interval, however, I hope I shall be able to ask hon. members to sit continuously on the three sitting days of the week, in order that we may expedite the work of the session.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [8.42]: I second the motion, in order to enable me to say a word or two. Is it desirable to adjourn for so long, seeing that the debate on the Address-in-reply in another place has terminated, and that several small Bills are being introduced and probably will be here next week? In these circumstances, is it desirable to adjourn for so long a period as a fortnight?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. Ewing—South-West—in reply) [8.43]: If hon. members do not wish to adjourn for the length of time I have sug-

gested, I do not desire it either. However, I do not think there will be much of importance before the date mentioned in my motion; and therefore it might be better to adjourn to that date. Hon. members have asked me to adjourn for a fortnight, after which they say they are prepared to come here for as long as I want them.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.44 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 23rd August, 1923.

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

QUESTION—WATER AND FIREWOOD PRICES, EASTERN GOLDFIELDS.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Can he inform the House of the quantity of firewood supplied to the Kalgoorlie and Boulder mines by the Lakeside Firewood Company and by the W.A. (Kurarang) Wood Company for the year ended June last? 2, Is he aware that the W.A. Company have purchased the business of the Lakeside Company, and that in consequence the supply of wood to the mines in this district has now assumed the form of a monopoly? 3, Is he further aware that the monopoly company have given notice of intention to increase the price of firewood to the mines by one shilling per ton? 4, In view of the probability of a considerable proportion of the proposed £40,000 per annum concession in reduced water charges being absorbed by increased fuel charges, will he defer final action in the matter until satisfied that the full benefit will, as intended, be received by the mining in-

dustry, and not by the profit and loss account of the firewood company?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, 126,908, including supplies in small quantities to other consumers. 2, 3, I have no official knowledge on the subject, but have heard that such is the case. 4, I am unable to see any warrant for withholding this very necessary need of assistance, but can assure the hon. member that the industry itself must receive the benefits to be derived.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Mullaney, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Money (Bunbury) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—REGISTRATION OF DEEDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: Under our land laws a title may be either under the Transfer of Land Act or under the Ordinance No. 14 of 1856. In the case of a transfer or mortgage under the Transfer of Land Act, as hon. members are aware, one goes before a justice of the peace, or some other authorised person, and signs the transfer or mortgage or other instrument, which is thereupon deposited in the office of the Registrar of Deeds in Perth. The business is done in that way. Under the old Ordinance, however, one has to appear before the Registrar of Deeds in Perth in order to sign a document. The document can, of course, be signed by a solicitor before the Registrar of Deeds, but it must be a solicitor living in Perth, because he must go before the Registrar to sign. There does not seem to be any reason at all why these documents under the Ordinance should not be signed before a person competent to witness the execution of documents under the Transfer of Land Act. It is not convenient for persons residing in the country to appear before the Registrar of Deeds in Perth, and it is expensive for them to pay someone to appear before the Registrar. The present Bill proposes to extend the conditions of the Transfer of Land Act in this connection to titles under the old conveyancing law. The object is to save people living out of Perth unnecessary trouble and expense. In the Old Country there is very little registration of deeds. In Yorkshire and Middlesex, I understand, deeds are registered as they are in this State; but for the rest of England one is entitled only to such land as is represented by the deeds in one's possession. Here we insist upon registration of all deeds, whether under the Transfer of Land Act or under the old conveyancing law. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.