

Mr. Duffell will not find any provisions similar to this in the Criminal Code, which would be the right place for the insertion of such a provision.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: But for the remarks of Dr. Saw I would have voted for the clause, but I can see it opens up a question which may have far-reaching effects. Although such a provision may be very necessary, the proper place for it is apparently in the Pharmacy and Poisons Act.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 26—Injuring trespassing animals:

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The object sought by this clause is apparently defeated by its very wording. Whilst it provides that if an animal is injured and escapes to an adjoining property the person who injured the animal shall report to the owner, if the animal escapes to a property which is not adjoining, or into the street, there is no occasion for the person to report.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: Certainly there is.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I am not quite clear as to whether the word "adjoining" includes property which does not adjoin.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I suggest that the clause should be amended. If we provide that the report shall be to the nearest justice of the peace or to an inspector of nuisances, it may be possible to get a workable clause. As the clause stands it suggests something which will be unworkable.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: If a dog attacked sheep depasturing in a paddock, no owner of the sheep would allow that dog to escape on to an adjoining property. The owner would make short shrift of the dog. There have been cases where dogs have been shot and have then got through the fence on to the roadway where a dog may not be shot. There is really nothing in the clause which should exercise the minds of hon. members.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 27, 28—agreed to.

Clause 29—Interpretation:

On motion by Honorary Minister, paragraph (d) was amended by inserting "cattle" before "bull" to provide that "cattle" should cover "bull, cow, bullock, etc."

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I make the suggestion that the hon. member should now report progress on this clause. There is no doubt that it is a new departure to put the interpretation clause at the end of the Bill instead of at the beginning. It may or may not be good procedure, but it is desirable to stick to the practice of defining in the interpretation clause the expressions that are used in the Bill. We find, for instance, in the interpretation clause that "goat" includes any kid, but I do not know that the word "goat" appears in any part of the Bill except in the interpretation clause. If a particular word does not appear in any portion of the Bill, there is no need to refer to it in the interpretation clause.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The word "sheep" includes lamb, ewe or ram. It is wethers that are to a great extent killed and the word "wethers" does not appear in the Bill. I agree with the Minister that it is desirable that progress should be reported at this stage.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I suggest that my colleague should meet the wishes of the Minister, especially as very good progress has been made with the Bill.

Hon. J. Duffell: I will agree to report progress at this stage.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 12th October, 1920.

	PAGE
Questions: Bread bonus	933
Appeal, John Hurley	933
Bills: Supply, all stages	934
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment, 1A ...	935
Coroners, report	935
Public Service Appeal Board, report ...	935
Annual Estimates, Votes and Items discussed ...	935

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

QUESTION—BREAD BONUS.

Mr. THOMSON asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the statement made by the Premier of South Australia (Mr. Barwell) in the House of Assembly regarding the price of bread and the payment of world's parity price to the farmers for their wheat? 2, If so, will he take action to assist Mr. Barwell in the convening of a conference of Premiers to formulate a scheme for the payment of a bonus to limit the price of bread to the consumers and provide that the farmers will receive the full market price for their produce?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, A conference of Premiers is to be called to consider the question of wheat supplies for local consumption.

QUESTION—APPEAL, JOHN HURLEY.

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Attorney General: Has he any objection to placing all the papers relative to the appeal of John Hurley on the table of the House?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: Yes. If the hon. member desires the papers to be laid on the Table of the House he should give notice of motion in the ordinary way. If any member desires to see the papers I will give him every opportunity of doing so.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £350,000.

All Stages.

The PREMIER AND COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.37]: I move—

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

Question put and passed.

Message.

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

In Committee of Supply.

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

The PREMIER AND COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam): I move—

That there be granted to His Majesty, on account of the service of the year 1920-21, a sum not exceeding £350,000.

This amount, of course, is part of the amount that is asked for by the Estimates now before the House. Hon. members will recollect that some two months ago I came to the House for three months' supply. Portion of that money has not yet been expended, of course. On that occasion I asked for £944,000 out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, of which amount only £911,000 has been expended; and I asked for £750,000 on account of moneys to credit of the General Loan Fund, of which amount only £513,000 has been expended. Hon. members will note that the amount asked for by the present Supply Bill is a small one, but we have remaining from the previous Supply Bill sufficient to carry us on for this month with the authorisation now asked for. Further, the amounts provided for under special Acts are not included in any Supply Bill. I do not know that I need discuss the matter. The Estimates are now under consideration, and it is not my fault that they are not through. If the House were willing, I would get them through to-day.

Mr. Gardiner: We cannot hear a word at the back here.

The PREMIER: I am asking for a month's supply, £350,000, from revenue. I do not suppose it is necessary for me to do more than ask the Committee for this sup-

ply. The Estimates in detail are before hon. members, and the present request is merely for authority to the Government to expend money upon the items which appear upon the Estimates.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.43]: No doubt, as the Premier explains, he is merely asking for authority to expend money; but the fact is that he is getting authority to expend money without the House knowing the items upon which it is to be expended. The present is the fourth month of the financial year, and thus a third of the annual expenditure is being authorised without any discussion. Although I must admit that this year's Budget has been brought down fairly early as compared with previous years, still the fact remains that the Committee have not made very much progress in discussing the Estimates. Indeed, we have hardly begun their discussion; only the officers of Parliament, I believe, have been dealt with. Practically the consideration of the whole of the huge amount of money provided by these Estimates has still to take place. On that aspect of the question let me say that I have never known any previous occasion on which the Committee have been called upon to discuss the Estimates in detail without having before them the annual reports of the departments. In a few moments we shall be dealing with the Estimates of the Agricultural Department, and yet that department's report for the past year has only been laid upon the Table of the House to-day. The reports of many other departments we have not yet received. Unless members have those annual reports in their possession before discussing the Estimates, the Government might just as well save the expense involved and not have the reports printed at all. Nobody reads them after the Estimates have been dealt with. It is a fact, too, that we have only this year seen quite a number of departmental reports for the financial year 1918-19. Further, I do not know why the Premier has not presented the Public Accounts for last year. I have not seen them.

The Premier: They are not ready.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know why they are not ready. I do not think I have ever known a previous occasion on which the Public Accounts have not been laid upon the Table at the same time as the Budget was brought down. Without the information afforded by the Public Accounts, members are entirely in the dark, and cannot possibly compare the proposed expenditure with the corresponding expenditure for the previous financial year. It is utterly impossible for members intelligently to discuss the Estimates without having the Public Accounts before them. We have not got them yet. I know of course it will be urged that the public service strike has been responsible for some of the delay in the preparation of these reports. But even that does not account for the whole of the delay. For instance, for many years past the report of the Mines Department has been placed on the Table at

the opening of the session; yet here the session is in its third month and we have not that report yet. In these circumstances it is useless discussing the question of supply.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported; the report adopted.

Supply Bill introduced, etc.

Resolution in Committee of Ways and Means having been passed, a Supply Bill was brought in providing for the expenditure of £350,000 out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Bill passed through its remaining stages without debate and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Attorney General and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—REPORT ADOPTED.

- 1, Coroners.
- 2, Public Service Appeal Board.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1920-21.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from 5th October, Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Department of Agriculture (Hon. H. P. Colebatch, Minister); the Honorary Minister in charge of the vote.

Vote—Minister for Agriculture, £68,222;

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [4.55]: Several hon. members have spoken on the question of agricultural education. I think the tactics adopted by the Government in this connection, more especially in respect of the experimental plots in the South-West, are deserving of commendation. In agriculture, as in most other industries, practical experience is one of the best guides. When we have experimental plots in centres unknown to the settlers, those plots serve to demonstrate the suitability of the soil to different products. One of the chief difficulties in agriculture lies in ascertaining the crops best suited to the soil.

Mr. Underwood: Do you think the schoolmaster can teach you that?

Mr. PICKERING: It is a question not of the schoolmaster, but of demonstrating to the farmer the suitability of his land.

Mr. Underwood: What practical results do you expect from a tiny experimental plot?

Mr. PICKERING: These plots are, I understand, of considerable area. In my opinion they should be at least 50 or 100 acres in extent. This would give some prospects of properly testing the country. I very much regret that the Brunswick State farm should have been cut out, and that there is now no

particular farm in the South-West used for demonstrations.

The Minister for Works: What is your opinion of Brunswick as an orchard country?

Mr. PICKERING: In my opinion that country is well suited for orchards. The member for Bunbury produces excellent fruit in his orchard, which is not very far removed from the old Brunswick State farm. However, it is not the question of orchards that I wish to discuss just now, but rather that of stock. I have always contended that the Brunswick State farm should have been used as a farm for breeding stud stock for dairy farmers. I hold that the stock grown in the district are the best suited for that district. In my electorate there is no demonstration farm or plot of any description. Many of my constituents think that a farm of this nature should be established down there. It is only natural that I should support the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) in his claim for the retention at Narrogin of the school of agriculture. Although we may agree that it is desirable to have a main centre as an agricultural college, we cannot believe that that will be adequate to deal with all the problems of agriculture that confront us. If we would do the best possible for our districts we should ask for many more of these institutions. Different conditions require different treatment. It is absurd to try to make applicable to the South-West those conditions which appertain to Geraldton or even the wheat area. Quite recently I was one of those who waited on the Minister for Agriculture with regard to the importation of potato seed. The practical farmers of my district assure me that disease has been introduced here in potato seed from the other States and that pests have also been introduced into the South-West and have with difficulty been eradicated. Notwithstanding this, the regulations governing the importation of seed potatoes have been revoked, and the position of the potato growers is by no means a secure one. Something more than a report of the potato inspector should have been brought to light before a decision of this nature was arrived at. There is a notice of mine on the Notice Paper dealing with the fruit industry. This motion has already been carried in another place, and is to the effect that in the opinion of this House the State and Federal Governments should take immediate steps to have the existing embargo on Australian apples removed, and that all Australian fruits should be placed in open competition on the market. I should like to emphasise the words "open competition on the market," for that is all that the fruit growers of Western Australia desire. Further, a resolution was carried at the conference of Australian fruit growers in Queensland, that the conference take steps to bring about the de-control of fruit prices in the English market next season—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot deal with that question.

Mr. PICKERING: My electorate is vitally interested in this question. During the war the fruit industry of Western Australia suffered considerably. In some cases the returns from sales overseas only amounted to 1s. 7d. per case. The industry is in a deplorable condition so far as prices are concerned. I hope, when the motion to which I have referred comes before hon. members, they will unanimously support and carry it in the way that was done in another place. There is also the question of fruit cases. The position of fruit growers in this State is far from satisfactory in this respect. Owing to the fire which destroyed the State sawmills, it is almost impossible to get collapsible cases from that source, and the supply to the growers has dwindled away to nothing. The position is fast becoming acute. I have made inquiries of all the timber mills to find out what provision is being made, and I have also consulted the Minister for Works. I am glad the Minister is doing all that is possible with the State sawmills to cut dumps and other cases. I hope the Government will take into consideration the urgent necessity for seeing that adequate supplies of cases are made available for the growers during the ensuing season.

The Minister for Works: We are not the only cutters.

Mr. PICKERING: I know that. In view of the serious deficiency which will arise, through the destruction of the State sawmills, it is absolutely necessary that every possible step should be taken to fill the requirements of the fruit growers. It must be borne in mind that for many years past the fruit growers have been labouring under great disabilities, and as there is now a prospect of a reasonable return for their labour every facility should be given to them to get their fruit away. With regard to the drainage of the South-West, I have continuously advocated that the Government should appoint a drainage expert. They have experts for nearly every other class of work in connection with agriculture.

Hon. P. Collier: There is an irrigation expert and an engineer is attached to the Water Supply Department.

Mr. PICKERING: There is no special expert to deal with drainage. I should like to see it made an important position. There are thousands of acres of good country that could be made available for dairying purposes if this business was properly gone into.

Hon. P. Collier: That is purely an engineering proposition.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not mind if the Government appoint an engineer for drainage, so long as some officer is definitely made responsible for the drainage of the South-West. In the neighbourhood of Busselton there is the Vasse River, which passes through that town. For some 10 miles back

this river has a break in it for five or six miles.

Hon. P. Collier: It is all a series of breaks or pools.

Mr. PICKERING: It is continuous up to a certain spot, and then there is a stretch of water which passes through very valuable dairying country. The river makes again at a place called Delaney's Flat. Between these two points there is a stretch of country which would make excellent dairying country, and comprises an area of about 5,000 acres. If a drain were cut between the two points I have referred to, this country would be effectively drained by a process of scouring. A report has been made on the country by one of our surveyors. He is not only a good surveyor but a good classifier of land, and he estimates that if this drain were cut it would make available the area and quality of land of which I have spoken. There is another spot which also needs attention in the South-West, and that is along the Scott River. There are three or four fords in the river, which could easily be removed by means of a few tons of explosives. The fords for the most part consist of soft clay rocks with a certain amount of iron oxide formation. If the fords were removed it would leave a clear passage for the river, which would thus be drained more quickly than at present. By this system of draining the country a large territory along the coastal fringe would be made available for dairy purposes. Mr. J. J. East recently went through this district, being authorised to make an examination of the Blackwood River by the Fisheries Department. While there he was struck by the large tract of country which would be made available for settlement if these fords along the Scott River were removed. Mr. East is a man of considerable experience, and I should be glad if the Government would examine the file which is in the Fisheries Department and ascertain the nature of his report. Mr. East visited the country between May and June and rode for a distance of about 8 miles through water. It will thus be seen what the country is like at that time of the year. If this country could be made available in the way I have suggested, the revenue from the line, which must ultimately be built between Big Brook and Flinders Bay, will very largely benefit. The timber that comes from the State mills at Big Brook has to be hauled over the ranges through Bridgetown and through Mullalyup to Donnybrook, I think having to rise something like 2,000 feet in the process of haulage. A considerable amount of revenue is thus lost to the State, and there is heavy wear and tear on the working of the plant. The natural trend of this trade should be to Flinders Bay, where there is an excellent port. The country is on the down grade all the way from the mill, and a line there would open up a lot of country which lies along the Scott River. That railway would also touch the coalfield at Fly Creek, where

I am informed the quality of the coal is equal to that at Collie. I wish to say a few words on the question of lime. The works at Lake Preston are almost complete and ready to start operations. I believe that the company concerned is in treaty with the Government with the object of having the freight on lime reduced. I am informed by the company that if the Government are prepared to reduce the freight on lime, they in turn are prepared to reduce the price of the lime, which would thus make it very cheap for the farmer. One of the main requirements in connection with farming is lime.

Hon. P. Collier: Are they prepared to sell lime at less than parity?

Mr. PICKERING: They are prepared to sell it at less than the amount which they quoted. I think it was 10s. a ton. I believe they are prepared to reduce the price of the lime according to the reduction that is made in the freight. This will probably lead to the farmers getting lime at something like 7s. 6d. a ton.

Hon. P. Collier: The same argument applies to fertiliser.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes.

Mr. Nairn: Do they sell at siding?

Mr. PICKERING: I think it is sold at Waroona.

Mr. Nairn: It looks like a sprat to catch a mackerel.

Mr. PICKERING: It would be of advantage to the farmers to get their lime cheaply. This company will have the lime available.

Mr. Foley: Is it proposed to reduce the price of lime according to the reduction that is made on the freight?

Mr. PICKERING: Yes.

Mr. Nairn: A farthing a ton!

Hon. P. Collier: What has it to do with them what freight the Government charge?

Mr. PICKERING: I presume the argument of the company is that lime is needed for the country, that they have plenty of it, and that they would get rid of it to the farmers at a lower price. The lower the price, the better it will be for the farmer, and the greater will be the turnover for the company. I suppose these are the arguments which the company would put up.

The Minister for Works: There is nothing to thank them for in that.

Mr. PICKERING: What I am concerned about is getting the lime as cheaply as possible for the farmer.

Hon. T. Walker: Is this bird lime?

Mr. PICKERING: Some bird lime is very good on a farm. The manure from a poultry yard is excellent.

Mr. Nairn: Do you think the Government should make a further loss on their railways through the farmers?

Mr. PICKERING: I desire to get lime as cheaply as possible for the farmers. I have to cart lime 14 miles to my farm. At least 5cwt. per acre is needed and it should be a ton. Hon. members can well understand

what price I have to pay by the time I have got the lime on the farm. I am anxious that it should be made available at the lowest possible cost.

The Minister for Works: If you had bird lime it would fly there.

Mr. PICKERING: I am sorry the Minister does not appreciate the urgency of this matter to the farmers. I am not treating this as a matter of bird lime but of agricultural lime, which is very necessary in Western Australia. The question of dingoes is one which is causing me anxiety, because I am being worried by various boards in my electorate.

The Minister for Works: They got £9,000 last year.

Mr. PICKERING: There are road boards in my electorate that are formed into vermin boards. Amongst these is one board that claims to be free from dingoes. I have had to lead a deputation to the Minister for Agriculture asking that this board should be cut out of the vermin area, and then I have had to lead a deputation from another board, which has dingoes within its precincts, asking him to see that this is retained as a vermin area. It is a very difficult position for me to take up. It is recognised that any board that is free from dingoes is fortunate, and those boards like the Sussex, Nelson and others that are cursed with the dingo are unfortunate. I know that there are boards from Capel to Dardanup and Harvey and even Collie which claim to be free from the dingo. I suggest that the Minister should include all those boards in the one area and there can then be no complaint from any individual board. By doing that the amount of the rate will be decreased, and those boards which are free from the dingo will derive a benefit from the boards which are keeping back the dingo, and their amount of rate will be proportionately lower. I suggest to the Minister that he should consider the advisability of bringing all these boards into the vermin area.

The Minister for Works: Why not the Perth Roads Board as well?

Mr. PICKERING: I would not object even to the Perth Roads Board being included. Another matter I would like to deal with is the Busselton butter factory. I am glad to be able to inform hon. members that this factory is going ahead by leaps and bounds, so much so that the Government have of necessity been compelled to increase the accommodation there. What I am jealous of, however, is the reputation of that factory, and I want every care exercised by the department in the direction of seeing that the management is up to date in every respect. There is no reason why the butter turned out by that factory should not be equal to the best in Australia, and the Government should see to it that the management is second to none. The industry is an important one, and the factory at Busselton has done good work for the State. It has been the

forerunner of other butter factories in Western Australia, and the success demonstrated at that factory was mainly responsible for the extension of the industry. It is necessary, therefore, that every care should be taken to see that nothing but the best butter is turned out. At one period we had a manager named Bray there and the work he did was excellent indeed, but after he left troubles arose in connection with the factory. I trust, however, that in the future every care will be taken to see that difficulties do not arise. I was glad to hear from the Minister that the question of dairy and herd testing was receiving the attention of the department and that the utmost was being done to encourage it. I am convinced from the results which have followed scientific herd testing that nothing but good can result from the practice. I understand that the department have set aside a certain sum of money for this purpose. The South-West conference which was held recently, discussed the question of how that money should be expended, and it was suggested that it should be given to the different societies to encourage herd testing. I hope, however, that if the Government take that stand they will not depart from their existing practice of conducting herd testings, because if that is carried out by a Government department the results will stand higher than those carried on outside. I am convinced that the standard of our dairy cattle will be considerably improved by testing and the products of farming will be proportionately increased. There is only another subject to which I desire to allude, and that is wire netting. Seeing that we are so troubled in the South-West by dingoes, I trust the Department of Agriculture will do all they can to assist the farmers in the direction of providing wire netting. Unfortunately the Federal Government have imposed a higher duty on this commodity and the consequence is that the price of netting to-day is higher than it ever was, and the added impost is likely to increase the price by another £3 or £4 per mile. We all recognise that to carry out sheep farming successfully in the South-West and in the wheat areas, it is essential that we should be able to protect our sheep. From my own experience I know that the practice of yarding sheep at night time is unprofitable not only because of the extra labour involved, but also because in the lambing season it is not possible to expect the same average of lambs if the sheep are moved about. Every step possible, therefore, should be taken by the Minister for Agriculture to try to bring about the removal of the duty on wire netting, and if possible to make arrangements whereby wire netting may be supplied to farmers on extended terms. It is of vital necessity in the South-West and in the wheat areas.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [5.25]: The term 'agriculture' is an all-embracing one, and I would not have been tempted to say anything on the subject at the present

time but for certain remarks which were made by the member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) and by that great agricultural expert the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert). I may claim to be a practical agriculturist, having engaged in agriculture in this country from the sickle to the harvester and from the scythe to the reaper and binder. We hear too much in this House about experts. Experts are very good in their way, but a man is not going to make himself prosperous by engaging experts or by leaning too much upon them. The prosperity of a man on a farm or anyone who is engaged in the agricultural industry depends on himself, and work is the basis of success. Some of the most successful farmers in this country are those who have had little or no assistance from experts. Agriculture is one of the most important industries in the State. It is most important because it provides everything that man requires, not only for food, but also for clothing. At the same time, in discussing the Agricultural Estimates I do not believe for one moment that any department of the State is in itself going to make people successful. It must depend on the experts employed and the useful assistance they give to farmers. At the same time, as I have already said, that assistance is not everything.

Mr. Angelo: The experts are necessary for the new settlers.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: I would like the new settler not to lean too much upon experts but to try to become his own expert, and by so doing he is likely to be much more successful. The best work that the Agricultural Department is doing to assist farmers is in the way of making experiments with different kinds of wheat. The farmer himself is not able to make these experiments but by concentrating efforts in certain localities, the State farms, by growing different sorts of wheat, are able to supply farmers with a particular seed which is required. At the same time, a farmer should find out for himself which is the best seed to grow in his particular locality. The greatest problem which we have in regard to agriculture, however, is that of rain, and no Agricultural Department is going to settle that. Given a fair distribution of rain, farming on proper lines is bound to be successful. We have in this country land capable of producing everything that man requires. During the past 30 years we have been discussing the question of supplying the State with butter and we have not succeeded in doing it yet. I hope, however, the time is not far distant when we shall be able to do so, but I do not see how we can succeed until we get a bigger population. When we have the people in this country—two or three millions instead of 300,000, then we shall be able to supply butter for all. I am pleased to learn from the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) that the Busselton butter factory has become a great success. I am not given to advertising, but I think I may take a little credit in connection with that institution, for when I assumed office, it was dead.

Assistance was given it, and its usefulness has increased by leaps and bounds, and now its position is thoroughly satisfactory. I am also pleased to know that the Bunbury butter factory has proved a success. That too I was able to assist in its re-establishment. It is owned by a private company but that company received Government assistance and the factory is now turning out something like five tons of butter a week. That is very satisfactory, because it is only a few years ago that they had to start afresh and re-establish their factory. Referring to the remarks of the member for Guildford (Mr. Davies), I would like the Committee to know that right at the gateway of Perth, we have one of the biggest settlements going on that we have in Western Australia. At the present time, the country in the Upper Swan is being covered with holdings, and land is being cleared and planted with the vine. I do not think that in any part of Western Australia there is so much successful settlement going on. There are some hundreds of new settlers in country which only a year or two ago was bush land. This is now being covered with vineyards, and there is every prospect of these people being highly successful. I am pleased to think that I was able to place the first men in this district after their return from the war, in order that they might engage in currant and raisin growing. They have encouraged others, and we have there country that has been opened up and tried, country where we know the vine will flourish as well as in any other part of the world. I firmly believe that these people will be eminently successful. The Midland Railway Company are prepared to assist these people by increasing the facilities for getting their produce to market, and I think they are to be commended in that respect, because the land is not their own and, moreover, they get very little for the freight on goods, seeing that they only carry their produce to Midland Junction. At the present time I think agriculture is in such a position that it is bound to continue to prosper as it has during the past few years; but everything depends on the seasons. Even now, although we have heard a great deal regarding the wheat which is to be produced in the State this year, the results are problematical. The farmer is always full of hope. Personally, I hope that we will yet have sufficient rain to assure a bountiful harvest throughout the State. I refer to the question of experts, because the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert), who is one of the agricultural experts here, led me to make a few remarks on this subject. I do not believe that we are going to get prosperity through experts alone. I want someone to take up the question of obtaining a cross between stinkwort and some edible fodder. If we can get that—I do not know whether the member for Coolgardie—

Mr. Lambert: We will never get it through any "pussyfoot" in agriculture.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: If we can get some such result, we will have achieved something of great importance, securing, as we

shall, a fodder that will last right through the summer. This in itself would be of great benefit to the State. I would like the member for Coolgardie to exercise his mind in that direction. I know he takes a great interest in agriculture, as I do in mining, and we might reciprocate in that way. If he did something in the direction I have indicated, he would achieve something of great importance for the benefit of the stock raisers of the country.

Mr. Lambert: When you grasp the rudiments of agriculture, I will talk to you about the more advanced stages.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: If the hon. member would pay me a visit, I would be glad to show him some of the rudiments of agriculture.

Mr. Lambert: I do not reflect on the hon. member personally. I was speaking more about the Party which he recently married.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: I will show the hon. member some of the rudiments, from wool to wheat, and from peas to potatoes. I know the hon. member's mind is of such a nature that he quickly grasps the point at issue.

Mr. Green: You will find him an expensive guest.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: To be serious, there is a large amount on the Estimates for the assistance of agriculture. I feel sure all those officers who are engaged in the work of the Agricultural Department are zealous and desirous of doing their best for the State. I trust that this large amount of money will be spent to the advantage of agriculturists under the able control of those now in charge of the department. I trust that the Agricultural Department will be able to give of its best for the assistance of agriculture generally throughout the State.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.37]: During the last half hour I have had a glance through the annual report of the Agricultural Department. I feel inclined to again voice a protest I have already made this afternoon at not receiving this report earlier in the session. I notice even in the course of a brief glance through the report that it contains much valuable information which would be of assistance to members and enable them to get an idea of the work carried out by the department during the year, thus assisting them in the discussion of the Estimates for the ensuing financial year. I was surprised to hear so experienced an agriculturist as the hon. member for Moore (Sir Henry Lefroy) discounting the value of the experts so far as this department is concerned. If there be anything at all in the hon. member's contention I do not know.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: I do not want to cut down the vote.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is quite clear, however, that this opinion is not shared by others, for in looking down the Estimates I notice that there is provision for a greater number of experts in this department than in all the other departments put together.

There is provision for something like 22 all told. Whatever may be the value of the services of these gentlemen to the industries of this State, the Under Secretary for Agriculture at least does not entertain the same view as the hon. member for Moore. In fact, the Under Secretary emphasises the point that he desires to make provision for a great number, or at least for experts of a greater capacity in the future than have been available up to the present. In the annual report which we have just received the Under Secretary has the following to say—

I have pleasure in placing on record that Mr. D. A. Herbert, Economic Botanist and Pathologist, has been successful in obtaining from his University in Melbourne the advanced degree of Master of Science. A question of great importance to the future progress and increased utility of this department is the adoption of a policy for recruiting the expert staff. In this connection the value of local experience is of particular importance in a State presenting such marked features of diversity and magnitude as Western Australia. At present, in most of the principal branches, there would be a marked gap, and considerable dislocation, should the department for any reason suddenly lose the services of any one of the experts at the head of them. For greater security, and increased efficiency in this direction, it is considered that a policy should be laid down, and a system outlined, for recruiting the staff in such a way that there shall be, in the several branches, young men who have received the requisite theoretical and scientific education, and who are in process of acquiring the necessary practical experience, and of applying the teachings of science to the agricultural problems of this State. These officers would serve a useful purpose as assistants, and would, in addition, so far as they may develop the necessary qualities, be available for stepping into the more responsible positions as vacancies may arise.

I am not going to judge between the gentleman who is Under Secretary of this department and the experience of the hon. member for Moore.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: I say that they must not lean too much on the experts.

Hon. T. Walker: Do you mean they should fatten on them?

Hon. P. COLLIER: If, after all, a Government department has properly trained men who are supposed to be experienced scientific men too, and sends them round the country lecturing and instructing the farmers generally, surely you must expect farmers, to a very great extent, to lean very considerably upon the advice tendered by these experts. If farmers are not to lean too much—and I do not know how you are going to strike the happy mean—then the services of these men are not required, or at least not so many of them are necessary. I do not know how far science has developed regarding agriculture.

Certainly it can be said that in all phases of life, it is recognised, and has been recognised more particularly in recent years, by the big financial interests and by private enterprise, that they are not going to make that advancement which they desire unless they make full use of scientific knowledge.

Mr. Pickering: Agriculture is no exception to that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I should say not. For too long an idea existed that any troglodyte could make a success on the land, which did not require any intelligence but that a strong arm and a thick skull were sufficient to enable a man to get on.

Mr. Harrison: A strong arm is a good acquisition.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But I do not know that a man who is thick in the head would stand very well to-day. I read an article a day or two ago which pointed out how many things a farmer required to be. He had to be a book-keeper, an accountant, a plumber, a wheelwright, and quite a number of other things. However, I will leave the question of the experts to the Under Secretary, and I believe he will have his way. I was surprised however, that the hon. member for Moore did not make more, seeing that he has joined the party which to-day specifically represents the agriculturists, and complain more at the fact that the present Government, which he supports, has altogether abandoned the policy of agricultural development which he outlined two or three years ago. Members will recollect that in his policy speech at Moora in 1917 the hon. member came out with a policy of ready-made farms for the South-West. Particularly for the purpose of settling our returned soldiers, areas were to be surveyed and cut up, and portions of the areas cleared, and homes to be erected, and everything put in such order that practically these settlers would be self-sustaining from the very commencement. During that intervening period of three years nothing at all, so far as I am aware, has been done in the South-West in pursuance of that policy.

Mr. Pickering: There has been a bit of classifying and surveying.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That has been the position in spite of Ministers travelling through the country and dilating at public functions on figures taken from the "Statistical Abstract" as to the quantity and value of imports of dairy produce, which was henceforth to be grown in the South-West. As long as I have been a member of this Chamber, Ministers and others have come forward with policies for the development of the South-West. It was in the South-West that we were to retain that huge sum of money, £300,000 or £900,000 sent each year to the Eastern States for dairy produce. But even a brief glance at the report of the Agricultural Department indicates that there has not been of recent years any development in the South-West.

The Minister for Works: That is not correct.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know there was a sum of £50,000 spent by the Labour Government on an irrigation scheme in that portion of the South-West which the Minister for Works represents. The figures which the report—supplies, however, do not indicate any development: nor does the amount provided for expenditure this year show that the Government are pushing forward the development of the South-West. I had not the privilege of hearing the Honorary Minister introduce this vote, and therefore I do not know whether he gave the Committee any comparative figures regarding the production of butter, bacon, and those other essential commodities which come under the heading of dairy produce, during the last year as compared with the years gone by. Personally, I do not believe there has been any substantial increase. The Government's policy as to pig raising and bacon factories ought to be showing some results by this time. That policy was inaugurated three or four years ago, but the figures given in the Agricultural Department's report do not indicate much headway. Six years ago, in 1914, there were in this State 59,816 pigs; but in 1919 that number had fallen to 58,160, or about 1,700 fewer. One would not expect to find a decrease in the number of pigs in the State.

Mr. Harrison: That decrease accounts for the number converted into bacon.

Hon. P. COLLIER: According to the hon. member's idea of developing an industry, it is only a matter of time when this particular industry will become entirely extinct.

Mr. Harrison: If the pig raisers do not breed up.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Surely there must be provision for supply of pigs in connection with the policy of establishing bacon factories. Surely those engaged in pig raising make provision to keep up the number of their pigs. If that is not being done, the State as a whole is not going to derive any benefit from the establishment of bacon factories, because next year, or the year after, there will be an insufficient supply of pigs for the factories to handle. It seems to me strange that after three or four years of what I may term active policy in this direction, there were fewer pigs in the State last year than there were in 1914. The same remark applies to cattle, which do not show a great increase. Now let us turn to the figures of area under cultivation, having regard to the whole policy of agricultural development which we have heard boosted day after day around the country at every opportunity. The area under cereals is considerably smaller for 1919 than for 1915. In fact, the 1919 figures exceed only very slightly those for 1914. In 1915, there were, in round figures, 1,472,000 acres under cereals. For last year the area was 1,243,000 acres, or about 230,000 acres less. Certainly,

there was an increase as regards hay; but even that increase does not account for the drop in cereals. Turning to vineyards and orchards, I find all along the line that the figures in last year's report of the Agricultural Department do not show the increases that one might expect. With reference to the South-West again, I find that while under the heading of administrative and technical development of the South-West a sum of £6,360 was expended in 1915-16, the amount expended in 1919-20 was £3,476, or roughly only one-half. In my opinion the policy enunciated by the member for Moore when Premier was a good one. If we are ever going to overtake the import of dairy produce into this State, the supply must come largely from the South-West. In view of the land there being so heavily timbered that it is very expensive to prepare for cultivation, it is evident that the work of agricultural development in the South-West will not be undertaken by the individual settler. That, indeed, is proved by the experience of many years. We cannot expect men to undertake the clearing of country which will run into £20 or £30 per acre, or even more, with the certainty of having to wait years for a return. Naturally, settlers are concentrating their attention upon what are called the wheat areas, where land is more easily cleared and more readily prepared for cultivation and gives a return more speedily. Intending settlers who have failed to obtain land in the wheat areas have turned their backs upon the South-West altogether. Therefore a policy such as that outlined by the member for Moore is essential for the development of the South-West. Failing that, we shall for years to come be sending out of the State huge sums of money for dairy produce. I may point out that the South-West was practically the first portion of this State to be settled. I think Captain Bussel landed at what is now Busselton about the year 1831; and other portions of the South-West have been settled ever since the foundation of the colony of Western Australia. Notwithstanding that fact, however, comparatively very little progress has taken place in the South-West.

Mr. Pickering: Because the people stick to the old policy.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The old settlers in the South-West have homesteads sufficient for their requirements; but the fact remains that during the past ten or twelve years, in which large numbers of agricultural settlers from the Eastern States and elsewhere have come to Western Australia, the South-West has not attracted any large number of new settlers.

Mr. Pickering: It is too hard and too expensive.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no use in talking about building additional railways in order to assist the agricultural development of the South-West. There is, for instance, the proposed railway from Manjinnup to Denmark, which would cost a huge sum of money.

To build such a line and to let the land in the South-West lie idle until the individual settler comes along to develop it himself, would be folly. Indeed, to my mind it would be criminal waste of money. We have now huge areas of idle land adjacent to the railways already built in the South-West. It is not necessary that we should build additional railway mileage in order to provide opportunities of agricultural development there.

Hon. T. Walker: There is the enormous area of agricultural land in the Esperance district, which has cost practically nothing to develop.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so. What strikes one, when travelling through the South-West, is to see a few acres of cleared patch on the hillside with several hundred acres adjacent in the virgin state. While that condition of things obtains there is no need to build further railways in the South-West. Unless the Government pursue a policy of preparing farms there we shall see very little progress, no matter how much we may talk. Government funds must be expended there. I understand that approximately 4,000 returned soldiers have been settled on the land in this State, and I very much regret that a greater proportion of them have not been settled in the South-West, where they would have been able to supply that which we need so much, that which we are now importing from the Eastern States. Most of these returned soldiers have been added to the number of our wheat growers, who no doubt are doing well, and whose returns this year will be very considerable. But it is necessary that we should in the near future develop the South-West at all events sufficiently to enable that area to supply the State's requirements in the way of dairy produce. Very few returned soldiers have gone to the South-West, and very few intending settlers are looking towards it; and that will continue to be the position of affairs until a policy somewhat in the nature of that outlined three years ago by the member for Moore is adopted.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [5.59]: Having spoken during the general discussion of the Estimates on the necessity for doing something in the way of agricultural development, much on the lines sketched out by the leader of the Opposition, I only wish to refer now to one point, and that is what the experts of this State have done to assist agriculture. Personally I am inclined to think that the money spent in the maintenance of our army of experts could be better employed. By that I am not against experts being employed to instruct our farmers as to the best way of getting the maximum wealth out of the land. Experts do a great deal of good. But I have always wondered what the experts in this State have done in respect of breeding wheat that would be suitable to our dry areas.

The Premier: They have done that.

Mr. FOLEY: They have done very little of it during recent years. If they could breed a wheat that would not require to be in the ground as long as our existing wheats, it would be of very great value to the State. Most of the energies of our many experts are expended in the South-West. But experience teaches us that we must look to some other portion of the State to pull Western Australia out of her difficulties. There are other areas where expert knowledge could be put to great advantage. Recently alunite was discovered on the gold-fields. Alunite by treatment produces one of the best fertilisers to be found. A number of men got out some of the ore, treated it and brought it down to Perth for judgment. They were willing to sell the resultant fertiliser to the farmer at a lower cost than that of the ordinary fertiliser. They submitted their product to Mr. Simpson, an expert in the employ of the Mines Department, one of the best chemists this or any other State possesses. Mr. Simpson reported favourably on the fertiliser, which he said was excellent in quality and would be most beneficial to the farmer. Therefore those men went on with the business of producing this fertiliser. They sold some of it to the farmers. Those who used it were well satisfied with the results. Then along came another expert, also of the Mines Department, and declared that the fertiliser was no good. This expert was Mr. Mann. Mr. Simpson had said the fertiliser was good, the farmers had proved that it was good, but Mr. Mann came along and said it was bad. In consequence, the farmers are still languishing for a cheap fertiliser. I think the Minister could well consider doing away with the duplication of these experts. The production of the alunite fertiliser was good, not only for the farmers but also for the mining industry, for it enabled the miners who for years had worked in deep mines to seek a change by finding work in shallow mines. I have never seen in any of the reports submitted by our experts reference to that wonderful belt of country lying 20 miles almost direct north of Perth, the country around Yanchep. It is one of the most fertile tracts I have ever seen. Moreover, it has abundance of the best water imaginable, a fact to which the attention of those who are taking an active interest in the manufacture of woollens in this State should be directed.

Hon. T. Walker: Who owns that land? How can one get it?

Mr. FOLEY: It is unoccupied Crown land. Out in that Yanchep area will be found also phosphates in abundance. A number of small settlers there are growing wonderfully good vegetables and fruit, using nothing but the local phosphates. In view of this, it does seem strange that none of our agricultural experts should have directed attention to that district. At present we are paying an exorbitant price for butter. Nine years ago we were told that

the South-West, with its dairying industry, would come to the salvation of the State. After nine years of good seasons down there, we are paying more for butter than ever in our past history. Rather than send settlers down the South-West, the Government would be well advised in establishing them in an area like Yanchep, where they would have a good fighting chance. A settler going into the South-West might work hard for 20 years without being able to clear sufficient land for the making of a decent living. Not in the South-West alone but in Gippsland also have I seen men and women wasting their lives, only for someone else to come along and reap the benefit.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [6.12]: Something has been said about the employment of so many experts. It is quite possible that we are employing too many. I do not see the benefit accruing from some of the experts that we have; I do not think we get full results from them. But, to a live policy of agricultural development, experts are necessary. Those nations which have made the greatest advancement in agriculture are those which have specially sought out their scientific men, men of wide experience and training in agriculture. It is the boast of the Canadian system that they take knowledge to the remotest little farm away in the west, or away up north, and that in every tract of country, wherever there is the slightest variation of soil, a demonstration is held to show what can be done with that soil. Here, it seems to me, we have more or less a superficial way of instructing the farmers. We start experimental farms and abandon them. I believe that at the present time the Narrogin State Farm is more or less under sentence of death. At all events there are questions as to how it should be managed, and whether it should be merely a school or whether it should be a farm.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. T. WALKER: Before tea I was speaking of a method of assisting settlers in Canada. I know that Canada is an immense country with great climatic differences and with vast areas of varying land to treat, but the Dominion Government, assisted by provincial Governments, meet nearly all the requirements of the farmers in that enormous area. The consequence is that that country is going ahead by leaps and bounds. Settlement proceeds on the principle of reaching out as far as possible, and sending to the West and the North the newcomer. The policy is not simply to centre everything around the few big towns and to keep the population congested in the cities, but to develop the whole country and do so simultaneously. It is a policy I should like to see pursued here. I should like to see some of our experts, as they are called, attend specially to some particular feature of agriculture or of mixed

farming. As it is, our experts, being but few, have too much to attend to; they have all kinds of requirements to meet.

Mr. Underwood: They have so much to learn.

Hon. T. WALKER: That may be true also. Most of our experts come from other parts of the world. If there is one State more than another, I think, that has a variety of conditions all requiring to be studied, it is Western Australia. Even in this State there is every possible type of soil from the poor and unfertile sand to the most fertile of country—

Mr. Underwood: And fertile sand, too.

Hon. T. WALKER: From the zero of fertility right up to the highest point of fertility that it is possible for soil to reach. Sometimes we find these extremes within a distance of a few miles, soil which will almost grow anything, and soil which will scarcely produce anything.

Mr. Underwood: If you do not look out you will find experts within a distance of a few feet of each other.

Hon. T. WALKER: We do not want experts within that distance of each other. We want to have judgment in the service to which the experts are to be put. The Wheat Belt is different from the South-West. We require a different method of treatment there and a different method of development. The conditions vary again as we go to the North and the North-West. We want those who are qualified for these particular zones to advise even upon all the varying conditions that may be found in them. I am particularly impressed with the suggestion that there should be experimental plots run by the farmers themselves, under the superintendence of a central board, with the particular inspectors who have these portions allotted to them for their supervision.

Mr. Underwood: It is a good job for the expert and supervisor.

Hon. T. WALKER: I do not know that I am holding a conversation with the hon. member. Sometimes his interjections are good, but these conversational attempts to interrupt the speaker shows that lack of courtesy of which the hon. member has so often been accused. It is not that we require an enormous number of experts, as suggested by the interruptions of some hon. members.

Hon. P. Collier: There are only 22 there.

Hon. T. WALKER: One inspector in a district ought to be able to advise upon all these special features. It is not necessary to have an expert for poultry, another for wheat, another for vegetables, and another for fruit, all going into the same district. One man should have sufficient general qualifications, under the superintendence of the head of the Agricultural Department, to supervise and instruct in all these particulars. It is not that we lack experts here, but we lack the knowledge of how to use them and to put them to the best advantage.

Mr. Foley: Was it not the experts that beat the Esperance railway?

Hon. T. WALKER: It was not an agricultural expert.

Mr. Foley: It was.

Mr. Underwood: It was the expert politician.

Hon. T. WALKER: No, nor even that.

Mr. Foley: The agricultural chemist.

Hon. T. WALKER: It was the chemist. I question whether I should call him in that respect an agricultural chemist.

Mr. Foley: If you will read this report, you will see that he is the agricultural chemist.

Hon. T. WALKER: Never mind what that report says. I have grave doubts as to his judgment in respect to the lands of the State. He certainly put up a report which has been demonstrated to be false. It is that difference I want to make clear between the office theorist and the practical expert. In order that they may get practical experts in Canada they not only have experimental farms in the provinces, but they have in every district experimental plots, and it is upon the actual results achieved there that the instructions are given to the farmers. We find a man going through a lot of dry chemical formulæ, and giving them forth as the results of tests on the lands at Esperance, although these results have been demonstrated again and again to be absolutely false. Similar results have been obtained in regard to the analyses of other lands. Even the report of this expert was not sufficient to stop the construction of the railway. The trouble was that we had political experts, as the hon. member puts it, at work, men who were determined to take advantage of the position to obtain revenge over the Labour Administration for their having obtained authority to build the line. It was made an electioneering cry, apparently with the object of making it appear that the Labour party had engineered that line purely for political and corrupt purposes. That was the intention sought to be conveyed from the political platform of the party in question.

Mr. Foley: Not in this Chamber.

Hon. T. WALKER: No. It was at election time. The somewhat unwise, injudicious, and incorrect utterances on the part of Mr. Mann were taken as the basis to stop the construction of the line, and to do an immense injury to that part of the State.

Mr. Foley: This is the agricultural chemist the State has got.

Hon. T. WALKER: I have no faith in him as such.

Mr. Smith: Subsequently proved to be incorrect.

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes. We have had other agricultural chemists I would more implicitly trust, particularly Professor Paterson of the University. He is a man I have some faith in. There is more than mere formal chemistry required to judge of the qualities of soil. One needs to be something of a bac-

teriologist as well, and to have some knowledge of the vital elements of the soil. I am not speaking merely from fancy when I speak of the vital elements of the soil. That great French chemist Monsieur Berthelot speaks in words almost identical with those that I have used. This is from "New Conceptions in Science"—

A line of delicate experiments revealed to M. Berthelot that the fixation of nitrogen is incontestably due to the presence of microbes. His work he summed up in an expressive phrase. "The soil," he said, "is in some sense living." This idea, taken up by some German experimenters, has led to the establishment of microbe cultures, for the breeding and sale of the especial family of germs which perform this useful work. But M. Berthelot, not content, has gone further and shown that, under the influence of a silent discharge of electricity, many organic compounds may absorb the nitrogen of the air. So a series of lightning-rods leading to large metal plates buried in the ground markedly increase the yield of a field. The influence of the nitrates used directly as fertilisers is so evidently beneficial that with the development of the guano beds of Chili a great industry has grown up. Still, the nitrates are dear, the beds not extensive. Taking up an old experiment of Cavendish, M. Berthelot has shown that under the action of a high-tension current of electricity the nitrogen and oxygen of the air may be made to combine in large quantities. Much, indeed, of his chief work has been done with this puissant aid. He was the first to show the rôle which electricity may play in chemical synthesis. The formation of acetylene from its elements was realised by means of the electric arc, a method which has since, in his own hands and those of M. Moissan and others, yielded such astonishing results.

I need not go further. The work I am quoting from is "New Conceptions in Science" by Carl Snyder, an American, and the chapter on synthetic chemistry shows the services this great scientist has rendered to his compatriots in France for the development of agriculture. It is that, that we require here. We require some head department like our University to take up that part of the work, experimental work. The work of assisting the farmer should be done in the districts and, so to speak, the man who is in charge of a particular district should not leave it. He ought to be there on the spot to supervise the work in that portion of the country and aid it with every bulletin and every message of assistance from headquarters from a scientific standpoint. That is the course that is being pursued in Canada and in America, and certainly it is being pursued in France, and before the war, in Germany. I see no reason why we should not do it here instead of having inspectors travelling the

country on hurried visits and coming back to report at their offices and then going back again. As a matter of fact, the Agricultural Department is practically run by the Under Secretary, who himself is not an expert. He has officers under his command, and he encourages or discourages them as his mood may take him. That, to my mind, is not a wise policy to follow. We require men to almost live with the farmers in the beginning stages of their work, and to assist them by actual demonstrations in the neighbourhood. In the meantime I commend the policy adopted in Canada of spreading the people out by sending them into the far back. Naturally, railways must overtake them in due course, but if we keep them in close proximity to the city and to the coast, anywhere near to us, we cannot expect the country to be developed. How can we encourage population in that way? I wonder when I see the lethargy—I cannot call it anything else—in pursuing our policy of land settlement, what we are going to do with those hundreds and thousands of soldier settlers we are inviting from the old country. As has been pointed out more than once up to the present, all we have been doing in connection with the settlement of our own returned soldiers is to buy out some farmer who has done his clearing, and who has perhaps prepared his farm—we buy him out and put a new man in, perhaps a man who knows nothing about it, and who may make a failure of it. Of course, such a man has a better chance with a farm in process of development, but those who have got used to the country, its climate and its soil, and who have become used to the methods of cultivation, are likely to make a greater success of such country. What are we going to do in the way of finding farms when we are inundated by a flood of immigrants from the old country? Where are we going to put those people? Men must strike out in new regions, in new fields, and it is this that takes me back to the stoppage of the construction of the Esperance line on the recommendation of the State agricultural chemist. The work was stopped because that officer said the land contained salt. It has been demonstrated now that that is not so. I maintain that that portion of the country requires less cost for its development than any other part of Western Australia. There is also a larger area of uniform country there than in any other part of the State. Of course I do not allude to the varieties of soil that one may find elsewhere, or to the extent of territory that exists in the North-West. The land at Esperance requires another form of treatment and it should be attended to without delay. It is ideal wheat country, and it is a spot where we should apply scientific knowledge to its development. Since I had occasion to speak last in the Chamber on this subject, a number of men from the mallee country of Victoria and from the mallee country of South Australia have been over the district with the view of investigating the character

of the soil and the possibilities of settlement. I have received visits from these people. The Premier, too, has some knowledge of Mr. Kent's investigation. That gentleman has assured the Premier and he has assured the public through the Press, that the mallee lands in the Esperance district are equal to, and in some respects, superior to the Mallee lands in Victoria and South Australia. Others have been there inspecting the country since, and I received a letter only by the last mail from one who is travelling through there, and who has come from the Victorian mallee country, his intention being to investigate and report. What he says is just as encouraging as the representations which have been made by others. With very little money indeed, that land can be cleared. There is room there for thousands of families. Hon. members have not had the pleasure of visiting that part of the world as they have the North-West, and the wheat belt, and other portions of the country at the expense of the State, but it would be an eye opener, I feel sure, if they could take a trip to that district. It is to me a marvel that that enormous area is absolutely neglected. It might as well be at Port Darwin or at the Gulf of Carpentaria for the interest that is taken in it by the general public in this part of the State.

Mr. Teesdale: Why do they keep an official in his position after doing a trick like that?

Hon. T. WALKER: I do not know. It has been a mystery to me. Let me tell the hon. member that within the last year or two many men have inquired about the Esperance district land, men who have been anxious to take it up. They have gone to the Agricultural Bank and to those Government departments that are supposed to assist settlers in making a choice, but they have been discouraged in every instance. They have been told that they will not get one pennyworth of assistance if they go to that part of the country, but that if they will take up land somewhere else in the near neighbourhood of Perth, for instance, they will be assisted to the utmost, and so far as the law will permit. This has actually been told to them, and they have been discouraged in every way from going to the Esperance country. Settlers living on the spot who have asked for a little assistance have been told that they were fools to stay there and that they could get no help whilst they remained there. They were told that if they wanted assistance, it would be better for them to give up their blocks there, and come nearer to Perth. Perhaps those were not the words used, but that was the meaning that was conveyed to them. That has been done through officialdom. I am pleased to know now from the Premier that he is going to alter that, and I believe we can rely upon him when he makes such a promise. That part of the State will then be treated just as he treats every other part, and the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural

Bank will go to the assistance of the settlers and help new beginners at Esperance as they have helped beginners elsewhere. Only last season, a man at Esperance applied for super, and failed to get it. It only shows how difficult farming is in that part of the world, when a man applies in time to get his super in, and it does not reach him until the crop is ready to come off. They are obliged to grow crops without super down there, and the instance I have quoted is not isolated. The case of Mr. Townsend can be referred to. I have had repeatedly to remind the department of the delays that were going on and of the fact that they were making farming down there impossible. Then they turn round and say, "Look at the results!" What results can we expect when so little help is given to the settlers? I am pleased to recognise that something is likely to be done and also that we have a promise from the Minister for Works that the railway is to be proceeded with. It is satisfactory to know that the Esperance settlers are to be accorded the same facilities as the settlers in other parts of the State. If that happens, what will it mean? We shall have an agricultural State down there, or at least something like one. There is an area there almost equal in extent of the State. The country is uniform, though there is not the variety we find in the wheat belt, where we may come across wodgail country, sandplain and forest land within a few yards almost of each other. At Esperance the land is uniform. It is some of the best wheat land we have in this State, or in any other. Once it is brought into proper cultivation it will give satisfactory yields, and whoever undertakes that work there with fair facilities and fair chances of finding a market for his products, will make a home not only for himself and his family, but for generations to come. It is my conviction that we can settle a big population there, that the place will rapidly grow and extend, and add to the resources and wealth of this country, and that it will assist in the development of one of the finest harbours on the coast. Then, instead of that land, isolated as it is there, we will find through the blessings of agricultural cultivation, a flotilla on our coast, and everlasting visits of ships which will make our country rich and powerful from one extent to the other just as America has become, almost it might be said in the course of a lifetime. I am speaking, of course, of North America. I was a boy in Canada when the people were speaking of Manitoba as one of the distant wilds, when it was a great thing to risk to go out there to settle, or to go out there as a policeman at an outpost. Now we find enormous cities right out in the heart of the country, and away to the Pacific coast. Why cannot we proceed with a similar policy here? All that has happened in the course of my lifetime in Canada. I have made inquiries regarding that wonderful progress, and on my recent trip to America it was astounding to me to find the enormous growth that had taken place, and all by the pursuance of the policy of

cultivation, of settling people on the land, and by sending them out farther. If we pursue that policy here, we shall within the course of the lives of some of those who are listening to me now, have at Esperance an important seaport and we shall open up right along the coast through to Israelite Bay, and right to the borders of South Australia, enormous areas for cattle raising. It will add to the welfare of this State beyond computation. It only means that we must apply ourselves to our task and be fair and just in our treatment of every part of the State.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. F. E. S. Willmott—Nelson—in reply) [8.2]: I want to reply briefly to some of the questions and statements that have been made by various hon. members when speaking to this vote. Never in my Parliamentary experience have I seen so much interest shown in the debate on this department. It is indeed pleasing at such a time as this, to know that members of this Chamber are taking such a deep interest in the work of this department. The opinions of members naturally vary. It was rather amusing to hear the leader of the Opposition trouncing the member for Moore (Sir H. B. Lefroy) on his opinion of experts. The member for Moore stated that the great factor was the man, so far as the land was concerned; the expert had very little to do with it.

Hon. P. Collier: There are over 20 in the department.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member says that the expert is necessary. I, too, believe that the expert is necessary, but if the wrong man is on the land, the expert will never make a farmer of him. That, of course, is patent to everyone. But if the officer is an expert and can impart the knowledge he has to the farmers, in other words, if he is fit to hold his position, that man is of inestimable value to the agricultural industry. We have many experts in this department. Let us take the case of the fruit industry. We have experts there, and have had for a very considerable time. These officers have been of the greatest possible advantage to the fruit grower.

Mr. Davies: You do not pay them very much.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I will admit that. The chief inspector draws a paltry pittance for the work he performs. I admit that that is the case, and could wish that he was drawing a very much larger salary.

Mr. Smith: Why do not you increase his salary?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not the Minister for Agriculture; I am representing the Minister for Agriculture in this Chamber.

Hon. P. Collier: In other words, your colleagues are responsible.

Hon. T. Walker: I hope the Minister knows what you are saying.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Up to a few years ago the fruit growers in this State packed their fruit as they thought fit. Each man thought his method was the best. The expert came along and introduced methods absolutely revolutionising the whole business, showing how we could make far more out of our industry. The result to-day is that Western Australian fruit on the London market is regarded as the finest and best packed, and secures the highest prices. Unfortunately, as I mentioned when introducing the vote, we have a fixed price for fruit in London, which means that we in Western Australia are not getting what we should for a very much better article than that placed on the London market from the other States. We have other experts in wool, wheat, dairying, and so on, and, from what I can gather, they are performing very good work. I would be sorry indeed to see any opinion go forward from this Chamber indicating that the experts are useless.

Hon. P. Collier: And we have a poultry expert who is getting £234 a year.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) is an optimist so far as his part of the country is concerned. I know that country pretty well. I have put in months there travelling, not by aeroplane or rushing through by motor car, but journeying over the roads in the early days of the goldfields, when I had to go 20, 30, and 40 miles east and west looking for water. I have a good knowledge of the country, such as few men in this State have to-day, and I bear out what the hon. member says, that we have an enormous territory there that will prove to be one of the greatest wheat-producing areas in Western Australia. The trouble is that where the very best country is north of the mallee belt, the rainfall so far has been too light. South and west of that portion, there is an enormous territory. West of the Esperance-Norseman road there is a territory "on its own," which, in years to come, will, I think, carry an enormous population, and may even fulfil that prediction so eloquently made by the hon. member for Kanowna when Esperance will develop into an enormous centre.

Mr. Johnston: What about the railway?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member knows very well that the question of the railway cannot be discussed during this debate.

Mr. Johnston: Agricultural development depends upon it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member for Kanowna said that the Government had done nothing in the work of clearing land for returned soldiers.

Hon. T. Walker: I did not say quite that.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member said that farms on which the land was cleared were bought and the soldiers

placed thereon. That has been done in many cases, but we have cleared thousands of acres of green timber country for them, and thousands of acres more would have been cleared if we could have secured men, machinery, and explosives at something like a cost which the man taking up the land would have some chance of paying. That is the whole trouble. Our clearing costs have gone up by 75 per cent., which means that that increase has to be added to the price of land, and it is almost like a heart-breaking task to ask them to shoulder the burden until such time as we can reduce this cost.

Hon. T. Walker: The Esperance areas would not entail such a cost.

The HONORARY MINISTER: But we cannot all go to Esperance. The hon. member says that in Canada they pushed out and tried to settle the whole country. We must try to do the same thing here, and there is no greater believer in decentralisation in this State than I am. But, with a paltry population such as we have in Western Australia, the task confronting us is a gigantic one.

Mr. Teesdale: And we have no Canadian-Pacific railway to back us up.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The member for Williams-Narrogin made a statement regarding the Narrogin State farm, that the committee had been instructed by the Government to confine their efforts regarding the proposed new agricultural farm or college to an area within 20 miles of Spencer's Brook. I have examined the files in an endeavour to find where that hon. member got his information. So far as I know, the information is entirely incorrect. No such instructions were given.

Mr. Griffiths: It was generally understood that that was so.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That may be so, but I do not know on what that general understanding was based.

Mr. Johnston: I got it from a member of the committee.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not know where such an instruction could come from. It may, of course, have been verbal, but I do not think that any such instruction has been given. It would be a most extraordinary instruction to give. The member for Kalgoorlie made a statement regarding freights on fruit. Someone, he said, had given him the figures, and I understand it was a fruit grower from Mt. Barker. He stated that the freight on a case of fruit to London was 1s. 6d. Let me say, I wish to God it was. The freight on one case of fruit to London is 8s.

Mr. Harrison: Is that an average?

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is the freight. It is not a matter of average, but a definitely fixed freight. At the present time we are threatened with a rise in that freight. Where it is going to end, I do not know. The fruit growers, as I have already indicated, are faced with the position that

there is a fixed price on the London market, and the cost of growing a case of fruit and sending it from the orchard in Western Australia to the purchasers in London is 16s.

Mr. Smith: Where is the "Kangaroo"?

The HONORARY MINISTER: She is not insulated, and has no refrigerating space. Therefore she is perfectly useless for carrying fruit. I am sorry that the hon. member for Kalgoorlie did not give me the name of the gentleman who gave him this information, because there is nothing worse for a member of Parliament to carry about than wrong information. To come to this House and make a statement backed up by the authority of an orchardist that it costs 1s. 6d. to send a case of fruit to London when it really costs 8s., is misleading the House.

Hon. P. Collier: I believe he came from Bridgetown.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We have all sorts of people there, but none foolish enough to make such a statement.

Mr. Munsie: He is probably one of those orchardists who do not grow fruit.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Probably that is the position. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) said that it was a standing disgrace that fruit was not on the dinner table at Parliament House, and that our fruit was not put to better use for advertising purposes. I entirely agree with him, but I remember when we did have fruit on the table. Why it was stopped I do not know.

Mr. Munsie: That was only when a couple of cases were sent up as a gift.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I agree that our people should eat more fruit. It is an extraordinary thing that, as "Pussy-foot" Johnson says, the man who likes whisky will not touch fruit. The member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) emphasised certain wants of the soldiers settled in his district. That is a matter for the Repatriation Department, and does not come under this vote; and therefore I shall not deal with it. The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) gave a most interesting address on the subject of agriculture, more especially with reference to our second class lands. I may inform the hon. member that investigations on the subject have been going on and are going on, and will go on as long as we have money for the purpose. As to the wodgil lands in particular, there is danger in sending a Government officer around to tell the settlers what to do—danger because we cannot be thoroughly sure that he is right. In the past the inspectors were instructed to tell the settlers to go on with their wodgil land, that it was the easiest land to clear, and that it was good land when cleared. The result was that a good deal of wodgil land was cleared, and eventually was found to be worthless. The settlers continued cultivating that land year after year, because they were told that if they turned it over and sweetened it, it would become good land.

Hon. P. Collier: There is something wrong with the expert who recommends the cultivation of such land year after year without finding out that it is no good.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The expert was misled.

Hon. P. Collier: Who led him, or misled him?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The people of the district.

Hon. P. Collier: He was taking advice from the farmers, was he?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Does not the expert always take advice from the farmers? How does an expert get his knowledge? He gets certain knowledge theoretically, and then he goes to the practical man and asks, "How does my theory compare with practice?" Hon. members will recollect the beautiful photographs of wodgil land showing fine crops of oats and other fodders, which photographs convinced the public that wodgil country would grow oats, and, for another thing, rape.

Hon. P. Collier: Now wodgil is good dairy land, I believe.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Since then it has been discovered that these photographs were not taken on wodgil land. That is the point. Those crops were grown on land bordering on wodgil country. The land had been cleared before the expert saw it, and he accepted the word of the people on the spot. I took the trouble to study those photographs very carefully, and I noticed that a well up-standing crop of rape, for instance, diminished gradually to nothing as it ran into the wodgil country. When it got right into that country, the crop disappeared altogether. The report further stated that if farmers would have patience and would carefully cultivate the wodgil land for six or seven years, then they would find it growing oats and grass. Any practical farmer, of course, would turn down such a proposition very quickly.

Hon. P. Collier: Who told the farmers that? The expert?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is in the report. We know that in such a case the return, to be profitable, would need to be something like 90 bushels to the acre selling at something like 13s. 6d. per bushel. I am glad to say that owing to the representations of the member for York (Mr. Griffiths) and other hon. members the Lands Department have dealt sympathetically with the unfortunate holders of wodgil land, who in consequence are now in a very much better position.

Hon. T. Walker: Have you found a use for wodgil land yet?

The HONORARY MINISTER: At one time it was thought that all wodgil land was the same. But that is not so. There are four or five varieties of wodgil land. There is poison in all of them, but the amount of poison varies. Land on which wodgil grows in conjunction with other timbers is sometimes from passable to fair. Pure wodgil

land seems to be perfectly useless. We have to find out why it is useless.

Mr. Griffiths: The cultivation of wodgeil land was not brought about by the expert, but by one of the inspectors.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It was originally brought about by one of the experts, who advised the inspectors. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) seemed dubious as to fruit growers being able to obtain fruit cases to market their products this year. A deputation waited upon the Premier last week in this connection, when one gentleman made the statement that the fruit-growers need not worry as the firm of Paterson & Co. could supply all the cases required. I am rather doubtful whether that prophecy will prove correct, but I am sure that the Minister for Works will see that the State sawmills will do all that is possible to provide cases. Regarding the drainage of the Scott River, in the far south, in the neighbourhood of the Blackwood River, reports have come to hand, and next summer levels will be taken to verify the reports and to determine whether the bar can be removed and thus the large tract of country to the north of the Scott River drained. In that case we shall have available a fine area fit for dairying and fruit crops. With regard to lime, I have previously made a statement of what is being done. I may add that the company operating at Lake Clifton are bound, under an Act passed by this Parliament, to supply lime in the natural state at 10s. and crushed at 12s. per ton on trucks at Waroona. I understand that the company are prepared to reduce the price of 10s. to 7s. if the Government are prepared to carry the lime free over the railways. Now, to carry a ton of lime from Waroona to say Bridgetown costs about 4s. 6d. It does not take much of a mathematician to recognise that if a farmer can get his lime for 4s. 6d. per ton less than he is now paying, he can afford to use more lime. I do not know that the scheme has yet reached the Government in a concrete form, but when it does it will receive every consideration. In reply to the remarks of the member for Sussex regarding dingoes and vermin boards, I can only say that the districts which are free from dingoes are inclined to be selfish. However, I have noted the hon. member's remarks and shall bring them under the notice of the Minister controlling the department. The discussion of this vote, which has lasted over several sittings, must now have covered every item; and therefore I trust that the vote will be passed by the Committee without further debate.

General debate concluded; items discussed as follow:

Item, Under Secretary, £648:

Mr. JOHNSTON: Is it the intention of the Government to resume the publication of the "Agricultural Journal" in connection with this department, which costs £67,000 per annum? The department contains a large number of experts, headed by the Under Secretary, and that gentleman might

well attach to the duties of his position the editorship of the "Agricultural Journal" if it is re-established. In the absence of the journal there is no medium of communication other than correspondence between the department and the farmers and settlers.

Hon. P. Collier: Does not the "Primary Producer" fill the bill?

Mr. JOHNSTON: If the Government cannot afford to publish an "Agricultural Journal" of their own, they might well consider the advisableness of obtaining one or two pages of the "Primary Producer" every week. I thank the leader of the Opposition for the suggestion. However, I hope the journal will be re-established. As things are now, every farmer or settler who is advised, has to be advised separately by letter; and when another man requires the same information, it has to be given by correspondence over again. The journal would be filed by the farmers, and thus the advice of the experts would be available on the farm to be turned up when required. It seems to me that the country is not justified in spending some £67,000 annually on the department while saving £1,500 or less per annum by refusing to publish the journal, which would bring the advice of all the departmental experts within the reach of every farmer and every settler once a week or once a fortnight. I believe the farmers would be prepared to pay 5s. or 10s. a year for the journal, and thus meet its full cost, exactly as they pay the full cost of everything they receive.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Last year the department issued 8,000 bulletins and pamphlets, so that the hon. member is not justified in saying that information is given just to one individual by letter and is then lost to the four winds of heaven. What he has said about the journal I will bring under the notice of the Minister.

Hon. P. Collier: Who is the Minister?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Colbatch.

Hon. P. Collier: It does not say so in "Hansard."

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not responsible for "Hansard." However, I will bring the matter under the notice of the Minister. Possibly it will be found better to publish the information in the form of a journal than to issue so many bulletins.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Minister has told us that the experts have to get their information from the farmers. Then the member for Williams-Narrogin wants the experts to put that information into a journal and send it back to the farmers. I think that before spending any considerable sum of money on this business we might appoint a Royal Commission to go into it. The idea of publishing for the benefit of farmers a journal containing information from the farmers, does not seem to be very useful.

Item, Messengers, £129:

Mr. LUTEY: This seems a very small sum for three messengers. Are uniforms provided for those lads?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Those messengers are little boys just from school.

Hon. P. Collier: Rising experts!

The HONORARY MINISTER: Their work is not arduous. They wear no uniforms. They are pretty well paid for their services.

Item, Caretaker, £144:

Mr. JONES: Apparently this man is being horribly sweated. Does the officer get any other emolument?

The HONORARY MINISTER: This is a very old servant. He lives on the premises. He has quarters and firing and light. Considering the duties he has to perform, he is pretty well paid.

Mr. JONES: He has been on that salary for some years past, whereas everybody else has had a rise. I ask the Minister to consider whether he could not give this officer a small increase in salary.

Item, Chief Inspector of Rabbits, £528:

Mr. JOHNSTON: What policy do the Government intend to pursue in respect of rabbit trapping? Are we to continue to prevent the trapping of rabbits as much as possible, and allow the metropolitan community to import part of our rabbit supplies from South Australia? To the best of my belief we have more rabbits than has South Australia. Again, on last year's Estimates was an amount of £3,711 for the eradication of rabbits on abandoned farms. That item has been cut out.

The Honorary Minister: You will find it under item No. 104.

Item, Irrigation Expert, £456:

Mr. SMITH: The Minister touched very lightly on irrigation. He should give us a little more information on the subject. We are spending a fair amount of money on irrigation officers' salaries and in other ways. The only extensive irrigation work carried out by the Government is that at Harvey, where they have completely ruined the orchards by installing a wrong system.

The Minister for Works: They have done nothing of the sort.

Mr. SMITH: Well, they have ruined the orchards, at any rate. If any orchardist at Harvey is asked whether his orchard has been ruined by the Government—

Hon. P. Collier: He will say yes, because the orchardists are refusing to pay their rates.

Mr. SMITH: Quite right too. The system was forced on them and, in my opinion, they ought to bring an action against the Government for having ruined their orchards. However, I should like to know the policy of the Government in this respect.

Mr. Munsie: Why, do you want to establish schemes elsewhere for the ruination of more orchards?

The HONORARY MINISTER: We have Mr. Scott and his assistant. Those two officers have been kept exceedingly busy during the last three years, not so much on big schemes as on giving individual farmers prac-

tical advice. They have saved the soldiers alone many thousands of pounds. Soldiers on certain blocks wanted to go in for an expensive scheme with pipes, but Mr. Scott went down and showed them that it could be done by contour channels, thus saving the price of the pipes and their laying. In my opinion those two officers have worked harder than any other two men in the service. They have given a great deal of satisfaction to all with whom they have come into contact. Certainly they have saved the farmers many thousands of pounds.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for North Perth referred to the Harvey irrigation scheme. Let me say in answer to his charge that there are more applicants for water down there than we can supply.

Hon. P. Collier: I am glad to hear that, because it was our Government who installed the scheme.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As for the scheme having been forced on the district, the hon. member is misinformed. He is quite wrong. His bringing of it forward in this way is done merely with the idea of embarrassing the Government. The hon. member gets up and talks a lot of claptrap merely with the purpose of catching a little popularity, but the statement he makes is quite wrong.

Mr. Smith: At all events I am not standing for your electorate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And if you were it would not give me much uneasiness. But inside and outside the House the hon. member is regarded as a man of considerable commercial experience, and therefore any words he may utter are likely to carry weight. Seeing that certain action is pending, for him to stand up here and say that the Government have ruined the orchards at Harvey is certainly not diplomatic. The latest report we have from Harvey shows that they want more water than the scheme can supply and, in consequence, the scheme will have to be enlarged. The mistake, if any, made at Harvey was that the orchards were laid out before the irrigation scheme was put down. It is undulating country and the water passes over the higher land and gets into the lower land which is not drained. It is idle for the hon. member to make such statements and give himself and the Government away in the manner he has done.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am pleased the Minister for Works has corrected the statement made by the member for North Perth. I should not like it to go forth that the irrigation scheme at Harvey, which was installed during the time the Labour Government were in office, had resulted in ruin to the orchardists.

Mr. Smith: The water is not intended for orchard use.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I fancy that allegations, similar to those made by the hon. member, were made some time ago at Harvey

when the Minister for Works and some of his officers were there.

The Minister for Works: It was all threshed out down there.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I should like the Minister to inform hon. members what amount of water rates is outstanding.

The Minister for Works: Do you not know?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know. It was stated in Harvey that these allegations were the reason for the rates not being paid. No doubt the residents are satisfied with the scheme now, and will be able to pay their outstanding rates.

Item, Dairy and pig expert, £360:

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I should like to know why there is an increase in this item from £310 to £360. What work does this officer do? We could scarcely expect a man worth his salt to work for £360 a year. Possibly he is a man who failed at the business himself and now thinks he can teach others. If a man were an expert at dairying and pig raising he should, by following that avocation, be able to make considerable more than this sum.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The name of this officer is Hampshire. He was employed for portion of last year, and this year is being provided for throughout the 12 months. He is an excellent officer and has done good work in regard to butter factories. He is highly spoken of. The State butter production this year is 2½ million lbs., and no doubt this officer had something to do with that.

Item, Officer in charge fruit industries, £384:

Mr. PICKERING: What are the duties of this officer? The salary appears to be extremely small. We may take this as an indication of the relative value the department places on the South-West as compared with the wheat belt, the Commissioner for which receives £756 a year. The Government are always saying that the future of the State lies in the development of the South-West, and yet on the Estimates the earnestness of the Government is dissipated by the amounts shown as being paid to officers employed there. There should be a special officer set apart for the development of the South-West to make it ready for the immigrants that are coming here.

The Honorary Minister: I do not see what immigration has to do with this item.

Mr. Munsie: You will see from the footnote that this officer also receives £360 a year for another position.

Mr. PICKERING: I hope the Government will do something to specially recognise the importance of the South-West.

Item, Experimentalist and science master, Narrogin School of Agriculture, £180:

Mr. JOHNSTON: This officer has a high sounding title and yet only receives £180 a year. He is in charge of 44 boys and hun-

dreds of different wheat plots. Last year his salary was included in the farm wages. This year he gets a special title, but apparently his salary is reduced.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have not much information about this officer except that he was employed during the latter portion of last year, and was paid from the wages item. I will make inquiries and inform the hon. member.

Item, Incidentals, £5,300:

Mr. SMITH: I should like an explanation as to the large increase in this item from £4,208 last year. It will be remembered that the House carried this resolution on the 12th November last—

That the House is of opinion that the Treasurer, when presenting his Estimates in future should separate departmental expenditure on rent, postage, and telegrams, stationery, printing, travelling, and motor cars, and specify same as items.

It is due to the Committee that the Minister should give some explanation, particularly in view of the fact that there has been such an increase in the vote.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The item covers the whole of the administration expenses of the department, but not salaries. The increased provision is necessary to permit of the large staff of experts to travel about the country to exercise the functions of their various offices. The policy of the department is to keep the experts outside instead of in the office, where they do not do much good. The dairy expert is provided with a motor car, and railway fares have been increased by £200, owing to tickets having to be taken out instead of passes, as before.

Mr. SMITH: I am not satisfied with the Minister's explanation. The resolution carried last year stated definitely that the items had to be specified, and this is the only department that has not carried out the instruction. The Committee should not accept the explanation of the Minister; it is a very lame one, to say the least of it.

Mr. ANGELO: We find that there is an increase in the vote of £1,300, and that no particulars are given. The Honorary Minister has not been treated fairly by the Minister in charge of the department. We have had very little information supplied, and the division should be postponed for further consideration until we get that information from the Minister. I have already stated, and I repeat it, that it is a mistake to have a statutory Minister in another House. I will support the member for North Perth if he moves a reduction in the vote.

Mr. MUNSIE: If the Honorary Minister has no further information to give us he might say so. I would like to know how it is intended to spend the £5,000, and how much of it is intended for travelling expenses. He might also tell us the reason for the increased cost of the tickets that were purchased.

The Honorary Minister: That accounts for £200.

Mr. MUNSIE: Then what about the remaining £5,100?

The Honorary Minister: I have told you about the motor car.

Mr. MUNSIE: How much has been spent on motor cars? There is an item in the list "motor car hire," and another "sundry stores and repairs." How much has been spent in cleaning and other charges? If the Minister has not the information, he should get it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Committee have been given all the information I have. I have pointed out where the increases have occurred. The desire of the department is to keep the experts out instead of having them hanging about Perth. A motor car has been provided for the dairy expert, while other cars are provided for the other experts. The days of horses and traps have gone. Travelling by such means is certainly not in the interests of the department. I regret I cannot give hon. members details.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Very little consideration has been given to the motion which was passed by the House last year. The member for North Perth has acted wisely in directing attention to this matter. The Premier made a clear and unreserved promise that when the Estimates were presented again, the details, as stipulated in the resolution which was carried, would be given.

The Minister for Works: That has been done in most cases.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That may be so in the department controlled by the Minister for Works. His department always sets an example to the others in the service. While I was speaking on the resolution passed last year, the Premier said, "I have already promised that detailed information will be given next year." I replied that the promise would meet the wishes of hon. members and that further comment was therefore unnecessary.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If hon. members will turn to page 29 they will find that under the heading of "Contingencies" what the Premier promised to do has been carried out. If they turn to page 35, under the heading of "Minister for Lands" it will be found that the same thing has been done there.

Mr. Smith: We are not complaining about those departments.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Under the heading of "Colonial Treasurer" the instruction has also been carried out. In regard to the Department of Agriculture, however, the matter has apparently been overlooked.

Mr. Smith: They have ignored the instructions of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: People are apt to make mistakes at times. If hon. members will look through the Esti-

mates, they will see that the undertaking of the Premier has been carried out in every instance except this one. That shows that the wishes of the House have not been deliberately ignored as some hon. members would have the Committee believe.

Mr. ANGELO: I have no intention of allowing the item to go through without a protest. If the Minister will agree to adjourn the further consideration of the division I will be content. If he is not prepared to do that, I shall move an amendment. At any rate I will move an amendment, but I will withdraw it if the undertaking I desire is given by the Minister. I move—

That the item be reduced by £1,300.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am certain the member for Gascoyne and the member for North Perth have no desire to embarrass the Government in connection with this matter.

Mr. Angelo: We only want information.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But as I have pointed out already, this is the only department which has failed to supply the information.

Mr. Angelo: That makes us suspicious; there may be something to hide.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is one of those things that must have slipped through carelessly.

Mr. Munsie: What is wrong with postponing the further consideration of the division until we get the information?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have hardly made a start with the Estimates, and it is our desire to push on. If there had been evidence on the part of other departments that the resolution of the House passed last year had been flouted, I could understand the step which has been taken. In this case, however, the omission has been an accidental one, and no doubt the Minister will take the proper steps to see that a similar thing will not occur again.

Mr. Angelo: And in the meantime the vote is passed.

Mr. Smith: I cannot trust them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the member for North Perth cannot trust the Ministers who are dealing with the matter now, he will have an opportunity to do so next session, if the prophecy of the leader of the Opposition and his supporters is carried out, of trusting others.

Mr. Smith: I did not say I did not trust the Minister. I said the officers of the department.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The officers of the department have either not seen the resolution referred to or may not have thought it as important as it really is.

Mr. Smith: Well, we will teach them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It does not avail anything taking an action like this, either by postponing the Estimates or cutting out £1,300. Such a course is too serious.

Mr. Smith: It is not so serious as ignoring the decision of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for North Perth is like one of those little terriers who come from his country. He hangs on and will not let go.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are not discussing terriers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That there has been no attempt on the part of the Government to ignore the decision of the House, is proved by the fact that in every other department the information desired is given.

Hon. P. Collier: It looks as if this particular Minister had set out to defy the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is not so; of course. If the leader of the Opposition had had no experience as a Minister, I could understand him saying that. He has been a Minister and knows that no Minister would attempt to ignore the wishes of the House in this way.

Hon. P. Collier: There are some, you know.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know some are autocratic, but it is not our experience in this House.

Mr. TEESDALE: If we were not so close to an election there would be nothing of this sort going on. It is altogether small and trivial. There are many items to be dealt with and if we spread this amount over a number of them, it will work out at about £10 each. I do not understand how hon. members can waste their time over such a trivial matter as this. It is nothing more nor less than an attempt to stay the progress of the House over a paltry matter that is not worth the time lost.

Mr. ANGELO: I agree that there may be 20 items over which this £1,300 may be spread, but the fact remains that one item may take up most of that amount. How are we to know that there is not some particular item involved in this amount?

Mr. Teesdale: Perhaps somebody got a motor car out of it.

Mr. ANGELO: Unless we get the information, I contend that the Committee has not got a fair deal.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. SMITH: I have not done with this item yet. The idea of the Minister for Works is to gloss over the item, saying that it is perhaps a mistake on the part of someone in the department. I believe that if an officer in the Minister's department attempted to do such a thing as this, ignoring the desire of the House, he would be sent about his business. It might perhaps be unwise to reduce this item by the amount of £1,300, but I wish to protest against the resolution of the House being flouted. I intend to move that the discussion of this item be postponed until this information is supplied to us.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot move in that direction. He can move to postpone the consideration of the item until the end of the Estimates so that the Minister may have an opportunity of supplying the information.

Mr. SMITH: I move—

That the further consideration of this item be postponed.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member wishes to have the information I have no desire to keep it from him. I have no objection to the information being obtained. I should have seen that the information was supplied on this occasion, but it escaped my notice. It is supplied in every other case and, in fact, we have been at considerable pains to supply particulars with all the information that members asked for last year. A great deal of information is contained in these Estimates and the leader of the Opposition need hardly ask for the public accounts, for he can tell from these Estimates what was spent last year.

Hon. P. Collier: They are a decided improvement.

The PREMIER: I do not think Estimates were ever presented in better form.

Mr. Munsie: You have reverted back to the old form.

The PREMIER: It is a better form. The officers endeavoured to meet the wishes of the House and not only read "Hansard" but interviewed at least one member who was much concerned about the Estimates, in order to meet fully the wishes of members of this Chamber.

Mr. Smith: You promised this information would be available. It is a simple matter.

The PREMIER: I have no objection to postponing consideration of this item. I will produce photographs of all the items dealt with if it will please the hon. member. I do not know if the information that the hon. member is so anxious to secure will influence a single vote. I did promise to give this information and I have no objection to the postponement in order that the member for North Perth may have all the information that he desires.

Motion put and passed.

Item, State farms, Merredin, £2,073:

Mr. HARRISON: Regarding the Merredin State farm, requests were made by a couple of road boards that facilities should be given to the young farmers in the district to have the benefit of the lectures similar to those in other centres. I desire to know whether any provision has been made to carry out their wishes for next season. I notice that there is an increase of £25 on this vote and I would like to know what the expenditure is for.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Fortnightly classes are being continued and the results for last year were very satisfactory. Certain re-arrangements have been made which it is anticipated the extra £25

will cover. This small increase is absolutely necessary.

Item, Rabbit and other vermin eradication and upkeep of rabbit-proof fence, including wages, £29,632:

Mr. PICKERING: I should like some information on this item. Last year there was provision for some £3,000 for the laying of poison baits on Crown land and so on.

The Premier: That was from the Agricultural Bank last year.

Mr. PICKERING: Has any provision been made for assistance regarding the capture of dingoes?

The HONORARY MINISTER: So far as dingoes are concerned, they are dealt with under a different system. There is a subsidy provided by the Government for the destruction of the pest. Last year the Government carried out work departmentally and had about 60 poison carts operating. These have been now reduced to 14 under the new system.

Mr. Pickering: What has become of the balance?

The HONORARY MINISTER: They have been transferred to the vermin boards which have been set up and this amount has been reduced accordingly. The provision this year will enable 30 carts to be employed at work for six months. The increased cost for materials, etc., has affected the position regarding fencing.

Mr. LUTEY: This year 9,000 scalps were paid for. I have reason to believe that it is only the scalp and the strip right down the back to the tail that is sent to the department. I have received complaints that the rest of the hides have been burned. They are rather valuable skins and I want to know whether people are being induced to send the whole skin along to the department.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The majority of these dingoes are poisoned and consequently the skin is destroyed, before being found, by decomposition. In other cases, men secure the skin and get up to 10s. for it, in addition to the subsidy obtained through the department.

Item, Flax industry, £50:

Mr. TEESDALE: I think £50 a paltry sum to provide for establishing the flax industry in this State. While in England I took considerable interest in this subject, and visited experimental farms there and in Ireland where flax was being grown; and I may add that I paid my own expenses. Flax crops were grown in England for the first time during the war, and they proved of great value to the British Government at a time when flax was very difficult to obtain. It was found that flax could be grown successfully on soils which had proved unsuitable for other crops. At the close of the war flax mills erected by the Government for the preparation of fibre were taken over by the farmers who had supplied the green flax to the mills. The farmers formed themselves into syndicates to purchase the factories, and they are now treating their

own flax. I went very carefully into the figures of a company called the Wessex Flax Company Ltd., in Ireland, whose shareholders are principally small men. The company receive as much as £800 per ton for their fibre after treatment. The whole product of a flax crop is saleable. The stalk brings from £16 to £20 per ton, finding a ready sale as feed for stock. The Wessex Flax Company obtained a record price for their product; and I had the pleasure of disussing the industry with their expert. He assured me that flax growing had completely transformed the prospects of farming in that neighbourhood, and that farmers who previously had been in comparatively poor circumstances were now, thanks to flax growing, approaching affluence. I obtained a quantity of flax seed at Home, after satisfying myself that it was seed suitable for Western Australia. I also made inquiries as to the soil on which the flax is grown at Home, and several Western Australians who were in London at the time, and with whom I compared notes, agreed with me that a large area of land in this State should be suitable for flax growing. I urge that the Government should undertake experiments, which would involve no great expense, as to whether the flax-growing industry can be established here. No very great skill is required, and the cultivation of flax is inexpensive. I believe three crops a year are obtained from Somersetshire lands, and possibly the same results might be secured here. The Wessex Company assure me that they are prepared to handle the whole of our product and to secure us the highest price for the quality of flax that we may supply. Out of the dozen applicants whom I furnished with small parcels of flax seed, not one has yet replied stating what results he has obtained. I would be very pleased if the Agricultural Department would follow up my humble efforts in this connection by obtaining another consignment of flax seed and giving the matter the necessary publicity.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The amount of £50 in this item is simply for distributing flax seed. There have been several trials of growing flax in this State. Many years ago it was grown in the Warren district, and lately trials have been made at Northam, where the fibre produced has proved excellent. On the Chapman experimental farm a certain area has been planted with flax seed, in an endeavour to obtain absolutely clean seed for distribution. The last lot of seed, which was obtained from the Commonwealth, was very weedy and consequently gave a great deal of trouble in the cultivation of the crop. I appreciate all that has been said by the member for Roebourne.

Item, Expenses of Committee of Investigation of Mortality amongst Sheep, £50:

Mr. HARRISON: What was the ultimate result of this committee's investigations?

The HONORARY MINISTER: One member of the committee, Professor Dakin, has visited England and the Continent in pur-

suance of the committee's investigations, and he has furnished a report. This sum of £50 is for the purpose of meeting the cost of further investigations. The results so far are somewhat indefinite.

Item, Herd testing, £200:

Mr. HARRISON: What is the reason for the increase of £116 in this item? Do the Government intend to test cattle for individual farmers?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The money will be expended in testing dairy herds under regulations adopted by the department. Certain fees are recoverable for this work, but they are insufficient to pay the full cost. It is also intended to provide £50 to pay subsidies on a pound for pound basis to herd testing associations, the formation of which has been assisted and promoted as far as possible for some little time.

Mr. PICKERING: To what extent do you give the pound for pound subsidy?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Not a very large amount is involved. I have alluded to the great work that herd testing is doing towards advancing the dairying industry in this State.

Item, Experimental plots in South-West, £200:

Mr. PICKERING: It seems to me that £200 is not going to do very much work in this connection.

Mr. Munsie: Only £33 was spent last year.

Mr. PICKERING: That shows how the matter has been neglected. Experimental plots in the South-West, to be of any value, must be of a fairly large size.

The Minister for Works: They are a fair size.

Mr. PICKERING: Of what size are the experimental plots here referred to?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The experimental plots in question are on established farms. A certain acreage is set aside on a farm for the purpose of conducting experiments, and the farmer carries out the experiments under the direction of an inspector of the Agricultural Department. These small experimental plots are working very advantageously to the interests of orchardists and agriculturists generally—far better than experiments conducted on one big farm, as by having numerous small plots one obtains different varieties of soil and climate.

Mr. PICKERING: It would be well if the policy of experimental plots were extended to parts of the State that are not yet settled. We know that the Premier has under consideration the settlement of large areas in the South-West which have not yet been tested for agriculture. Before those areas are settled by immigrants or otherwise, it would be advisable to open up experimental farms of a considerable area on them. The effect would be to prevent serious losses being occasioned to new settlers, and especially to immigrants, because of their inexperience of that country.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It has been done already in several districts, some of them in the hon. member's electorate.

Item, Tobacco industry, £50:

Mr. TEESDALE: I should like to hear from the Minister what it is intended to do this year. The present price of tobacco renders it advisable for the Government to give the industry every possible assistance. We have soils suitable for tobacco culture. I saw a successful experimental crop in Devonshire in rainfall very similar to that of our South-West. Something should be done to retain the enormous amount of money sent out of the State annually to support American tobacco growers. If the Government have no seed of their own, I will readily supply them with all grades of first class seed which I brought from Ireland.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Owing to the largely increased value of tobacco, there should be a field for its cultivation in Western Australia. Seed has been obtained and distributed. It is proposed to continue in the direction of advising and assisting anyone who is prepared to try the experiment. In some cases satisfactory results have been obtained from practical experiments.

Vote (with the exception of Item 82)—put and passed.

Department of Public Works and Buildings (Hon. W. J. George, Minister).

Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £116,463.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [9.50]: The total expenditure last year under the heading of Public Works and Buildings was £439,244 made up as follows—Loan, £271,228, revenue £116,488, trust £51,528, total £439,244. In addition to this expenditure from votes the department expended £5,584 which was charged against the votes of other departments. Also for the Commonwealth Government we expended £54,392 and for the wheat marketing scheme and other items we expended £8,740. Thus the total expenditure of the department for last year was a little over half a million. On the revenue Estimates of last year the detailed items of works showed an estimated expenditure of £114,448 plus £10,000 in salaries, or £124,448. We expected that on the 30th June, 1920, there would be an under draft on account of works not being completed of £9,448, but the actual expenditure including salaries was £116,448, which was £1,488 in excess of the amount voted. Part of this was in consequence of extra amounts being paid in wages in connection with the railway award delivered in November last; also in connection with the visit of the Prince of Wales heavy expenditure had to be undertaken at Government House. A sum of £1,000 was voted for the purpose but to the end of June we expended £2,876. On the present year's Estimates if we are able to complete all the works listed by the 30th June

next, the expenditure will total £130,178 including salaries. We are asking for a vote of £116,463. In regard to salaries after allowing for the sum of £2,676, the amount advanced to officers in respect of the strike period, the sum of £57,148 is required for the current financial year as against £56,291 spent during the previous 12 months. This increase is represented by statutory increases to officers up to £324 pending classification. Only £11,463 has been charged against public works revenue items generally for the current financial year, as against £11,049 spent last year. The small increase is not accounted for by increases in salaries of officers drawing up to £324, but a charge against revenue Estimates was decreased owing to heavier expenditure on Government Property Trust and on Loan items generally, including goldfields water supply. As against the £11,463 salaries proportioned to the public works section of the Estimates and the £3,250 set down for incidentals, it is anticipated we shall receive recoups by way of commission from other sources to the extent of £5,500, the amount actually received last year having been £5,828. On page 67 of the Estimates will be found a foot note showing that we received last year commission for services rendered to the Commonwealth £3,071, from the wheat marketing scheme £241, and for other items £1,447, or a total of £4,759. That money cannot be credited direct as it has to be paid to consolidated revenue and accounted thereby; but it will show hon. members that the utility of the department enables it not only to do the work of the State but also to earn a very appreciable sum in connection with work for the Commonwealth. I am pleased to say that all our officers who, having gone to the Front, lived through the war, have returned to us except one, Mr. Kenny of the Goldfields Water Supply Department, Perth. There have been some slight changes during the year in the different departments. Assistant engineer Hickson was retired, Mr. Oldham was retired and a cadet engineer was put on. Some draftsmen have been transferred from one department to another. The changes were practically minor and in the ordinary course of business. Hon. members are interested in the question of agricultural halls. Of course it is well known to members that since the outbreak of war the subsidies in favour of those buildings have been withdrawn. Last year the Committee were good enough to pass an item of £1,000 to enable some pre-war promise to be kept. This year hon. members will find an item for a similar amount to enable us to redeem a few more promises. Eventually, when the revenue becomes more buoyant, I hope we shall be able to keep faith by meeting all the applications for agricultural halls, applications which I may say have been duly registered by the department in priority of receipt. During the last 25 years grants for agricultural halls, of which we have 192, have aggregated £41,203; for mechanics' institutes, of which

we have 71, £29,964, and for miners' institutes, of which we have 57, £20,206. The average amount granted has been as follows: Agricultural halls £214, mechanics' institutes £422, miners' institutes £354. Taking the total of these institutions, namely 320, the average payment has been £285, which I think represents an expenditure no one could cavil at. Out in the back blocks, unless there is some place where people can meet for a little social life, existence would be very hard indeed. Hon. members will find on the Estimates that with the exception of £30,000 provided for roads and bridges, all other items are for ordinary necessary services required for the maintenance of existing buildings, jetties, roads and bridges. One heavy item of expenditure which is continually growing as the years go on is that of maintenance of public buildings. We have all over the State police stations, schools, courts of justice, various stores and all manner of buildings and, owing to financial trouble which has come upon us during the last few years, the maintenance of those buildings has been allowed to go back. Now we are attempting to bring it up to date, taking the worst cases and doing the best we can to restore them. We know that unless wooden buildings and the woodwork in other buildings in Western Australia are regularly and properly painted, the climate is such that it causes them very rapidly to perish. The officers of the department and I have been much concerned to know that, although repairs have been essential, the means for making them have not been forthcoming, when our judgment and experience have told us that such repairs should have been effected. We made a beginning last year, however, and are continuing the work. No matter what Government is in power the department will have to keep that work going. A sum of £2,000 is set down for rent for office accommodation. Last year it was pointed out that efforts were being made as far as possible to have the various departments of State in Perth under Government roofs. We were paying something like £4,000 a year in Perth for buildings in which the utilities of Government were domiciled. A determined effort was made to see if this sum could not be saved, and it has been saved. The Government had been paying out annually in rent for the Agricultural Bank £1,994, for the Education Department a sum of £560 for the renting of Mr. Morgans' house in St. George's terrace, and another sum for the Public Service Commissioner in Surrey Chambers, etc., a total of £4,000, but to-day we are not spending a single penny on that account. I have a list here showing how the £2,000 that we are paying on this account is made up. The bulk of it is for schools such as the Onslow, Busseton, Lion Mill schools, and others. Indeed, there is hardly a part of the State where such small amounts as £20 or £30 are not being paid for schools in this way. At Millar's timber mills there are seven schools. For these we are paying

£194 a year for rent. The sums vary from £18 to £45 and are quite reasonable. There is also a certain outlay in connection with water supply rentals, such as a sum of £13 at Bridgetown. The Police Department have to spend in rentals small sums at Port Hedland, Wiluna, Northampton, and other places. The Charities Department are paying other small items for rentals. All these amount to the £2,000 mentioned. Altogether there are 59 items in connection with schools making up this £2,000 and 16 for sundry purposes. There is an item for insurance on public buildings, £1,300, being an increase of £25. This amount represents payment to the Treasury insurance fund of one per cent. on the capital value of public buildings. I am pleased to say there is a reserve of between £40,000 and £50,000 in the Treasury on this account. There is an item for incidentals, £3,250, an increase of £7. The details are given in the Estimates, as fully as I think the member for North Perth would desire. This is item 17. There is an item for extra remuneration, £500, an increase of £44. This expenditure may be considered unusually large. The reason for it was the temporary transfer of the Under Secretary as one of the Commissioners appointed to classify the service. This will rectify itself during the year, as Mr. Munt has now been permanently appointed to deal with labour questions.

Hon. P. Collier: Is this a permanent appointment?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: It will not fully occupy Mr. Munt's time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He has other things to attend to. At present there is an acting under secretary and an acting assistant to the under secretary, and the difference in the salaries, according to the Public Service Act, has to be apportioned amongst those who are carrying out the higher duties. As soon as the permanent appointments are made this will regulate itself right through.

Mr. Robinson: Is there a secretary to the under secretary?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is an acting under secretary, Mr. Lowe. Mr. Lowe was assistant to the under secretary, and someone has had to take his place. It will relieve me very much when the permanent appointments are made. We have an increase on the vote under the Workers' Compensation Act fund of £54. The reason for this is that wages have risen fairly high as compared with what they were when we started, and we desire to make provision in accordance therewith. Hon. members who are interested in roads and bridges, and subsidies to road boards, will find that we have made a slight increase here. We are now making provision for grants to road boards in connection with their offices. It has been found that the work thrown upon road boards is increasing year by year, and the policy of the depart-

ment has been, and is, to induce members of road boards to rise more fully to the responsibilities of their position. It has been found necessary to provide buildings for offices, and we are prepared to assist them as far as our means will allow. Country members have been worried about these subsidies. The subsidies paid to-day are 50 per cent. lower than what they were when the war broke out. Now the war is over road boards desire to get the full amount of these subsidies. The matter has been discussed, examined, and reported upon, and we shall reach finality later in the year, but not by the time these Estimates are finished. An important point is that the Treasurer has not got the cash. The maintenance of various roads and repairs to bridges, as well as matters in connection with harbours and rivers, account for an estimated expenditure of £22,250. Of this amount £13,650 is on account of jetties, tramways, etc., in the North-West. This portion of Western Australia is absorbing a considerable amount of money, and is being treated fairly well as compared with the rest of the State. There is no doubt that the North-West is a wonderful country, and its value to this part of Western Australia is great. A considerable sum of money has been spent there, and I am sorry to say that the expenditure will have to increase each year upon jetties and wharves.

Mr. Underwood: How is the revenue?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have nothing to do with the revenue. I am not casting any reflection on that part of the State. From now on the expenditure will have to be largely increased, because of the necessity for keeping up the jetties and wharves in the North-West. The inroads of the teredo have been very heavy. We built a new jetty at Wyndham in connection with the meat works, and before it was completed we found that some new piles which had been specially treated had been seriously damaged by the teredo. We have to undertake an additional expenditure of about £10,000 in putting concrete sleeves around them, and filling up the gaps with sand, which it is considered will prove an efficient safeguard against this destructive pest. A certain sum has been provided for the dredging of the Albany harbour, and for the maintenance of the channels in the Swan River. There are various items in connection with the departments, such as the Education and Police Departments. This money is expended by the Public Works Department, but the instructions as to how it is spent and where, and the accommodation that is to be given as a result of that expenditure, are within the control of the departments concerned. There are many schools; and other buildings, which require repairing and maintaining, and the expenditure on this account will become heavier each year. I am not complaining about this, but merely wish to point out that this is a liability which must be incurred. Alterations will have to be made

at the Fremantle gaol, and in connection with hospitals and charitable institutions, involving an expenditure of £7,545. The actual revenue earned by the Public Works Department last year was £24,006, made up of various items, including rents of various properties owned by the State £10,542, commission received from the Commonwealth £3,071, reimbursements in aid £4,000, hire of plant £1,442, salaries paid through other departments £2,557, receipts in connection with the Lake Clifton railway £1,447. This year it is anticipated that the Public Works Department will receive from sources similar to those which I have mentioned a total of £22,470. On referring to page 73 of the Estimates, hon. members will see that the total amount of money listed for expenditure in connection with the various works this year is £118,715; but the amount asked for in connection with them is £105,000, as although we may be able to put all these works in hand it is not expected that we shall be able to expend more than the amount I have stated, namely, £105,000. I shall be happy to give, as far as lies in my power, any information that the Committee may desire.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [10.17]: I desire to congratulate the Minister on his clear enunciation of the operations of the Public Works Department, and on the full particulars which he has supplied. I am glad to know that the Commonwealth Government have recognised the services of the Architectural Division. I take it that most of the money received from the Commonwealth by the Public Works Department is in connection with the new General Post Office and works of that nature, and I should like to see the salary of the Chief Architect increased by reason of his association with those works.

The Minister for Works: We do the Commonwealth work, and we get commission on all work performed.

Mr. PICKERING: That was what I understood from what the Minister said. I take it that the expenses incurred in connection with Government House during the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales will to a certain extent do away with the renovation and other works that would have been required in normal circumstances.

The Minister for Works: To a great degree, yes.

Hon. P. Collier: There is an equally large item down for this year: at least, £2,000 as against £2,800 previously.

Mr. PICKERING: I am very glad to hear from the Minister that it is his intention as soon as possible to make provision for assistance with regard to public halls, which are an essential not only in the agricultural districts, but at mining centres and elsewhere. This is so more especially in view of the fact that life in the country at all times is more or less dull, and therefore it is only reasonable that some sacrifices should

be made by the people generally for the benefit more especially of those who open up new districts. I know of districts where the settlers have had to build their own schools, being unable to secure Government assistance in that direction. It is up to the Government to assist settlers in new areas. As regards roads, I am sure the Minister sympathises with the desire that a proper road system should be established throughout the State, and recognises, as I do, that there are certain main arteries in this country which are impossible to deal with under the present road board system. I hope the Minister will introduce legislation to amend the system in that direction at an early date. In the matter of subsidies, I join with all road boards in the desire that the Government may as speedily as possible return to the system of subsidies which obtained before the war. I do not know whether I shall be in order in referring to the question of schools; possibly that matter should come up under the Loan Estimates. However, as regard the Busselton school, my electors are now under great difficulties. These have been brought under the notice of the Minister for Education and of the Premier, but I believe that under this vote provision has been made for supplying the necessary accommodation.

The Minister for Works: It will come out of the Sales of Government Property Trust Account.

Mr. PICKERING: I presume that also applies to the extension of the Busselton hospital, which institution is in sore need of a maternity ward. If there is one thing which Western Australia needs, it is population; and when a town like Busselton is unable to accommodate maternity cases it is evident that the State should do something in that direction at the earliest possible moment. The doctor and the nurses at the Busselton hospital are at their wit's end to know what to do with maternity cases.

Hon. P. Collier: That should be a matter for the Health Department.

Mr. PICKERING: Possibly, but I have to approach the Minister for Works for assistance in providing the building. The item of jetties, I understand, comes under another vote. I desire to say a few words on the maintenance of buildings. The Minister has already pointed out what a serious item of expense maintenance of buildings will become to Western Australia. As a result of the neglect inevitably following in the train of the war, the bill which this State will have to foot will be a very considerable one indeed. One prominent building which is a disgrace to this State is that which accommodates the head office staff of the State sawmills. When we look at the roof of that building we see a mass of patches of different grades of iron of different periods. If the Minister could find sufficient money to treat that roof with a coat of red oxide, the interests of the State would be served.

The Minister for Works: I may be able to do that.

Mr. PICKERING: I am sorry that no provision has been made for repairs to the Donnybrook court house and gaol. The Donnybrook court house was, I believe, originally built for one of the goldfields towns. The goldfields town in question ceased to exist, and the court house was removed to Donnybrook. It now consists mainly of softwood riddled by white ants, and unless it is promptly placed in proper repair it is likely to fall about the ears of the resident magistrate. The Minister knows that the Donnybrook school has been burnt down, and I hope that in replying he will give me an assurance that a new school is to be provided for the district.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [10.27]: The Minister for Works referred to the increasing cost of repairs to jetties in the North-West. In doing so he was considerate enough to say that he had nothing against the North-West. I am sure we North-West members are very pleased to know that we have not incurred the Minister's enmity. Let me point out that the expenditure on North-West jetties is to be £25,000, and that the revenue expected from those jetties amounts to £42,000. All the repairs to jetties that are being made in the North-West are being paid for by the people of the North-West, and the jetties are returning a pretty solid profit at that. The North-West people never come squealing about wanting things without paying for them. However, there is a point I want to make about the continual repairs of the piles in the North-West jetties. The Minister has referred to the action of the teredo. For many years I have been endeavouring to impress upon the Works Department engineers the necessity for using reinforced concrete instead of timber for those jetties. I strongly advocated the use of concrete in connection with the Wyndham jetty, and practically told not only the engineers but also the then Minister that it was utterly useless to put up a timber jetty at Wyndham. The result has proved that I knew more than the engineers at that time. Even now I may tell the Minister that I am very doubtful about the efficacy of the system which has been adopted. The initial cost of reinforced concrete would be considerably greater than that of timber, but a jetty erected of that material would last practically for ever, whereas the shore end of the Wyndham jetty was eaten out before the sea end was finished. I have at home a piece of a strut out of that jetty which had been in the water for 12 months; there is now practically nothing but the teredo left in it. It is like a piece of sponge. I want to impress not merely upon the present Minister for Works, but upon the Public Works Department generally, and particularly upon this Parliament, that with regard to

North-West jetties the best possible thing to do is to cut out timber altogether and use either steel or reinforced concrete. Seeing that steel is likely to be considerably more expensive than concrete, we thus come back to the fact that the jetties in the North-West should be constructed of reinforced concrete. There is one other question regarding the North-West upon which I desire some information. It is about the engineer for the North-West. Shortly after coming into office the Scaddan Government appointed an officer to this position. He was employed upon North-West work wholly, and there is no shadow of doubt that that officer did excellent work there and for the whole State, saving many thousands of pounds. But since the present Government and the preceding Government came into office—or should I say since the Scaddan Government went out—there seems to be a continual inclination to put other work on that officer and take him away from his North-West work. At the present time he has practically finished with his work in the North-West; not finished with it, but he has not the time to do it in.

The Minister for Works: We have another man on it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: You have Mr. Hutchinson on it.

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We want to know who Mr. Hutchinson is. We do not want any third-rate officer there. Mr. Hutchinson, I suppose, was a sort of ganger under Mr. Tindale who was doing the work. If the present officer is going to leave his position we want a first class officer in his place.

Mr. Teesdale: But we do not want him to go.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There is ample work for him to do. I am speaking in the interests of economy for the whole State. A good engineer in the North-West and one who devotes the whole of his time to the works in those parts is, I think, essential. I said that Mr. Tindale has saved thousands of pounds, and a good engineer permanently employed will save quite that amount where a casual man will lose thousands. I hope the Minister will take notice of these few remarks in the interests of public economy. It is absolute waste to send casual engineers to do jobs in the North-West. We want first class men with general knowledge, able to build and repair bridges, sink wells, repair them, build tram lines, railways, and innumerable things that we could not get any casual man to do. I trust that the Government will allow the present officer to continue his work or else keep him down here permanently and get another first class man for the North-West.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [10.33]: I support the remarks of the member for Pilbara regarding the North-West engineer, and I hope the Government

will hesitate before taking away this official who has secured a complete knowledge of North-West requirements as the result of his many years of experience in those parts. So great is his experience that he can, to all intents and purposes, sit down in his office in Perth and pick out every culvert, bridge, crossing and other public work which we may choose to speak to him about, without moving out of his office. An engineer like this man is positively necessary for the North-West, and it would be a crime to take him away from that position. It would take years before another engineer could gain the experience that Mr. Tindale has to his credit. It is important that we should have a man like this with an intimate knowledge of our requirements. He has a tremendous area to cover and it is a splendid thing to know that we can go to such a man in his office and be sure that he is au fait with, and knows intimately the locality it is desired to talk about.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [10.35]: Following on the remarks of the members for Pilbara and Roebourne respectively, I would like to refer to the announcement that a Commissioner for the North-West is to be appointed. I consider that for a position like this an engineer is required, because the development of the North-West will depend largely upon engineering skill. If we secure an engineer with a certain amount of administrative ability and business capacity he should fill the position well. I think that the gentleman who has been referred to by the previous speakers is fully qualified to fill the position, and if Mr. Tindale could be spared from the Public Works Department to take up the position of Commissioner for the North-West it would probably prove a great saving, as the two positions could be combined in the one appointment. Thus, if Mr. Tindale were chosen for the position, he would have to be well paid, for it is essential that we should have such a man who knows thoroughly the North-West as Mr. Tindale does. I hope the Ministry will release Mr. Tindale from his present position and offer him a fair salary to take up the position of Commissioner for the North-West combined with that of engineer for the North-West.

Mr. MUNSIE (Menzies) [10.38]: I desire to have some information, but I am at a loss to know whether I can get it at this stage, and if not, at which stage of the Estimates I can do so. The point I want to have some information upon deals with the question of water supply. A number of headings are given, but there are no details whatever. Briefly, what I want to know is, what is being done regarding the extension of a water scheme to Hampton Plains.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [10.39]: This is not the place for

that, but I have no objection to giving it to the hon. member at this stage.

Mr. Munsie: I should like to have information on the point.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So far as the Hampton Plains water supply scheme is concerned, an agreement was entered into between the company and the Goldfields Water Supply Department under which it was agreed that the pipe line should be laid to Hampton Plains, a six-inch pipe line striking off from the main goldfields pipe. It was agreed what the price should be and what guarantee should be given under agreement, by the Hampton Plains Company. Under that arrangement a certain amount was to be repaid by way of a water guarantee. The whole of the details may be seen by members. The pipes are being made as rapidly as possible at the State Implement Works and at Monteath's at Subiaco. As the pipes are made they are sent forward by rail to the depôt. I do not think anything is being done in connection with the laying of the pipes at present because Mr. O'Brien is of the opinion that it is not well to start laying the pipes until he has got at least half the necessary length of pipes delivered there. I believe the water will be there by the coming summer. There has been nothing done to hinder the progress of the work and there is no desire to hinder it. I will give the hon. member all the information that I have at any time. The member for Sussex spoke about the Donnybrook school. I cannot tell him anything about that just now, but I will let him have the information he desires this week so that he may tell his constituents that their interests are not being neglected. With regard to the more important matters dealt with by members interested in the North-West, I thought I had made it clear to the member for Pilbara that my remarks about continual repairs to jetties were not said in a disparaging way to the North-West. They were made with the idea of warning the House of the continual expense that must be entailed in connection with jetties and wharves where timber is used. I quite agree that with regard to repairs and reinstatement and so forth it is due to the engineers, and to me as Minister, to see that whatever is done is of a lasting character, even though it may be more expensive in the first instance. Regarding concrete piles there has been considerable discussion amongst the engineers in the Works Department. I have had them in my office from time to time discussing this very question, and I expect that we shall be using concrete piles within the next 12 months. They have been used successfully in other parts of the world and there is no reason why we should not try them here. I do not care about steel structures in salt water because we know that steel is not lasting when used in those conditions. With regard to the sleeves for piles for the Wyndham jetty, the engineers are not doubtful. I was speaking to Mr. Tindale about this only within the last

fortnight and he is of opinion that they will be quite successful. The members for Pilbara, Gascoyne, and Roebourne expressed opinions in regard to Mr. Tindale that I was very pleased to hear. Mr. Tindale is regarded by the department in the same way as those hon. members regard him; namely, that he is a man of experience, common sense, and initiative. At the present time he is occupying the position of assistant to the Engineer in Chief, and I can assure hon. members that Mr. Tindale would not have been taken away from his active position as engineer for the North-West if there had been in our department a man available who could have filled the position Mr. Tindale now occupies. It is a post which requires a man with experience in all kinds of engineering, and it should be a stepping-stone to the higher office of engineer in chief when the present occupant retires. I am quite satisfied that the hon. members who have spoken so well of Mr. Tindale would not stand in his way.

Mr. Underwood: I would not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What has been said about this officer has been said, I am sure, because of a genuine and sincere appreciation of his work. We had the power to take him away, but before I would consent to him being appointed to the position he now holds, which is really an advancement, I had to be assured that the North-West would be properly looked after. I have been assured that Mr. Hutchinson will be directed as to what work should be done and how it should be done. But for that I would not have consented to place Mr. Tindale in the position he holds to-day. I know nothing as to whether he is likely to be offered the position of Commissioner for the North-West, but should that post be offered to him, hon. members can rely upon it that I shall not stand in the way of Mr. Tindale's advancement or indeed the advancement of anyone. We in the department would be sorry indeed to lose Mr. Tindale because he is one of those rare men we find at times who unite high professional experience and knowledge with common sense. That is a combination which has made Mr. Tindale appreciated in the North-West. Mr. Hutchinson will be guided by a man who has a knowledge of the work, and the members of the various North-West electorates can rest assured that their interests will not be neglected in any shape or form. It is satisfactory for me to hear what hon. members have to say about Mr. Tindale and I shall take the opportunity to-morrow to let him know. When a man has done good work and that work has been appreciated, he should be made acquainted with the fact.

General debate concluded; items discussed as follow:

Item, Wages of storemen, office cleaners and labourers employed in P.W. offices Perth, etc., £2,300:

Mr. LUTEX: This item shows an increase of £79. Will the Minister state whether it

refers to an increase in wages? The details are not given in the item.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We could not very well itemise this. At the moment I am not able to say whether the increase represents an increase in wages or in numbers. If we were to itemise this it would take a couple of sheets of the Estimates.

Item, Insurance on public buildings, contribution to insurance fund, £1,300:

Mr. PICKERING: Is this amount sufficient to cover the insurance?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Provision was made on a percentage for the insurance of our buildings. The Treasury carries the risk. At present there is a sum of between £45,000 and £50,000, out of which this is provided. That money is out at interest. Instead of paying premiums to the insurance companies, we are covering our own insurance.

Item, Roads and Bridges throughout the State, £30,000.

Mr. SMITH: I should like to know how much of this is to be spent on roads and bridges, as distinct from travelling expenses.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not able to give the details, but there are two road boards auditors, their salaries being approximately £300 each. Therefore their travelling expenses would be 12s. 6d. per day, and so, say, £1,000 would cover the amount.

Item, Maintenance and Reconstruction Main Road, Caves, £500:

Mr. PICKERING: This road is not in good repair. I suggest an alteration of the system of maintenance. Instead of having one foreman driving about the road and doing no work himself, it would be better to have two working foremen who would devote all their time to the road.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When at Busselton three weeks ago I was approached on this question by the local authorities. I said I would have inquiries made. The responsible officer has been away, but I hope to see him this week and find out what can be done in this respect.

Item, Perth Government House and Albany Government House, Incidentals, £2,000:

Mr. MUNSIE: The Minister has already explained that last year £2,876 was spent at Government House, Perth, in connection with the visit of the Prince of Wales. This year it is proposed to spend another £2,000. What is the reason for this?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of this £2,000 some £1,200 has been spent in connection with the Prince's visit, making the total expenditure at Government House in connection with that visit approximately £3,500. We had to entirely renovate the ball room and repair the ceiling. In addition it was necessary to increase the exits from the

ball room, for we agreed that we could not risk any accident in the case of a panic.

Item, Claremont Old Men's Home, Renovation and repairs, £700:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am glad to know that the Minister was so careful to make everything comfortable at Government House, and eliminate all risk of accident. Hon. members who have visited the Old Men's Home at Claremont must conclude that the amount provided here is somewhat niggardly. I do not know of any other public building where, in the event of fire breaking out, there is so frightful a risk of tragedy as is to be found at the Old Men's Home. The verandahs have been enclosed with hessian to provide accommodation for some 30 beds, with the result that the side entrance and exits of the building, and even the windows, have to remain permanently closed, leaving but one exit at either end. Strictly speaking, the accommodation at the Old Men's Home should be discussed on the Health Estimates. This item only provides for renovations and repairs. Additional buildings are required to accommodate at least 200 people. I intend to bring the matter forward at a later stage. The old folks who have gone to spend the rest of their lives in this home, have helped to blaze the track, and should at least have sufficient accommodation and comfort for their needs. I propose at a later stage to ask the House to agree to something more being done for them.

Item, Wooroloo Sanatorium, Renovations and Repairs, £600.

Mr. MUNSIE: There has been an agitation for some time for the erection of a recreation hall at the Wooroloo Sanatorium. Certain gentlemen agreed to put up £1,000 if the Government will provide the balance. Is there any chance of the building being provided in the near future?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is a certainty. A sum of money has been advanced and the Government will advance another amount. I expect the matter will very shortly be finalised.

Item, Crawley Estate and camping area, maintenance, wages, and minor works, including road approach, £30.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Last year I brought up the question of improvements at Crawley. We are neglecting this part of the metropolitan area as a holiday resort. The large number of camping parties that go there each summer are fast destroying the natural shade that was there. Now is the time for the Government to begin planting trees. This is one of the most popular picnic grounds near Perth, but, if it is to be denuded of shade, it will be lost for that purpose.

Mr. Smith: They should also provide sanitary conveniences and water.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. Improvements of this sort would not cost very much, for the trees could be obtained from the Government nursery.

The Premier: We are arranging to do that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Nothing has been done for a year. I hope that when the trees are planted they will be of the variety that will grow fast and give plenty of shade.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In connection with this item and the foreshore of Perth I may say that arrangements are now being made to transfer the control to Mr. Shapcott, the Secretary to the Premier. Mr. Shapcott is an enthusiast in matters of this sort. Let me add that no encroachment will be permitted, however powerful the influence brought to bear, on the breathing spaces of the generations yet to come. As Minister for Works I have the power of veto in that connection. Mr. Shapcott is undertaking the active work of transforming the bare spaces we have into something more eyeable and more attractive. Any assistance that my department can give him will be rendered.

Mr. ANGELO: Surely Mr. Shapcott has more to do than he can attend to now, and these places should not be transferred to his care.

The Premier: Mr. Shapcott has the assistance of a gardener.

Mr. ANGELO: In Java and Singapore parks and pleasure resorts are placed under the control of the Tourist Bureau, and the same course should be followed here, as if these attractions are neglected the effect will be to send our country visitors to the Eastern States to spend their money. I am glad the leader of the Opposition has drawn attention to the matter.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.15 p.m.