

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 17th November, 1927.

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

QUESTION—PEEL ESTATE SETTLERS.

Mr. NORTH (for Hon. W. J. George) asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Will he make public the policy of the Government in respect to the settlers for whom blocks on the Peel Estate will not be available when the re-allotment, following on reclassification, has been completed? 2, In respect to groups which have been condemned, will the department find the settlers work on other groups? If so, on what conditions and rates of pay?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, The Government will provide suitable holdings as early as possible in other localities for the settlers referred to. Action to this end is now being taken by the Group Settlement Board. 2, The department is offering contract work on other adjacent groups to these men, pending action referred to in reply to Question 1.

QUESTION—TRAMWAYS EXTENSION.

Mr. MANN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, When does he anticipate the tram-line in Stirling, Newcastle, and Lord Streets will be completed? 2, Is he aware that its present condition is dangerous to the public?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Provided the City Council adhere to their original arrangement, the road surfacing in Stirling, Newcastle, and Lord Streets should be completed in five weeks. Failing this there will be some delay, as the department have no road roller available. The matter is being gone into with the City Council with a view to expediting completion of road surfacing. 2, There is no danger, provided ordinary care is exercised.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Industries Assistance Act Continuance Bill.

BILL—LEIGHTON-ROBB'S JETTY RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: This is a very small Bill, but it involves highly important issues and carries with it a very substantial expenditure. In it we provide for the deviation of the railway that now serves Fremantle to the site of the suggested bridge over the Swan River, as recommended by the Engineer-in-Chief in his report on the bridge and the suggested improvements to the Fremantle harbour. So the Bill carries with it the acceptance by the Government of the Engineer-in-Chief's report. But that does not mean that heavy expenditure is to be incurred immediately and big work involved straight off. All that the Engineer-in-Chief asks for this year is £2,000. He says it will take him until June next to prepare his plans, take the necessary borings, and get out his specifications. So all he is asking for this year is £2,000. He says the bridge itself will take at least two years to construct from the time the work starts. If authority for that work were given immediately, it would be 2½ years at least before the bridge would be ready. The Bill involves the question of the bridge, and the site of the bridge carries with it the question of harbour extension. It is those two points, railway and road traffic, and harbour extension, that the Engineer-in-Chief reported on.

Mr. Thomson: It will mean a good deal of resumption.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The reason why the Bill is introduced at this stage is to provide for the resumptions, and also to get a declaration from Parliament. The Government do not consider it would be right, even if we had the necessary legal authority, to go ahead with the scheme without Parliament first being asked to declare upon it. And although we may have power to proceed with the resumptions, still we think the right thing to do is to come to Parliament first.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: A previous Government purchased a tremendous area of

land many years ago with a view to the building of the bridge.

Mr. Thomson: But that will not be suitable now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Some of it may be. That land was resumed for a site further up the river, and of course it cannot be used for the site now suggested. But I think that when this work is completed we shall be able to dispose of the land resumed at that earlier time, and at a considerable profit, for land values have since risen, and the extension of the harbour up the river will add to those values. So I do not think there will be any loss.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I should think not!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Eventually a lot of the land previously resumed will be sold. But I do not think it should be sold until the harbour is extended up the river, for that extension will add to the value of the land and give us a substantial profit on the price paid some years ago. I want to deal with the question of the bridges. They have been discussed for many years, and it was impressed on the Government prior to the war that those bridges were antiquated and that it was most desirable that new bridges should be built. But I think it is most necessary to be very cautious in making public statements dealing with bridges, particularly a bridge carrying so much traffic as does the Fremantle bridge; for we do not want to create an impression in the public mind that the bridge is unsafe. Since a time many years before the war, successive Governments have been urged by the department that a new bridge should be built for Fremantle.

Hon. G. Taylor: It has been advocated for over 20 years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Just after the washaway that occurred in 1926, the Railway Department, who are in charge of the railway bridge, examined the whole position, and the Engineer for Ways and Works, who is the responsible officer, put up to the Commissioner of Railways a long report on the bridge. After he had dealt with the repairs, he concluded his minute by stating—

I cannot undertake to maintain the present bridge in safe working order for more than about three years longer, and it will probably take all that time before a new bridge will be ready, even if a start is made at once.

That was dated 14th October, 1926. Over a year has gone by since then. There is the

declaration by a responsible engineer that he cannot guarantee the safety of the bridge for more than another two years from to-day. And it will take at least two years—provided the money is found to the extent the Engineer-in-Chief has asked for—to build the bridge as suggested. The traffic bridge is an historic structure.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is not referred to in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, both bridges have to be removed. That means removing an historic structure. Its history is rather interesting. It has undergone many alterations since it was first constructed, and has been patched and added to from year to year in the endeavour to make it carry the traffic. It has given good service, and of course is now decrepit with age. The bridge was commenced in 1864 and was constructed by convict labour. It was then 955ft. long by 12ft. wide and cost £3,114. That was the result of having convict labour for the job. Prior to that date the traffic to Perth was by the south side of the river, over the Canning Bridge, which was built in 1849. The Causeway was built in 1843. The original bridge at Fremantle was 33 feet above low-water level. That permitted the lighters to sail up the river from Fremantle. In 1897 the bridge was closed and a temporary bridge constructed on the downstream side, giving a clear headway of 21 feet above low water, through two navigation spans. The lower bridge was used as a vehicular bridge, while the old structure was left for pedestrians. In 1908-9 alterations to the old bridge were undertaken by the municipality to permit of trams being run to North Fremantle. Originally the bridge was built on a rapidly rising gradient from North Fremantle, in order to give the desired head room in the navigation spans. But the design, made by Mr. Leslie for the municipalities concerned, provided for reconstruction of the bridge to a lower level and on a uniform grade from north to south. The work of alteration, commenced by the municipality, was eventually finished by the Public Works Department. That alteration comprised widening the bridge to 20 feet on the down-stream side. Portion of the low-level bridge was also removed. Since then the bridge has been strengthened and repaired. In 1911-12, 464 feet was reconstructed and new piles were driven in order that the trams might be carried. In 1920 the effect of the teredo became evident, and

tarred piles were driven alongside the existing piles where the effect of the marine borer was most marked. During the last year, the whole of the decking was renewed and a wearing surface of tuart was provided, but the essential structure itself is that which existed after the completion of the reconstruction work in 1908. We are dealing with the traffic bridge which was actually closed in 1897. Another bridge was built alongside it. At that time it was considered unsafe.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is visiting ancient sins upon modern times.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was patched up, and other piles were driven in, and it has served the purpose since then. The average cost of maintaining the two bridges over the last five years has been £4,003.

Mr. Corboy: Would that include the cost of repairing the bridge after the washaway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is in addition to that. There was a sum of £14,433 spent on the reconstruction, in addition to the maintenance cost.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have to spend money in maintaining any bridge.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The maintenance of a steel bridge, such as is suggested, will be nothing as compared with the cost of maintaining a wooden bridge. In order to give some semblance of safety to the bridge, we have had to provide, under the Traffic Act, that no person shall drive any vehicle across it of a weight exceeding 35 cwt. at more than eight miles an hour. The Fremantle tramways do not travel at a speed of more than six miles an hour, while the maximum rate of other vehicles is eight miles an hour. The big trams are not allowed to cross the bridge at all. There have been enough discussions in public and in the department for the last 20 years for us to say that the time has arrived to make a move in the direction of getting a decent structure. In his last annual report, which has been laid on the Table of the House, the Commissioner of Railways makes the following statement:—

The question of a new steel railway bridge at Fremantle is still in abeyance, but the order of its urgency has in no way diminished. While the reconstructed portion of the old bridge is in very good condition, the whole structure is antiquated, and the annual cost of maintenance is becoming increasingly and excessively heavy.

That is the point dealing with the bridge. Wrapped up with the bridge is the question of harbour extension. We have had to consider the position of the trade at Fremantle, and just what the development of the State is likely to mean to the trade of that port. For many years the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners have been pressing different Governments for increased accommodation. The matter was under active consideration by Cabinet when war broke out. On the declaration of war the trust said they would withdraw their request for increased accommodation, and they carried on since with the additional facilities that were provided in the way of wharfage accommodation and in other directions. Although we were able to do without the additional accommodation during the war, I think the war is now sufficiently far behind for us to be able to sum up the position and judge what the future is likely to mean to the trade of the port, and whether that port will be able to cope with the trade that will be passing through it.

Mr. Thomson: Have any tests been made with regard to the foundations?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Engineer-in-Chief is satisfied that everything is all right, but borings have to be made before the design is decided upon.

Mr. Thomson: Is he satisfied that the foundations will be all right for a dock?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There has been no boring for a dock. No expenditure will be incurred until the foundations have been thoroughly tested. The £2,000 asked for by the Engineer-in-Chief is to include boring. No bridge will be gone on with until the foundations have been thoroughly tested. Under the Public Works Act, if the resumptions are effected before the 1st January, the price paid will be the price as at June last. If the resumptions are not effected this year, the price will be that as on the 1st January next. Upon the decision being arrived at to extend the harbour upstream, the value that this decision will give to property will have to be paid if the resumption is not done this side of January. That is the object of getting the power to go on with the resumptions before the New Year.

Mr. Marshall: Assuming that the foundations are all right, will the new bridge be approximately where the old one is at present?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The site is about 1,000 feet up from the existing traffic bridge.

Mr. Marshall: What do you call the traffic bridge?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The bridge over which the tramways run. The map on the wall will show the site that has been selected. The railway bridge is further down.

Mr. Sampson: Will the railway junction with the Jandakot line?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will deal with that phase later. The question of harbour extensions was under active consideration at the time war broke out, but has been in abeyance for the last few years. Last year we were particularly fortunate in having the arrangement for our shipping spread over so many months. Last year's harvest has not yet all left Fremantle. There is still some to go.

Mr. Marshall: I do not know that it is all in yet.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: No one anticipated that such favourable arrangements would be made for this year. The general impression is that there will be difficulty in accommodating the ships, and that there will be a considerable amount of congestion. I do not suggest we should cater at Fremantle for any area except that for which Fremantle is the closest port. I will give the figures to show the trade from the area for which Fremantle is catering. Just prior to the war the Fremantle harbour was showing an increase in its tonnage, and had been doing so for some years before the war, of a little over 7 per cent. In the year before war broke out it reached 7.9 per cent. It has got back to that now. During the last five years, the increased average has been just about the same, namely, over 7 per cent. We have therefore got back to the rate of progress that we were making just before the war. At that period we were averaging an increase in our area under crop of approximately 200,000 acres a year. If we take the period from 1919, which was the first year when the State got into its normal stride after the war, until last year, we find that for the period of seven years the State averaged an additional 200,000 acres under crop each year. This year it is anticipated the additional area will be 300,000 acres.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: More than that. Your figures are too low.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are conservative. I am not overstating the position. I am keeping to the conservative side in these figures. If for the next ten years we make the same rate of progress that has been made since 1919, we shall continue to average an additional 200,000 acres under crop each year. I do not think any member will doubt that. I think we shall do more than that.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: With wheat at 5s. we shall double it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If we take that average throughout, and the State yield is 12 bushels to the acre, at the end of ten years our wheat output will reach 55,000,000 bushels. If we have a 15-bushel yield, the output will be 67,000,000 bushels. I do not think anyone will suggest that these figures are very wide of the mark.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The outports will get more and more wheat every year.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. There has been an enormous increase in our wool yield. Particularly does this apply to the progress made in the North Coolgardie district. Five years ago three tons of wool came down from Leonora, but the department estimate that this year there will be 300 tons, and that next year there will be a tremendous increase upon that. The number of sheep has increased in five years by over 1,000,000. At present we have approximately half a million more sheep than South Australia. Although we have not yet reached the South Australian clip, that will come. We shall be a long way ahead of South Australia both in wool and wheat in the next year or two. During the last five years our wool output has increased by 10,000,000 lbs. weight, and there is going to be a very substantial increase upon that during the next few years.

Mr. Thomson: The large holdings are also increasing their carrying capacity.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If that progress is maintained, we can see what position we shall have to face in ten years' time. I want to examine the trade that Fremantle will have to cater for at the end of that period. The figures show that between 96 per cent. and 93 per cent. of the imports into the State passed through Fremantle during the last six years, and that the exports for the same period averaged between 87 and 76 per cent. We can say that there will be

95 per cent. of the State's imports and approximately 75 per cent. of the State's exports coming through Fremantle. Of our total agricultural area, 42 per cent. of it has Fremantle as its nearest shipping port. I am not suggesting that we should cater at Fremantle for trade which does not geographically belong to it. We are building a harbour at Geraldton and catering for that end. The Engineer-in-Chief has under consideration other harbours in the State to cater for the requirements of the districts affected.

Mr. Thomson: I hope Albany will receive a greater share of the trade.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The ports will get their rightful trade. Three-quarters of the wheat now produced by the State is grown within the area for which Fremantle is the distributing port.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Only 10 per cent. of the agricultural land within the Fremantle zone is at present developed. Ninety per cent. of it remains undeveloped. I do not say the whole of that 90 per cent. is cultivable land, but a large percentage is. When we realise that only 10 per cent. of the country tributary to the port is at present developed, we can imagine the size of the trade Fremantle will eventually be called upon to do.

Mr. Thomson: Those are staggering figures.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Last year Fremantle handled approximately $1\frac{3}{4}$ million tons of cargo, and if the increase in trade which I have conservatively estimated takes place, then, upon the foundation from which the Engineer-in-Chief has built, for every ton of wheat and flour the harbour is called upon to handle, it will handle three tons of other cargo. That is to say, the proportion of wheat and flour will be as one in four. If the progress anticipated is made—a prospect which I do not think the House questions for a moment—it means that within ten years the Fremantle harbour will have to handle 3,000,000 tons of cargo as against the $1\frac{1}{4}$ million of last year. That is to say, the harbour will be called upon to do more than double the business it has been called upon to do up to the present. That increased volume cannot possibly be handled with existing facilities. The extension up the river to the new site for the bridge will give additional wharf space of 5,750ft., making the total space available 15,890ft., or approximately a third more.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is no good.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will mean that, provided increased use is made of the existing wharf space—and widening operations are well in progress now—at the end of 10 years the whole of the wharf accommodation available up the river will be fully needed. The report of the Engineer-in-Chief gives interesting figures as to the use of wharf accommodation in other parts of the world. However, our trade is seasonal, and we have to get our goods away within a given time in order to secure for them anything like a fair chance in the world's markets; and this means that we cannot derive the same use from the Fremantle wharf accommodation as is possible in some other parts of the world.

Mr. Marshall: Do not you think that in 10 years' time our interests will not be solely seasonal?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope so, but that will mean a need for additional accommodation.

Mr. Marshall: Do not you think you had better take the bridge right away so as to accommodate shipping on the east side?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Evidently the hon. member has not seen the scheme put up by Mr. Stileman.

Mr. Marshall: I have not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The harbour goes up the river as far as the new site for the bridge, and that extension will cater for the trade during the next ten years; but the Engineer-in-Chief has definitely decided against going further up the river.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have to decide that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: His reasons for that decision are very sound, and will be found in his report. In one sentence he disposes effectively of the suggestion to go further up the river. As regards economical working, to have a harbour three miles long, with communication only at one end, would mean a very expensive harbour to administer. Then there is a viewpoint which has not been examined by any of those who previously reported on Fremantle harbour extension—the tidal effect on Perth waters which would result from a deepening of the channel up the river as far as was proposed. Mr. Stileman has had records taken in Perth waters, as high up as Guildford, at the Causeway, at Mill-street and at other points on the river; and these records show that there would be a substantial increase in the rise and fall of the tide if the proposal were

carried out; that at high tide the Esplanade would be flooded, and that at low tide the water front would be very dirty. All the wharves and jetties up the river have been built with an eye to the existing rise and fall of the tide, and they would be useless, as also would the existing channels, if the harbour were extended up the river as far as has been suggested.

Mr. North: Then there was a big blunder in the previous scheme.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That phase was not examined by any engineer who previously reported on the scheme. I am very glad indeed that it has now been examined, because it would be nothing short of a calamity if anything of the nature indicated should happen to our river. The case for limiting the up-river work on the harbour to the site suggested by the Engineer-in-Chief is sound. Then the proposal is to go on the north side, to remove the foot of the North Mole, and to build along the back of the North Wharf, so that actually we shall be working from both the left hand and the right hand there. A marshalling yard for the Railway Department is provided, and all things will be most convenient. Mr. Stileman says the proposal permits of almost unlimited extension along the coast line up to Cottesloe Beach. The advantage of working on the other side is that the approach already exists. The same approach to the harbour as exists now will be available then. The foot of the breakwater will be removed, an entrance made to the other side of the wharf, and the necessary dredging will be done and the dredged matter pumped to fill in the back of the wharf. The work will serve two good purposes, and, besides, there is good water in that location. As regards the north side, the Bill provides for the deviation of the railway so as to relieve the existing line and cross over to the bridge site. On the other side the existing railway coming in from Jandakot up the waterfront to Fremantle station is to be deviated to meet the bridge site, the idea being that eventually, when the Brookton-Armadale railway is completed and the proposal to make the trunk line on to Kondinin has been carried out, instead of all the wheat having to be hauled round through Spencer's Brook and in through the Perth yard, it will come down through Armadale and Jandakot, and instead of going through the Fremantle yard, causing

congestion there, will come straight over the bridge across to the North Wharf. There is no immediate urgency for the construction of that part of the line, which will only be necessary when the Brookton-Armadale line and the other section have been built; but we want to obtain rights of resumption because, if a declaration goes forth that that is the scheme, then under the Public Works Act it will only be possible to go back to the previous June or January. The scheme having been proposed, it is necessary that we go on with the work. When the line is to be built, is a matter for future decision. As I said earlier, the Engineer-in-Chief is asking for only £2,000 this year. The Government are asking Parliament for £2,000 to be provided this year for boring at the bridge site and for the preparation of drawings. When that work has been completed, the Government will have to take into consideration not only the urgency of this further work, but the position of the money market and the claims of the rest of the State for expenditure. The claims of this further work, as compared with other requirements, will have to be considered by Cabinet. The Government have religiously kept in view during the whole of the time that the expenditure of loan moneys should as far as possible be directed towards further development and the production of new wealth. We try to see that every pound of loan money expended is directed towards the production of new wealth: but so much production as Western Australia now has, of course brings with it other demands. It would be useless to continue increasing the wheat and wool production of the country without providing means for the products to reach the markets of the world. Harbour accommodation is just as essential to the producer as is railway communication. It would be useless to furnish roads and railways for the purpose of getting commodities to the seaport, if there are not facilities at the seaport for the conveyance of those commodities to the world's markets. It will be for the Government to consider, when the time comes, just what money can be made available for this further work, and the rate at which the work can proceed, and also the period at which it may be begun. All hon. members will agree that our chief harbour, which will be called upon to handle so much of Western Aus-

tralia's trade, should be thoroughly equipped and should be able to guarantee quick despatch. Only this morning I have received complaints that ships will not be able to secure berths next week. With that difficulty starting so early in the season, it is hard to say what the position will be later. We have to realise that unless Fremantle can guarantee accommodation and quick despatch, the freights for loading at that port will be increased.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course if shippers charter badly and pile all the ships on to us at once, we cannot meet the situation.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Such favourable conditions as existed last year will not obtain this year. As to the urgency of the work, I have read the minute of the Engineer for Railway Construction on the bridge, and I have quoted figures showing what tonnage Fremantle will be called upon to cater for from the area within the zone of the port. These figures are ample evidence of the urgent need for increased harbour accommodation at Fremantle. Mr. Stileman informs me that from the time he starts dredging, three or four years must elapse before any appreciable increase in berthing accommodation will be available.

Mr. Thomson: That is, in the river.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Mr. Stileman points out that he cannot work too near any of the bridges, as by doing so he would endanger them. There is, however, a type of dredge that he will be able to work if he can get it under the bridges. That type of dredge will be able to work between the bridges, and so the work can be proceeded with if the money is found. I repeat, even if the Engineer-in-Chief can get on with the work as indicated, three or four years must elapse from the time he starts dredging before any additional wharfage accommodation will become available. If money cannot be found to do the work, until the bridge is finished—the expenditure on the bridge will involve £1,000,000 in itself—and also the money involved in constructing the harbour at Geraldton, as well as that necessary for the harbour construction at Fremantle, it will be five or six years before any additional wharfage accommodation will be available. That is to say, that will be the position if the harbour construction works at Fremantle have to wait until the bridge is completed. We are compelled to face the

position, for it will be a bad look-out for the producers of the State if additional accommodation is not available. Without it the harbour will be unduly congested and there will be considerable delays experienced in getting our products away. As time goes on and the position develops, we shall be forced to face this task. At this stage of our history we must look well ahead. With the enormous development that is taking place in Western Australia, it is useless to sit down until we find our harbour so choked that we cannot get our commodities away. Until we can export our commodities, we cannot receive the money that we should get as the result of our development. The attitude of the Government is that we have adopted the scheme the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. Stileman) has advanced, and that we will provide £2,000 this year to effect the necessary preliminary work, the borings and the preparation of plans. Next year when the financial position is being considered, we shall announce to Parliament just what we propose to do at that juncture. We seek the passage of the Bill in order to give us authority to proceed with the resumption of that are necessary for railway purposes, so that we may save to the State the additional money we shall have to pay if this work has to remain in abeyance until next year. That is the whole essence of our desire to have the Bill passed this session. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

BILL—AUDIT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.18] in moving the second reading said: This is a short Bill, the object of which is to increase the salary of the Auditor General. This matter has been the subject of discussion in the House from time to time, and it is rather surprising to find that notwithstanding the completely altered condition of affairs throughout the State during recent years, the salary of the Auditor General has remained stationary ever since his appointment in 1904.

Mr. Mann: He is not the type of man who will agitate on his own behalf.

THE PREMIER: No. One can hardly credit that with the increases that have been

granted in salaries and wages generally, consequent upon the altered condition of affairs throughout the State, the salary of this particular position should have remained stationary for a period of 23 years. The salary paid to the Auditor General of the Commonwealth is £1,750 a year, while that paid to the Auditor General of New South Wales is £1,150; to the Auditor General of Victoria, £1,250; to the Auditor General of Queensland, £1,500; to the Auditor General of South Australia, £1,000; and to the Auditor General of Tasmania, £1,000. The only concern I have in submitting the Bill is that perhaps the increase set out is not as much as it might be. It will bring the stipend of the Auditor General in this State into line with the salaries paid in South Australia and Tasmania, but will leave us still lower than the salaries paid in each of the other States. Of course that is a position that can be remedied easily at any time. If we were to unduly increase the salary now we would not be able to go backwards, but at any time we can grant a further increase on the amount mentioned in the Bill. The salary has been fixed at £1,000. The only other clause contained in the Bill has to do with the retirement of the Auditor General. Hon. members will be aware that there is no provision in the existing Audit Act for the retirement of the Auditor General except under very special circumstances. His retirement can be effected by a vote of both Houses of Parliament. In fact the position of our Auditor General is similar to that of the Supreme Court judges. Should the Auditor General keep within the bounds of his duties and conform to the requirements of the Audit Act, it would be possible for him to continue in the position until he felt disposed of his own volition to retire. I consider that an undesirable condition of affairs. In the public service generally we have a compulsory retiring age. Officers may be retired at 60 years, but retirement is compulsory at 65 years of age. The Bill therefore provides that the Auditor General shall retire when he reaches the age of 65 years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is hardly fixed in the Civil Service, because we allow officers to continue after they reach the retiring age.

The PREMIER: Yes, in exceptional instances.

Mr. Corboy: But they are very rare.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There are quite a number.

The PREMIER: There was a time when I thought a person should retire when he became 65 years of age. As the years go by, however, I have come to the conclusion that some men have really reached their prime at that age, and that they are then in a position to render the maximum service to the State. That view comes with advancing years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We should make it 50 years for members of this House.

Mr. Corboy: It would be a suitable atmosphere if they were not permitted to come here until they were 50 years of age!

The PREMIER: Many of the great events in the world have been accomplished by persons of advanced years. Mr. Gladstone, when he became Prime Minister of England for the third time, was 84 years of age, and in the concluding stages of the recent war most of the generals were well advanced in years. Clemenceau was Prime Minister of France at 78. That was his age at the conclusion of war when he directed the destinies of France.

Mr. Corboy: What about Sir Henry Parkes in Australia?

The PREMIER: I can assure the youthful member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy) that if I made a search of history for the great events for which youth was responsible, I would find that they were insignificant compared with the great deeds of men of advanced years.

Mr. Latham: What about William Pitt?

The PREMIER: But one swallow does not make a summer and history does not enable us to multiply the Pitts.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But it does the pitfalls—

Mr. Corboy: Created by elderly men—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: For youths to fall into.

The PREMIER: We must admire the enthusiasm of youth!

Mr. Corboy: You are merely envious!

The PREMIER: Not at all, but it is necessary for the venturesome recklessness of youth to be at least curbed by those of more mature years! While the compulsory retiring age is 65 years, the Governor in Council may, and at times does, retain officers beyond that age. In such instances, however, they are special officers with special qualifications for the offices they hold. These are the two points covered by the Bill. I have much pleasure in moving for an increase, after waiting for 23 years.

in the salary paid to the Auditor General. I move therefore—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.26]: I support the second reading of the Bill which contains one good clause and one not so good. Since 1904 the Auditor General has been in receipt of the same salary, but it has to be remembered that in those early days, £800 was a big salary to be paid to an officer in the Civil Service.

The Premier: Yes, in those days.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The salary of the Auditor General, in my opinion, should bear the same relationship to salaries paid in these days.

The Premier: At that rate it would be about £2,000.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Hardly that. Only recently we increased the salary paid to the President of the Licensing Bench to £1,000, although the position had been in existence for only three years, while we increased the salaries of the lay members to £850. Their duties are responsible, but not nearly so responsible as those of the Auditor General.

The Premier: That applies to many other officers in the Public Service.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. The position held by the Auditor General must be filled by a man possessing ability, courage and fairness, and I think we have those qualities in the present Auditor General. I support the salary to be paid to him, but I think it should be a little more. After all, he is an officer of Parliament and perhaps you, Mr. Speaker, should have moved the second reading of the Bill.

The Premier: It is because Parliament has neglected its duty that I have been forced to do it in the end.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Premier knows that we have suggested that this should be done on several occasions. It is only right that we should make the salary of the Auditor General bear some relationship to the salaries paid to other officers. As a matter of fact, even with this increase, the salary of the Auditor General will exceed by merely £40 that of an Under Secretary. However, I support the payment of the increase mentioned in the Bill. I am not so certain, and I grow less certain every day, that we ought to retire in any circumstances experienced men who

reach the age of 65 years. We have men in the service who are over 65 years of age and they are men with special knowledge. Science enables people to live longer, in better health and to work much longer than was possible a few years ago when pyorrhoea, appendicitis or some other complaint carried many people off before they reached that age. Now the position is changed and I do not know why we should discard the services of a useful man simply because he is 65 years of age. Why should it not be 66, 64, 63, 68 or 70? It is a rough and ready way of determining when a man should retire.

The Premier: As a matter of fact the date of retirement should depend upon the individual and his capacity. Some men prematurely aged should retire at 50; others might go on to 70.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The conditions in this respect have changed just as much as in respect to salaries during the last 20 years. Science has done much for the world and many men to-day are fit at 65.

The Premier: I heard a whisper from behind that all of us over 50 should be retired.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If that were done, there would not be much of the Parliament left.

Mr. Corboy: But what remained would be much better.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The member for Yilgarn would occupy a very different position in the public eye if he were not overshadowed by so many men a little older than he is.

Mr. Panton: What you apply to the civil servants you should apply to the politicians!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I would not wait for 65. If we waited for 65 before we retired the member for Yilgarn it would be impossible to get him out. We are very kind to ourselves; people generally are kind to themselves.

Mr. Sampson: Do you call this kindness?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is no age that is too great for a member of Parliament. Sir Henry Parkes filled several important positions at the age of 84. The same applies to Gladstone, and Balfour must be nearly 80 now.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suppose the average age of British Ministers would be well over 65.

Mr. Panton: They age very slowly there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But they go very well for all that. It was such men that gave us the first 200,000 of Britain's men, and if we had been left to act on the advice of people less able, we should not now belong to such an Empire.

The Premier: Gladstone was 68 before he became Prime Minister, and he was Prime Minister three times.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes; these young fellows have not had much experience.

The Premier: We will tolerate them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: When they come here we have to tolerate them. I hope that the amendment relating to the retiring age will not be passed. It is a sad thing to see able-bodied men, particularly wages men, put out of the service when there are many posts they could fill. It should not be difficult to say to a salaried man, "There is something easier that you could do, and we shall keep you on." We all know there are able-bodied men, not old at 65, that have to retire from the service, and it is a sad thing to see them retired. There is no other work at which they can start and some of them, perhaps after having served the country well and faithfully for 30 or 40 years, go out without a pension or retiring allowance and have a terrible struggle to live. No pensions are granted now, and men who joined the service after 1904 and are retired have to live without a pension. I should be sorry to say that an experienced man should not be retained after the age of 65. He might possess special knowledge. The Premier has one such man in mind—and so have I—a man who has special knowledge although he is over 65. If a man can do the work, why should he not be retained? The younger men in the service say that if a man is not retired at 65, it keeps them back, but that disadvantage is compensated for by paying well more than one man in each department. Formerly, when the head of the department received a fair salary, no one else got a reasonable salary, but all that has been changed. I am not enamoured of retiring men of experience. Take such men as the Chief Justice, the Auditor General, the Commissioner of Railways, and other men who must be experienced, and who could gain experience only by time. Why should they be retired at 65? What we are supposed to do is to ensure that the people get the best service for the money expended, and if we have a good

man as Auditor General, I do not see why he should be retired at 65. His position is not an easy one to fill; it would, in fact, be difficult to get a suitable man for the work because he would require so many qualifications and so much knowledge of accounts. I hope that in Committee the Premier will agree to the deletion of that provision.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.36]: I support the proposal to increase the salary of the Auditor General. I regret that the Premier has seen fit to provide that that officer shall retire at the age of 65. Perhaps some members would be fearful if a similar provision were applied to Parliament. A man of ripe experience and in possession of all his intellectual faculties should be a more valuable servant than one many years younger. As the Auditor General is the servant of Parliament, let me express the hope that next year we shall receive his report very much earlier than it reached us this year. In his report he attributed its late presentation to lack of staff and other reasons. I hope the Government will make provision for an increase of staff, so that at the earliest possible moment after the close of the financial year, the House will be in possession of the report.

The Premier: I have never been approached for an increase of staff and an increase of staff has never been denied him.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not say that the Premier has denied him an increase of staff, but I can only base my opinion on the statement in the report. Apparently the Auditor General has not been able to get an increase of staff.

The Premier: I do not think there is anything in that.

Mr. THOMSON: Then why should it be stated in his report?

The Premier: He may have asked the Public Service Commissioner; I do not know.

Mr. THOMSON: The Auditor General occupies a highly responsible position and, considering the increased salaries that have been granted to other sections of the Public Service, it is only fair that he should receive consideration.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [5.39]: I am pleased that the Bill has been introduced even at this late stage. I was surprised to find that the Auditor General mentioned lack of staff as an excuse for the late appearance of his report. The Premier told us he has not been asked for an increase

of staff. More than likely application was made to the Public Service Commissioner.

The Premier: I cannot imagine the Public Service Commissioner refusing him more staff.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I suppose it was necessary for the Auditor General to offer some reason for the lateness of his report, but I hope there will be no necessity to offer any reason in future. The report should reach us simultaneously with the presentation of the Budget. Once the Estimates have been passed, the Auditor General's report loses its value. I do not agree with the other provision of the Bill stipulating 65 years as the retiring age. I know men who were retired 12 or 15 years ago and who to-day are walking about and drawing pensions. Yet for many years after their retirement they were capable of carrying out their duties. Even now they possess perhaps more mature judgment than they did during the years of their service. Of course the younger members of the service are always anxious that the heads should be retired when they reach the stipulated age, so that opportunities for advancement will be available.

The Premier: That applies in every walk of life. Any aspirants for politics, they say, should be pushed out.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is remarkable that we should make 65 years the limit when men have reached the higher political positions in England at 68. They have appealed to the people and the people have put them in the position to become Prime Minister, even at 80 years of age. Parliament, therefore, cannot give effect to the wishes of the people in every particular, because the people are not anxious to discard men when they are still capable of doing good work. If they were of opinion that a man ceased to be of value on attaining the age of 65 years, many of the older Ministers in England would not have received support at the polls. There are some men that are prematurely old at 50, while others at 70 are still capable of work.

The Premier: Much depends on how they spent their earlier years.

Mr. Sampson: A good conceit of advancing years!

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Fancy a man having been retired on a pension 15 years ago and still being capable of work! It is absurd. When a man becomes incapable of doing his work, retirement must follow.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Someone has said that if such men do not go at 65, they will not go at 70.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Perhaps so. I am pleased to have an opportunity to support the granting of an increase to the Auditor General. I was a member of the Government that made the appointment of Auditor General in 1904 and this is the first increase of salary granted during all those years.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Message.

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

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 6:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) be struck out.

The PREMIER: I agree with all that has been said by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mt. Margaret as to the possibility of a man being able to render greater service at 65, and even at 70 years of age, than he has been able to do at any previous period of his life, and we know that there are such instances. I, too, could name a number of such officers in the service to-day who are well over 65 and who really are at the zenith of their powers and, by virtue of their long years of experience, are rendering perhaps better service at the present time than they did in their earlier years. Nevertheless, we must have regard for the fact that probably in the majority of cases the active life's work is about completed at the age of 65, and that is why, no doubt, in this State, and in most of the other States as well, the definite retiring age has been fixed at 65 years. We have that provision in our own Public Service Act.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Sixty.

The PREMIER: At 60 he may retire, but at 65 he must retire. Notwithstanding that provision, we have in the service a number of officers who are beyond the age of 65,

and I have no doubt that if the paragraph is carried as it appears in the Bill, in the future, when the present Auditor General reaches that age—his services will be continued. The paragraph has not been inserted with any desire to apply it to him.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, No.

The PREMIER: So far as I know, the present Auditor-General is still many years off the retiring age. As a matter of fact, I do not think he is yet 60, but it is wise that we should have a provision of this kind in our Act to enable a retirement to be effected if the circumstances of the case require the retirement. Most of us are not conscious of our shortcomings and of what the advancing years are imposing upon us, and we might go on and on doddering to senile decay, almost, without realising that we ought to retire in the interests of the service in which we are engaged. So we might have the Auditor-General going on until he is 80 years of age; he might continue for years after he has ceased to be able to perform the functions of his office.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Parliament could do its duty, and retire him.

The PREMIER: Of course he could be retired by resolution of both Houses. But if a man has a record of long service, and has conducted himself well in his office, Parliament would be reluctant to put up a motion for his retirement merely because he has reached the retiring age. So I think the position will be safeguarded by fixing the age at 65, and we know well that Parliament will not complain if any Government does not adhere strictly to the letter of the law in respect of the retirement.

Mr. Mann: Why do not you leave it to the Government's discretion.

The PREMIER: The Government have no control in this matter. I had thought of that. Moreover, it would be in the highest degree undesirable.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Immoral.

The PREMIER: The Government have no control over the Auditor-General; he is an officer of Parliament. Hon. members will realise the position.

Hon. G. Taylor: He will go at 65 if you pass this clause.

The PREMIER: He will not if the Government of the day do not put the clause into operation. There are quite a number of officers in the service to-day well over the retiring age.

Mr. Latham: The paragraph is very definite.

The PREMIER: What are you going to do with a man who, because of his advancing years, and who should have retired at 65, does not realise his years and still carries on? The Committee will not be doing any injustice by passing the paragraph, because no Government would retire a man at 65 if that man was in full possession of his faculties.

Hon. G. Taylor: You mean that the Government would not retire such an officer without consulting Parliament?

The PREMIER: I am sure I would not. The Auditor-General is an officer of Parliament. I would not dream of interfering with his tenure of office without consulting Parliament. I do not think any other Government would do so either.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It occurs to me as being proper that if a man, on reaching the age of 65, is still capable of carrying out his duties, we should not compel him to retire. I am content with what the Premier has said.

The PREMIER: More especially in a case such as this, where the Auditor-General is an officer of Parliament.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: An officer who holds an important position should not be permitted to retain it after his 60th year unless he is in full possession of his faculties, and is able to render valuable service. There are in the employment of the Government some who are not rendering services for which they are paid, and who ought to go out at 30 or 40 years of age. We are to blame if they are kept in the service, but we know how difficult it is to move anyone from a position in the service. The fact, remains, however, that if such a person cannot live up to his job, he ought to go. I withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That "shall" be struck out with a view to inserting "may"

The Premier: It means the same thing.

Mr. LATHAM: No; "shall" is mandatory.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: At first I had strong objections to the clause, but I am now satisfied there is no danger in it, especially when assured that no Government would attempt to retire the Auditor General without consulting Parliament. As for the proposed

amendment, under the conditions I have mentioned we shall be quite safe in leaving the Bill as it is.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1927-28.

In Committee of Supply.

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

Department of Agriculture (Hon. M. F. Troy, Minister).

Note—Agriculture, £79,210:

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [6.3]: The Department of Agriculture is so closely allied to the Lands Department that at first I thought it advisable to combine the discussion on the two of them. But since they are separate departments, each covering a wide scope, it is better that we give separate attention to the department now under consideration. I am glad to say that the agricultural industry in this State is in an exceedingly prosperous condition. This year I am sure we shall have a record harvest, and that the wheat yield will be some million bushels in excess of last year's figures. The past year can be looked back on with a great deal of pleasure, for there is no doubt that the State, from an agricultural point of view, has made wonderful progress. The primary products, such as wool, wheat and fruit, have been marketed in far greater quantities than ever before. The year might reasonably be referred to as a record breaking one. This will be realised when I inform members that the wheat produced, namely, 30,021,616 bushels, exceeded the previous record by 6,134,219 bushels, and that the area under crop for wheat, namely, 2,571,187 acres, was greater by 459,155 acres than we had ever sown before. It is estimated that we have under crop this year for grain 3,000,000 acres, and that we shall harvest 35,000,000 bushels. Last evening the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) made the remarkable statement that the farmer had

to do all his own investigation work, that the department did not do any. To say that of the Department of Agriculture is to say something that is not correct. The department in its activities places investigations and research work foremost. It is quite manifest this year that the breeding of wheat in this country has been largely responsible for our increased production. That is work done by the Agricultural Department, and no other person is entitled to credit for what has been achieved in that respect. It is remarkable that the wheats bred up by the department are freer from disease than are other varieties. Also the wheats bred by the department are giving heavier yields than most other varieties. That is attributable to the work of the department. There is no doubt the experimental farms under the control of the department have had an appreciable effect on our wheat yield, as they carry out experiments to determine the best varieties to plant, the time of planting, the rate of seeding and the rate of fertilisers to apply. Year after year the department is carrying out research work with a view to building up those records essential to the maintaining of our progress. And when we come to realise the great work done by our departmental experts in the treatment of insect pests, it will be admitted that in this respect the department is performing a very valuable service, one that deserves to be warmly encouraged by the Government. Reverting to the department's special wheats, the latest to be produced is that known as Noongar. It is the result of very patient research over a number of years, and it is expected to prove one of the most prolific of our wheats.

Mr. Mann: What was it bred from?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I could not tell you that.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is it an early wheat or a late one?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: An early wheat. It is a highly prolific wheat and it is doing particularly well in outlying parts of the wheat belt. The production of that variety of wheat in this country means millions of wealth to Western Australia. I am glad to know from results coming to hand that the wheat yields in the far eastern areas are more than favourable. From all the outback areas beyond Lake Brown and Southern Cross the harvest reports are most encouraging. Although some time ago a scare was raised about rust and

other disabilities, it will be found that the harvest will prove a record one for Western Australia.

Mr. Thomson: Will you speak up please; we cannot hear a word you are saying.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The apple yield last year was a record. From figures that have just come to hand I find that no fewer than 901,000 cases of apples were produced last season, or approximately 40,000 cases more than we ever obtained before. Of this number, 548,201 cases were exported, the highest quantity sent out of the State previously having been 347,342 cases. It is very gratifying to hear that the prices obtained overseas by our growers were the highest paid for apples from Australasia. I regret that probably this year's production will not be so great. Still that remains to be seen. I hope things will not prove to be quite so bad as some people fear. Things always appear to be worse at the beginning of the season. The producer fears to see the whole of his year's operations and expenditure go for naught. To him it means the difference between paying his debts and not being able to pay them. Other citizens can live from month to month and year to year because they are in receipt of salaries or incomes, but the producer has to put in all his capital, wait a year, and is all the time dependent on the seasons. We can appreciate his point of view when some pests come along and rob him of the fruit of his toil. During last year the State sent away its first large shipment of wine to the English market, 22,000 gallons being despatched. It is important to remember that the Australian wines are securing a place on the British market and are bringing good prices. Many people, coming to this country and taking up land for vineyards, decided to grow grapes to be converted into dried fruits. Had they embarked on the growing of wine grapes, the results might have been more satisfactory. Of course it is easy to be wise after the event, but it is a pity that men should ever be induced to put all their eggs into one basket. Our vineyards could be so arranged that in the years when there is a good market for dried fruit our growers would have dried fruit, while if the markets were good for wine, they would have wine for the markets.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: When referring to the activities of the Department of Agriculture I should like to emphasise the great work that is being done by the departmental experts. Some reference to them is necessary, because most people, as well as members of Parliament, rarely come into contact with them, with the result that the officers do not receive the encouragement that is due to them. There have been no less than three outbreaks of codlin moth during the last few years, one at North Dandalup, one at Collie and the other at Narrogin. I imagine that not five per cent. of the community knew anything about this, or the great danger that arose to our apple growers and the people of the State generally through the outbreak of that pest. I am glad to say that the departmental officers were able successfully to combat the pest, and I believe it has now been stamped out in the districts where it occurred.

Mr. Latham: I hope they will tackle the blowfly question.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I admit that this must be tackled, but we must take one thing at a time. The department is co-operating now with the Commonwealth Bureau of Science and Industry and is tackling that problem. Yesterday I discussed the matter of organisation of premises, and a laboratory, with the local council, of which Mr. Perry is the chairman. I think some progress will be made in the matter. I am glad the pastoralists are endeavouring to raise a fund with which to assist in the research work. Probably the blowfly causes more damage to flocks than anything else in the country. It accounts for millions of pounds of wealth. This year the blowfly has been particularly bad. I know of places where every day during winter, sheep had to be brought in and attended to because of this pest, whereas previously they were clean healthy animals. This blowfly was hardly known in the State ten or 20 years ago. Its occurrence is only of recent date. Whether it is due to the fact that more wool is growing on the backs of the sheep or that the pest has increased at a wonderful rate, I do not know.

Mr. Latham: I think the grubs are brought here with the sheep sometimes.

Mr. Ferguson: It may be due to the number of dead rabbits that are lying about.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That may be so. It is said that the blowflies came with sheep from the Eastern States. I do not think the department know very much about the pest at present. If it is not tackled soon, it will be a bad thing for our flocks. I am glad the Pastoralists' Association have taken up the matter and I hope they will succeed in raising the fund. I am very surprised to know there is any objection on the part of some members of that organisation to contribute a levy of 2s. per bale on the wool output. I understand there is some trouble of that sort. It is strange that any reasonable man in the community should object to contribute to such a fund. It will benefit all concerned if the research work is carried on, and if the Bureau of Science and Industry as well as the Agricultural Department are assisted in combating this pest. There have been great developments in the pastoral industry in Western Australia during the last five years. Five years ago the area taken up by pastoralists was 200,000,000 acres, but at the end of June last 230,000,000 acres had been taken up. As members are aware, there has been a very active settlement of pastoralists on the north-eastern goldfields. Many pastoralists have come from the Eastern States and taken advantage of the opportunity of acquiring holdings between Kalgoorlie, Menzies, Leonora and Laverton, on either side of the railway lines. I think all the country is now taken up from the old settled portion of the Murchison to Laverton and beyond. That will mean very much increased wool production and a large percentage increase in the number of sheep. The sheep census for the year 1926 shows that the State was then carrying 7,456,000 sheep. That was a record. The previous record was 7,183,000. During 1926 the wool produced was 50,300,000 lbs., which is a greater production than anything the State has known before. During the last two years the number of sheep has increased at the rate of half a million a year. Reports indicate that as a result of the wonderful season experienced in the pastoral areas, there will be a further increase in the number of sheep held. I should not be surprised if at the next census the number did not exceed 9,000,000 sheep. Farmers in the wheat belt are now fencing their properties and providing adequate water supplies in order that they, too, may carry sheep. We know from the

quantity of wire netting going out that the farmers are rapidly bringing their properties into a fit state to enable them to carry sheep. We can anticipate that in a few years at least 1,000,000 sheep will be added in the agricultural areas alone. When I was at Kojonup the other day with the leader of the Country Party I was struck with the great possibilities of lamb production in that locality. The early pioneers had a difficult task in front of them. They were settled on apparently poor country and had poison to contend with. Notwithstanding their difficulties, they were able to produce a fine quality of wool, as fine as anything produced anywhere in the State. They did not, however, make much progress until a year or two ago. It is a wonderful tribute to the enterprise shown by the people in the Great Southern district that they have been able to do so much with their country. They have indeed created a fine reputation for Western Australia in the matter of wool production and stud stock. In the area to which I refer a great change has been brought about by the growth of subterranean clover. The country is naturally well drained, and on one or two holdings we saw magnificent growths of this particular fodder. This afforded evidence of what can be done with country of this character. I should particularly like members to see the property of one settler who arrived in the district only a few years ago. He is now carrying some excellent stud stock and has 1,000 sheep on 1,000 acres. He also receives a fine cheque every month from the butter factory. He has gone in for intense cultivation, and by this means will eventually be able to carry more stock than he is doing now. I do not think I have ever seen a better example of husbandry than is shown by the property belonging to this settler. It is worth anyone's while going to see it. This is probably the finest and most compact property I have ever come across. If we could get several hundreds of farmers like this one, there would be no question about the future of that part of the Great Southern district. We have at Fremantle erected at great expense meat works, at which to treat fat lambs for export. If there is one portion of Western Australia where the fat lamb industry can be carried on better than anywhere else it is in the area that lies between the Great Southern railway and the dairying country

in the South-West. There is a great future before that district. I should like to see there about 1,000 men of the capacity and intelligence of the settler to whom I have referred in the Kojonup district. If we had men of that calibre settled in this area, it would be turned into a magnificent province. At any rate there is a great future before it. The Department of Agriculture is carrying out many experiments there in poor white gum country, to show what can be done with it. The experiments are very instructive. They show that even on the poorest of land it is possible with subterranean clover to secure excellent results.

Mr. Thomson: Provided it is heartened up with superphosphate.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Superphosphate must be used. This country cannot produce very much without super. Not only must it be used in the autumn and the early winter, but there must also be a top dressing of it in the spring. If our producers will use superphosphate in the right way I believe a great future lies before our stock raisers. It is pleasing to note the improvement that has been made in the dairying industry. In 1916 there were only 31,065 dairy cows in the State, but last year the number had increased to 67,160. In 1916 the butter production was 1,080,466 lbs., whereas in 1926 the figure had increased to 3,800,000 lbs. At present there are eight butter factories and two cheese factories operating in the State. I think we can anticipate that as the years proceed there will be a considerable increase in the production of butter. There is every reason to expect this, for with the expenditure of the large sums of money that are being laid out in the South-West we ought very quickly to increase our butter production. I feel sure of that myself. I anticipate we shall rapidly overhaul the necessities of the State, and in a few years should be able to cease importing from the Eastern States, and enter upon the export trade.

Mr. Latham: Shall we be able to get some of the Paterson bonus then?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope we shall not need it. We should be able so to develop our country as not to need the Paterson bonus, though I suppose we shall not despise it if it is still there.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The dairymen have to provide it. The Federal Govern-

ment do not provide it as they do in the case of sugar production.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The people really have to pay. It is merely another method of raising taxation. The producers have so arranged things that they are able to charge a certain price to the Australian public. It is an exaction from the people, and is a species of taxation. When members opposite are talking about vermin taxes and other charges of that nature; which are imposed for the benefit of the people they represent, they should have some regard to the imposition that is levied also upon the consumers of Australian butter.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There is too much roundabout taxation one way and another.

Mr. Lindsay: What comparison is there between the vermin tax and the Paterson butter bonus?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Farmers pay the vermin tax because through it protection is afforded to their stock.

Mr. Thomson: But they do not pay it cheerfully.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The public pay the butter bonus in order to help the producers of butter.

Mr. Latham: We pay the vermin tax in order that you may get more income taxation for the Treasury.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Premier offered to repeal the vermin tax and cut away that ground of complaint. I am one of the settlers who pay the vermin tax. I pay it for someone else, but I pay it cheerfully because the man farther out who is fighting the pests—the dingoes, the foxes and the eaglehawks—is protecting me by reason of his property standing between me and the pests.

Mr. Lindsay: That is correct.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not see much to complain about in that. If a Bill were introduced to repeal the vermin tax, it would create great disappointment amongst some members opposite.

Mr. Thomson: Introduce it and I will support it.

Mr. Lindsay: If you introduce it, I shall oppose it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The member for Toodyay is a wise man; he realises the benefit accruing from that piece

of legislation. I have referred to the operations of the experimental farms. All the farms are now in active operation except that at Dampawah, for which a manager was appointed the other day. We have experienced some difficulty there in regard to clearing and making provision for the establishment of the farm. The area was portion of a pastoral lease, and we have had to resume it.

Mr. Griffiths: Where is Dampawah farm?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: About 40 miles east of Perenjori. In September of last year the Muresk Agricultural College was officially opened by the Premier. At that time 16 students were receiving instruction. At present 45 students are enrolled, but as the requests for studentship far exceed the accommodation available, the Government decided to erect an additional dormitory that will permit of another 45 students being enrolled. One member recently directed attention to the crops at Muresk and stated that they were a very bad advertisement for the college. I do not think it is fair to condemn the institution before it has been properly launched.

Mr. Latham: It has not had a fair chance.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It was one of the dirtiest farms in the country, it having been neglected for years. It is not fair to attack the principal of the college before he has had an opportunity to put the place in order.

Mr. Griffiths: The same thing applied to the Merredin State Farm.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, and to the Chapman State Farm. The Chapman farm was the derision of the country for years. It takes time to knock the farms into shape, but the results have proved highly advantageous to the State. In the principal of the Muresk College we have a very good man.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He is a very fine man.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, he has personality and character, and sets a fine example to the students. From my contact with the students I know they hold him in very high regard. At Muresk we have one of the best dairy herds in the State. We paid a high price to the Government of New South Wales for some of the animals. We did endeavour to import a number of pigs of the best quality obtain-

able from the Old Country, but the exportation was prohibited owing to the prevalence of foot and mouth disease. The Government are prepared to make the college a place where the students will have every opportunity to equip themselves for the life on the land. In addition I think that the institution will prove a good advertisement for the State and that the results of its work will be reflected in future settlement. Members will note from the Estimates that the vote exceeds last year's expenditure by £7,863. Every year the vote is increasing because the activities of the department are becoming greater.

Mr. Thomson: It must increase every year.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The staff also has been augmented. The staff has been increased by the appointment of an apiculturist and five new agricultural advisers, and provision is made for the appointment of an assistant entomologist. Dr. Teakle has been appointed research officer on plant nutrition. Dr. Teakle is a Western Australian who was brought up in the Geraldton district. He qualified in this State, gained an Amy Saw scholarship, and went to America, where he studied for several years and then took his degree. He has had wide experience since he left Western Australia. The Government were fortunate in securing his services. He did not propose to return to Western Australia, having been offered attractive positions elsewhere, but the Government made the position sufficiently attractive to induce him to return to this State. He will devote the whole of his time to research on plant nutrition. The expenditure has also been increased by the establishment of the new farms referred to. Members will raise no objection to that. I should like to see the system of experimental farms extended particularly to localities where difficulties are experienced owing to climatic and natural features. That, however, is not possible. As an alternative, we employ a big staff to journey through the country and carry out a large number of experiments in behalf of the settlers and on locations adjacent to the farms. The money spent on those experiments, I consider, is wisely spent. I doubt whether any expenditure in the State results in the creation of greater wealth than the expenditure by the Department of Agriculture. I have pleasure in presenting the Estimates for the consideration of members.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.55]: I congratulate the Minister and the officers of his department on the sympathetic treatment extended to me personally. When any request has been made to the Minister, he has received it courteously and given it his best consideration. To give an illustration: the Honorary Minister recently visited my district and it was pointed out to him that certain crops were affected by what is known as take-all or die-back. The Minister immediately made available one of the agricultural advisers, who went right through the district. On my making application to Mr. Sutton, I was able to obtain the services of the same officer and secure his advice. In Mr. Sutton and his officers I feel we have men who are desirous of assisting the industry to the utmost of their ability. One of the activities of the department that is most beneficial is the sending of exhibits to various agricultural shows. The officer in charge of the exhibits is Mr. Rudall. If the Minister had been present at the Katanning Show, he would have felt that the work of Mr. Rudall was well worth while. He was kept busily engaged supplying information to farmers regarding the various types of seed wheat. The department, through that officer, is doing excellent work. I am sorry the member for Yilgarn is not in his seat, because I wish to refer to his district. Some time ago I visited the Southern Cross area and found that a great deal of dissatisfaction existed amongst the settlers over the advances being made by the Agricultural Bank. I visited the experimental plots on the farm of Mr. Richards. Those plots clearly demonstrated the productive capacity of the district provided the crops were sown under proper conditions. I have no doubt that the work done by the departmental expert on Mr. Richards' farm has been largely responsible for the splendid results achieved in the Southern Cross district this year. Let me also utter a word in commendation of the sheep and wool inspector, Mr. McCallum.

Hon. G. Taylor: The only thing wrong with him is his name.

Mr. THOMSON: I had the pleasure of attending one of his lectures, and a more practical lecture I never heard.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: He is the most underpaid man in the department.

Hon. G. Taylor: He knows his business.

Mr. THOMSON: He is a valuable asset to the department, and has proved of great assistance to the small farmers. Through Mr.

McCallum the department is able to place at the disposal of a new settler the fruits of years of experience, and if the settler follows the advice given him in the establishment of his flocks, he must reap considerable benefit. I direct the attention of the Minister to the difficulty experienced by that officer in moving about the country. In view of his excellent work he should be provided with suitable means of transport. At present he has to rely upon the train service, or accept the good offices of people interested in his lectures to convey him to various centres. I believe that better returns would be obtained from that gentleman's services if he were provided with means of transport. He himself has not put the matter to me at all: I am merely expressing the effect of representations made to me by my constituents. Another field officer, Mr. Barron Hay, is also most capable and gives highly valuable advice. I was pleased to hear from the Minister that among the new appointees there is a gentleman who was one of this State's students, and who, having accumulated knowledge in other parts of the world, has returned to place it at the disposal of his native country. The Western Australian agriculturist has many problems to face, but through suitable working arrangements with the Federal Government in regard to scientific research we should be able to eliminate quite a number of the pests now afflicting our farmers and orchardists. Take the case of the apple industry. Last year was most profitable to the orchardist; but that experience will not, I regret to say, be repeated this year. Contracts for the sale of many thousands of pounds' worth of fruit have been made, and the problem is whether the goods can be delivered.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is the cause of the trouble?

Mr. THOMSON: Thrip, which has produced disastrous results in the apple orchards. I see by this evening's paper that the thrip problem, among others, will receive attention from the Commonwealth. If some method of effectively combating thrip can be devised, a crop should be ensured to our apple-growers each year. I was glad to hear the Minister say that the blow-fly menace is also receiving attention. Thousands of pounds' worth of valuable wool has been lost this season owing to blow-fly attacks, and it is high time the pest was countered. The Minister, like many other people, has been surprised to learn that in certain districts stock cannot be raised, since they live

only a certain period, and then fade away and die in spite of all efforts to restore them to health. In those districts the scientist of the Agricultural Department will have to come to the aid of the primary producers, and I hope he will be able to solve that very serious problem. As a general rule our officials do not get many thanks, and probably they will appreciate a public acknowledgment of the excellent services rendered to this State by Mr. Sutton and his staff. Mr. Sutton is sympathetic, keen, and prompt to attend to requests. From a part of my electorate I recently received a telephone message to the effect that sheep were dying. I got in touch with the Agricultural Department, and on the very next day Mr. Bennett, the Veterinary Pathologist, was despatched to the district. Nothing could have been prompter. In viticulture we are faced with a difficult problem. Unfortunately for this State and the Commonwealth, at the close of the war dried fruit prices were excellent and sufficient investigation was not made into the normal requirements of the market. As a result, hundreds of acres of land were put under table vines. Greatly to the disappointment not only of those who urged the men to embark on the industry, but also of the soldiers themselves, it is found that Western Australia is producing far more dried fruits than can be sold in competition with other countries. I hope the department are making or will make inquiries as to what is best to be done with vineyards which were planted for the production of dried fruits, particularly whether they can with profit be turned to wine-making. I have no doubt the matter has received the Minister's consideration already. The advice given by the hon. gentleman is sound, but if our viticultural industry is not going to expand, a viticultural expert is of no use to us. I acknowledge that the gentleman in question is very keen and capable.

The Minister for Agriculture: In that respect there is an excellent opening for all these Jugo-Slavs.

Mr. THOMSON: Possibly, though one hardly dares to suggest that those people should take on the industry. However, much land now regarded as useless could, under certain conditions, be utilised by Jugo-Slavs. If those people prove themselves good citizens by bringing into productivity land today looked upon as absolutely useless, they will render a most valuable service to the

State and the community. Moreover, their activities must furnish a certain amount of work for other people in the State.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is difficult to get people to see the matter in that light.

Mr. THOMSON: Many people will see it in that light. As Leader of the Country Party I desire to express my appreciation of the excellent work which the Agricultural Department have done and are doing. While, as pointed out by the Minister, the Agricultural Estimates have increased, we recognise the necessity for continued expansion in our agricultural industry, failing which the State will stagnate; and the wider the expansion, the greater will be the demands upon the Agricultural Department's scientific side.

MR. C. P. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [8.10]: I desire to congratulate the Minister upon having handed over the Avondale Estate to the Agricultural Department. I am aware that this subject is, with me, a hardy annual of many years' standing; but I am indeed pleased to know that at last the fine estate alluded to is commencing to deal with certain problems which in my district are awaiting solution. Since the Agricultural College has been lost to Beverley, my constituents are of opinion that the Avondale Estate should be put to some other use than being a holding ground for cattle from the North-West. Unquestionably the estate has served a useful purpose in that respect, but I am more than pleased that the officers of the Agricultural Department are now turning it to better uses. The oat crops on the estate are marvellous. Though, like Muresk, Avondale is an old estate and somewhat dirty, nevertheless in the matter of oat crops it will stand up to anything else in Western Australia. The recent field day on Avondale was a pronounced success, more especially from an educational aspect. The demonstrations which Mr. Millington caused to be submitted to the notice of the farmers were indeed lessons to many people of the district, and this applies more particularly to the silo demonstration. I agree with the Minister for Agriculture that we do not yet know one half of the productive capabilities of our lands, more particularly as regards pasture. From that aspect I am especially pleased to learn of the appointment of Dr. Teakle. A large field awaits his exploration, more especially in the mat-

ter of the stock diseases rampant in some parts of the State. The combined attention of Dr. Teakle and Mr. Bennett should immediately be given to solving the problem of braxy-like disease. Despite lengthy investigations, no remedy has yet been discovered; and therefore Dr. Teakle and Mr. Bennett have the opportunity of rendering a service of the first importance to Western Australia. I would like the Minister, in replying, to state how far Mr. Bennett has progressed in his investigations into the braxy-like disease. We have had nothing definite on the subject from any officer as yet, though considerable attention has been given to it during the last two years. I wish to state plainly that the fault does not lie with Mr. Bennett, who spares no trouble, either day or night. During last winter he was walking about the paddocks by lantern light in the hope of picking up some clue that would enable him to discover the cause of the disease.

Hon. G. Taylor: He is a very energetic officer.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Some years ago Professor Dakin went closely into the question, and submitted a full and interesting report; but from this, as from other investigations, nothing definite has resulted. Whether other investigators followed the same lines as Professor Dakin I do not know. In my electorate the farmers minimise their losses by paying specially careful attention to the sheep during certain periods. The Scottish settlers, who have had long experience of the braxy-like trouble in the Old Country, maintain that the local disease is in appearance the same trouble. From the scientific aspect, the one thing lacking is a definite diagnosis. One Scottish settler maintains that it is a question of plant nutrition, the treatment of the soil with lime and so forth. There again there is a wide field for research in connection with the probable effect arising from the treatment of the heavier soils with lime. The Minister referred to the fine results secured by a farmer in the Great Southern district with subterranean clover. The Minister need not go so far afield as that for a striking illustration of what can be done along those lines. He need go only so far as York and visit the estate of Mr. A. J. Monger. There he will get a better illustration of what can be done.

The Minister for Lands: Without depreciating Mr. Monger's achievements, I consider those secured by the gentleman I referred to are the better of the two. I have seen them both. There were fine results not only with subterranean clover, but with vetches and other fodder plants.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: The point I wish to make is that it is not necessary to go down to the wet districts of the South-West to establish subterranean clover successfully. Mr. Monger has succeeded in that direction for a number of years with the older soils of the York district, and he has reached the stage that he has demonstrated the advantages to be gained by the application of fertilisers to the heavier soils in that area. With the establishment of clovers, he has revolutionised the stock-carrying capacity of the land there. Under capable management, I believe the stock-carrying capacity of two-thirds of the land in the eastern districts, and in the southern parts as well, will be vastly increased. The Minister referred to the Agricultural College at Muresk and the condition of the crops this year. It must be admitted that, as viewed from the railway carriage windows, the crops on the Muresk estate, adjoining the line, are certainly a bad advertisement. I will not go so far as did some members in another place and condemn the crops altogether, because I realise the problem involved in dealing with an old-established farm. At the same time I must admit that the fallowing is not a credit to the college. From a practical farmer's point of view, better methods will have to be employed in the future if that class of land is to yield to an extent corresponding to the capacity of the soil. Another matter relating to the Agricultural College is the age at which students are allowed to take up residence. I understand lads must be 15 years of age before they are admitted. For the average country lad that is a year too late. The average lad in the country leaves school at the age of 15, and in regard to farming his education is sufficient to enable him to become a student at Muresk. I think a point could be stretched and country lads admitted when they are 14 years of age. I congratulate the Minister on the way results are bearing out his forecast of the wheat yield. In some of the eastern districts marvellous yields are recorded, and it is stated that an average as high as 36 bushels to the acre has been secured in the

Mukenbudden district. To-night's "Daily News" contains a statement indicating that 25-bushel crops are common. For my part I believe that will be characteristic of the whole of the eastern wheat areas. I confess to having been one of those who was afraid of the ravages of rust. I thought that disease would materially reduce the average yield, but I am satisfied that the damage is not serious except where one or two types of wheat are concerned. That applies particularly to Federation wheat. The farmers of the State should be able to learn a lesson from present-day results. Federation is a wheat that has been used in my electorate for many years past and has proved the ruination of more than one farmer.

The Minister for Lands: There is a great temptation to grow it.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: That is so, but it is very susceptible to various diseases. This year it has been affected badly by rust. If this experience results in farmers learning the lesson to be drawn, some good will have been achieved. I congratulate the Minister on his references to Nabawa wheat. That type is a monument to the credit of the Director of Agriculture, Mr. Sutton. Nabawa has proved itself to possess wonderful disease-resisting qualities. I have not heard of one instance of Nabawa having been affected by rust or any other disease. I trust Mr. Sutton will be able to continue along the lines to which his investigations have led this State. I hope to see the Avondale Estate providing clean seed wheat true to name to the surrounding districts where such supplies are badly needed.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [8.22]: While hon. members have had opportunities to discuss most of the phases of agriculture, there are three or four points I would like to touch upon. They are not little points, as the Premier sometimes interjects when I mention matters in this Chamber. I will divide my remarks under four headings. First, I shall refer to the economic position of the agricultural industry, secondly, to scientific investigation, and, thirdly, I shall link up with those two phases, some of the marvellous statements we read in the Press about the use of electric ploughs, electro-culture, and other phases. Finally, I shall put in a plea for the establishment in this State of crop competitions for the farmers who are developing our second and third

class land. The development of agriculture deals with a phase of our national life and we must acknowledge its importance. Agriculture is the money spinner at the present time, therefore it would not have been a compliment to the Minister had the discussion on the vote concluded last night. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) made reference to the generally accepted view that everything was right with agriculture in Australia, and emphasised his remarks by dealing with the position in the United States of America. He pictured the position of the farmers as far back as 1924, and referred to the state of insolvency in which so many of the American farmers found themselves. Recently the Federal Industrial Commission returned from the United States after a lengthy inquiry into the industrial and manufacturing undertakings of that country. They did not make any inquiries regarding the primary industries. On the other hand, Mr. Norman Angell spent a considerable time in an investigation of the industrial conditions obtaining in the United States. Unlike the Federal Industrial Commission, he did not examine the position on one side only. He examined the conditions on both sides and he embodied the result of his inquiries in an article headed "The Prosperity of America"; "Reverse Side of the Medal." In the course of that article he said—

If the visitor would leave the towns and go to the farms—particularly in the South and South-West, in the Dakotas, in the wheat belt—he would find a difference of standard so great in degree from that of the cities as to make an entirely different kind of life. No longer an air of lavishness and prosperity, but an oppressive atmosphere of poverty and insolvency; or decrepit and tumble-down houses, poor food, tramps' clothing, anxiety, debt and hopelessness. And this is certainly a third, perhaps more, of the golden America.

In another paragraph headed "The Two Americas" he says—

Perhaps the most amazing thing in the whole situation is the ignorance of the average town-bred American of the conditions of his own country in this respect. He realises little of the deep and vast gulf which now separates the two Americas—the America of the town and the America of the farm. The real class struggle in this country is not as between the town worker and the town capitalist, it is between the man on the land and the present industrial organisation.

Under the heading of "The Farmer's Plight" he concludes—

Virtually everything that the farmer had for sale had to be sold at a world (a free trade)

price. But everything he had to buy, including things like machinery, clothing and the rest, was bought at a highly protected price. No industry in the world could, year in and year out, stand such one-sided treatment, and American farming has not stood it. Meantime manufacturing and the cities were getting their foodstuffs and many of the raw materials at lowest world price, while making the farmer pay the highest protected price for manufactures.

That was the verdict of Mr. Norman Angell after he had returned to England.

Hon. G. Taylor: But the farmers in Australia are supporting a very high tariff.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Where do you get that idea from?

Hon. G. Taylor: The highest tariff we have ever had in Australia has been imposed under the regime of the present Federal Government.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: In highly organised countries like Great Britain and the United States of America, the position has reached such a parlous state that, while manufacturers flourish, farmers are practically down and out. Here is a quotation from the "Melbourne Age" under date 2nd November--

News from St. Louis, Missouri, says that 300 agricultural leaders from 20 mid-west and southern States, in a sweeping indictment of the foes of farm relief, adopted a resolution in conference demanding the re-enactment of legislation effectively incorporating the principles of the McNary-Haugen Marketing Bill, which was vetoed by President Coolidge. The resolution criticised President Coolidge's farm policy.

Hon. G. Taylor: The farmers are in trouble there, too. They are always in trouble.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The farmers are in trouble in Britain and America, and while the farmers of Australia are on a fairly decent wicket, I want to make sure that we do not drift into the same condition as the farmers in America and Britain.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: There are no country parties in those places.

Hon. G. Taylor: Why look for trouble?

Mr. Marshall: They have not got such a Federal Government as we have to impose high tariffs. Look what Earle Page has done since he has been in the Government.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: In the "Daily Mail," and other British papers that I have read recently, I have noticed series of headings such as the following:—

"England's farmers down and out"; "Land in Kent for nothing"; "Unsaleable food ploughed in"; "Not a penny profit in three years"; "Farmers' plight"; "Two

ways out"; "State purchase or less taxation."

In those two highly urbanised countries every attention has been paid to industrial development, but very little attention to agricultural development. On the other hand at present in the United States scientists are devoting some study to agriculture, and large sums are being spent on research work. A farm block has been formed in the Senate in conjunction with a number of scientific bodies that have been trying to find some solution of the difficulties of the farmer. Here is an extract from the "Age" dealing with the conditions in New South Wales. It is headed, "Wheat farming costs" and it reads as follows--

That there is a back to grazing movement in the Riverina is the opinion expressed by a number of experienced farmers in the district, mainly due, it is stated, to the poor prices obtained for wheat and the character of the legislation being enforced in New South Wales. The cost of production is so close to the value received for the wheat that the profit obtained is infinitesimal. The farmer who has a wife and family to maintain finds it necessary to work about 70 hours a week, and with the recent rural award for farm hands, it is evident that further difficulties will arise in the wheat-growing industry.

The writer gives an estimate of farming costs, showing how little margin there is between profit and loss. However, it would only weary the House if I were to read out the details. Here we have two highly urbanised countries like the United States and Great Britain, where the farmers are in difficulties, due to many causes; and nearer home, even in Australia we see that there is talk of the line above poverty being too narrow. In our own State farmers have been doing very well during the past few years. But the relative price, the margin between the cost of production and what is realised for the product, is very little better than it was at the beginning of the war. People tell us that the price of wheat has gone up, and that the prices of other commodities have not gone up in the same proportion. That is entirely wrong. They have gone up in the same proportion, and I am even now collecting figures showing the position exactly. I propose to put them before the House as soon as I have completed my task. The member for Toodyay pointed out last night that it has been by the adoption of large machinery and the introduction of good farming methods that we have been able to make a payable pro-

position of agriculture as an industry. In America all sorts of devices have been adopted in the attempt to relieve the situation showing that the position there is really serious.

Hon. G. Taylor: They get a good yield there.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Not so good a yield as we get, and their holdings are very much smaller than are ours. We are enabled to crop large areas at lower costs, and so we can reap reasonable profits. But I warn members that we require to be careful not to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. Now that completes the first phase of what I have to say to-night. Turning to the question of agricultural research, we have had from the Minister to-night certain indications that he at any rate is alive to the value of agricultural research. Science is on the side of survival, and money invested in research is not a luxury, but is a sound investment and is indeed a condition of survival. Mr Bruce, speaking about research generally, when addressing the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research recently, said this—

No country that desires to carry out its development on the most modern and efficient lines can afford to neglect the fostering of scientific effort within its borders.

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research has pointed to the millions of money spent by other countries in that work. The Minister will tell us that they are doing a great deal for Australia, for certainly he is alive to the value of their work. Some men are ever ready to speak of scientists as humbugs, but of course those men have never met real scientists. Those they have met may more properly be described as charlatans. Scientific research is a question of survival amongst the different races. If we are to hold our own, we must keep abreast of the march of things in up to date countries. In this journal that I have, mention is made of what is being spent in other countries. They instance the Carnegie Institute, with a capital endowment of £4,000,000, the Bureau of Standards with an annual budget of £120,000, the Bureau of Mines, which annually expends £100,000, and the Department of Agriculture with an annual appropriation of £8,000,000, and an annual expenditure of £2,000,000 on research alone in many of the magnificent private indus-

trial research laboratories with which America is so richly endowed. I have a list of many of these, but it would weary members if I were to read it out. Undoubtedly America is going in largely for research, particularly on the industrial side. Canada has established a Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, and so too has New Zealand. South Africa has made tremendous strides in primary industries and particularly at the veterinary college at Onderstepoort, which is capitalised at £250,000 and has an annual appropriation of £100,000. I know the Minister is fully alive to the value of agricultural research, but I think it is incumbent on me to crave the indulgence of the House while I dwell upon this aspect. I look back and see what we owe to the scientists of the past, particularly in agriculture. First there is Gregor Mendel, whose laws have been a very great factor in the breeding of plants and animals. Then there was Luther Burbank, of America, who did wonderful things in plant breeding, including the spineless cactus, which is transforming some of the desert regions of America today. Then we come to Margraff, the German chemist, who in 1760 improved the sugar beet, and as a result the sugar beet factories to-day are turning out a thousand times more sugar than they did in Napoleon's day. Then there is Babeock, of the Wisconsin Agricultural College, whose milk tester has worked radical changes in dairying. Next we come to Pasteur's work. What he discovered revolutionised wine making. Then there is the great Anglo-Australian, William Farrer. Something was said to-night about Federation wheat. That wheat has served a very useful purpose, and has meant an annual increased income of half a million to Victoria for the last 15 years. Probably it has now had its day, but there are other wheats, like Nabawa, meeting present-day conditions. Then the discovery of superphosphate has meant a tremendous increase of wealth to Australia, estimated at £5,000,000 per annum. In conclusion, I wish to emphasise the discoveries of Hellrigel and Wilfarth, the Germans who investigated the problem of leguminous plants. During the war it was frequently said that Germany would be out within six months, that she could not get the nitrate salts required for fertilising purposes and for the manufacture of high explosives. But what was the solution of her difficulty? Her

scientists erected plants by which they extracted from the atmosphere the necessary nitrogen. We know that four-fifths of the atmosphere consists of nitrogen, and I believe the annual rainfall brings down some 10 lbs. of nitrogen to the acre. Then we read of electrical appliances that put electricity into the soil. It is wonderful to think of these things. Hon. members need only go into their own gardens and pull up peas or beans or other leguminous plants to find the nitrogenous nodules on the roots of those plants.

Mr. Davy: You can see them on the roots of the clover in the lawn.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes. The Minister will be interested to know that one of his own officers, the district inspector at Kellerrin, had a letter from America containing a remarkable passage. He thought it rather good, although it sounds impossible. He handed it over to the editor of the "Eastern Recorder," and I see it has been copied into several other papers since. The article says: "Plough sends power into soil it tills; demonstration of electroculture near Rochester draws many farmers and experts; no fertiliser required." Fertiliser companies in this State will not like it if some invention renders it unnecessary for farmers to use their products. The article continues, "Results of system are called remarkable, crops grow faster and weeds are killed." Some people go through life with their faces turned to the past. They seem to think that summers and winters are not the same as those they used to experience. They are forever talking about the old days. Our eyes were put into our heads in order that we might look forward. We were not intended to look backwards. Before I left the Old Country as a young fellow I used to be absorbed in Jules Verne's tales. I was also acquainted with Mother Shipton's prophecies. She prophesied many wonderful things. I remember only one thing that did not come true, and that was: "The world then to an end shall come, in 1891." We have long passed that date, so that prophecy has not come true. Many things were spoken of, such as flying, and travelling under the sea. Jules Verne wrote about five weeks in a balloon and another story of a voyage 25,000 leagues under the sea. All those things were looked upon as wonderful, if not impossible. To-day we take them as a matter of course. Quite recently a man flew at the rate of 300

miles an hour. In our homes we can hear the booming of Big Ben at Westminster.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is getting away from the subject.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am trying to show that those things, regarded as wonderful 25 or 30 years ago, are commonplace to-day. I read just now of a plough that is going to do away with fertilisers. We cannot afford to smile at such things. I have come in contact lately with several things that have caused me to think and to interview certain people. I hold no brief in respect of the particular matter about which I am going to speak, nor for the man who invented it, nor for him who has secured the agency in this State. I refer to the electroculture plant, and the electrification of seeds. I will give members some information that will set them thinking, and probably experimenting in their own gardens. I am experimenting myself. I have seen and heard certain things which have caused me to wonder. I interviewed Mr. Trouchet some little time ago, as a result of which he put certain questions before me, and I am going to pass them on to members to-night. There is more in this than meets the eye. A plant was recently erected at Merredin. A mistake was made with regard to it, but after an expenditure of £45 or £50 the plant was put right. It has not cost the Government anything. I ask the Minister to keep an eye upon this, and not to be taken in by what the Minister for Agriculture in France has sent back here, accusing a certain inventor of being a cheat.

Mr. E. B. Johnston. Have you had results?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am only experimenting at present.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It will be interesting to hear what they are.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: This is no new thing. We know what happened with regard to superphosphate and chemical manures some years ago. I remember the scepticism amongst farmers in the Old Country. They would not have super. on their land because they said it would exhaust the soil and ruin it. To-day chemical manures are used everywhere in the Old Country.

Mr. Latham: You cannot get a better fertiliser than electricity.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: This matter is not a question of a few isolated plants. There are more than 1,000,000 plants in operation to-day. A man who has been in France told me

the other day that he has seen these plants in many vineyards in his country, and that the practice of electrifying the vines is being largely indulged in. He also said that in cases where the plants are correctly installed, they are giving good results. In 1756 an Edinburgh physician found that two myrtle trees, after being treated in this fashion, put forth small branches and blossomed sooner than similar trees that had not been so treated.

The Premier: I should like someone to electrocute you.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have certain things to say that I will say, despite the Premier's disgust.

Mr. Latham: It is good stuff.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have listened to the Premier with patience, and he should listen to me also.

The Premier: You are always reading about somebody else. Give us an idea or two of your own.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have given some ideas of my own, and have quoted other things to endorse them.

The Premier: If you confined yourself to your own ideas you would soon be punctured.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Premier sometimes quotes from the sayings of other people.

The Premier: No.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Collie might well interview Mr. McCaughan with regard to some tomato experiments at Collie. The member for Bunbury might interview Miss Higgin, who wrote a letter to the "Sunday Times" showing what she has done in her private house with the Christoffen apparatus. The member for Greenough might interview the schoolmaster at Nabawa, whose letter appeared in the "Sunday Times" last Sunday week. The member for Irwin might interview John Leahy of Pithara. That gentleman noticed what had occurred at the foot of an earth wire which ran into the ground from his wireless. All the land round about was denuded of vegetation, but where the wire ran into the ground he found a fine growth of grass, weeds, oats, etc. As there was no moisture in the ground at the time, he thought the growth was due to electricity passing through the wire. The member for Katanning should interview Mr. Vanzulicom at Mt. Barker. In a letter from Bunbury Miss Higgin states that in view of the interest that is taken in electroculture, she thinks it might interest readers of the "Sunday Times" if she quoted some results

she had obtained with regard to a plant she had installed in her own garden. The vegetables she grew on the electrified portion consisted of fine peas, beans, and lettuces, as well as rock melons and jam melons. She says, "We were able to use carrots although they were only nine weeks old."

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Is the process expensive?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The plant costs about £8. The master of the school at Nabawa has given his experience of electrification in this direction. I have here some photographs of vegetables grown with this apparatus. The white turnips weigh $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., and the radishes $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. The plants were grown from electrified seeds. The master of the school at Nabawa writes:—

I have delayed this letter in order that I might see the plants throughout the growing period to that of seeding, in order that I might find whether the treatment improved the plant during any special period to the detriment of another. The seeds were planted, cared for, and records kept by the children, and a check plot of untreated seeds planted in order that any improvement caused by the treatment might be more easily noticed. Seeds were not watered except when in the seed beds, after which, except for weeding, both lots were grown under field conditions in the rocksoil on the side of a hill, not a very promising place for growing either flowers or vegetables.

This appeared in the "Sunday Times" last Sunday week. I suggest the member for the district should look into this matter.

The Premier: Why do not the persons concerned in this process take the usual course of advertising in the "West Australian" instead of in this fashion?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am not putting this forward to advertise anyone. I want all to have an open mind on this question of electroculture. I believe it has come to stay and will be of benefit to the country. That is why I am bringing the matter forward. I have no desire to advertise anyone. Over 1,000,000 of these apparatus are in operation in different parts of the world. They are not all of this man's make. In Germany there are 350,000 of these plants in operation. They are also found in France, Sweden, Italy, Spain, Denmark, and Norway.

The Premier: Are there any in Saskatchewan? That is your favourite State.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It used to be, but I have gone past that stage.

The Premier: You are getting into a worse stage.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have brought this matter up because I know that officers of the department have written to France. They have received unfavourable replies from the Minister there. There is some sinister suggestion behind the turning down of this scheme on the part of that Minister. A big chemical combine exists in France and it has always been opposed to this invention. A system of persecution has been instituted. The ignorance of the peasantry has been traded upon. The consequence has been that the inventor has been threatened with all sorts of pains and penalties. He has been accused of burying in his garden the body of a murdered woman.

The Minister for Agriculture: On whose authority do you make that statement?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I can show the Minister the documentary evidence.

The Premier: Where may we get that information?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: From me, in the morning. The Press of France has taken up the cudgels on behalf of that man. Certain officers have written from the department in Western Australia.

The Minister for Agriculture: How do you know that?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: They have done so and received unfavourable replies.

The Premier: I do not think that can be correct. Produce the file.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: In South Africa certain action has been taken which points in the same direction. The Press of France have taken severely to task the French Minister for Agriculture for his unfair attitude to the invention. I have considerable documentary information to corroborate what I say and I shall be pleased to show it to the Minister. M. Justin Christofleau speaks bitterly of the attitude of the French Minister for Agriculture towards the invention. A few nights ago I told the Minister that there was a standing offer for 10 sets of this invention to be installed at Wooroloo to relieve consumptive patients. I mentioned that in Siam it had been experimented with for cases of leprosy. It is also applied to animal husbandry. Under the influence of electricity animals thrive. There is much in the matter of utilising the earth currents and this is not extraordinary when we remember that a plant extracts from the atmosphere the nitrogen it requires. Sir David Hall, speaking on the growth of production, stated that the increase of the wheat-eating population of the world was so great that

12,000,000 acres of land were required to provide for the annual increase. Obviously something must be done to intensify production. We are told that the ability of a plant to absorb the sun's energy and extract nitrogen from the air is equal to only one per cent., which is far below the capacity of the worst motor engine in existence to-day. An extract from the London Press recently referred to a German inventor's claim that he secured two harvests a year. He had been experimenting with an apparatus somewhat similar to that of M. Christofleau. So wonderful are the results of the invention that the British Minister for Agriculture has asked for particulars as he is anxious to have it tested. I am glad that Mr. Sutton was able to give a good explanation for the Merredin plant not operating satisfactorily. Apparently it was erected 35 degrees from the magnetic North. I ask the Minister to preserve an open mind on the question of electroculture. Members seem inclined to encourage the Premier to become a little joecular on the subject, but I am satisfied that there is more in the invention than meets the eye. I hope the Minister will introduce crop competitions for second and third class lands. While the crop competitions on first class land have served a useful purpose, a lot of second and third class land is being cropped and competitions on such land should be instituted to encourage increased production.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [9.5]: I do not propose to cover the whole of the ramifications of the Department of Agriculture, which is doing very useful work in the interests of the man on the land. The Minister for Agriculture deserves the congratulations that have been extended to him from the cross benches on the work of the department. It is true that the professional officers are always available, and that settlers in the new areas are receiving a great deal of assistance from those officers. I desire to direct the attention of the Minister to two ways in which the administration could be improved. At present the Director of Agriculture, who is a very efficient officer with a wide knowledge of wheat and agriculture, is confined too much to his office in Perth. Outside the duties of directing that department—we should remember that he is Director of Agriculture and not director of the Agricultural Department—it is necessary that

he should spend a good deal of time in the country. As has been the policy for some years, the Government have made the Director of Agriculture a member of the Railway Advisory Board. The board have always consisted of the Surveyor General as Chairman, a representative of the Commissioner of Railways, a representative of the Public Works Department, an engineer, and a gentleman particularly to represent the agricultural industry. For many years Mr. Hewby, manager of the Agricultural Bank, did the work on the board, and he did it thoroughly. Then Mr. Sutton took his place, and I consider that his appointment was a good one. The Director of Agriculture is the proper man to accompany the board and assist in the selection of agricultural railway routes. We are spending millions of pounds in a wise policy of constructing agricultural railways and, once the routes are fixed, they are fixed for all time. If a mistake is made, posterity has to put up with it. To take a share of the responsibilities of selecting the proper routes for such railways is the most important work given to the Director of Agriculture. Yet in the two latest reports presented to the House on routes for agricultural railways we are informed that the Director of Agriculture was unable to accompany the board. That has meant that the routes were selected by the Surveyor General and the other members of the board. The Surveyor General is one of the best officers we have had in this State, and his wide knowledge of every class of agricultural land has been of immense value to the State. It is the duty of the Government to see that when the Railway Advisory Board are making their inspections the Director of Agriculture is relieved from routine work in Perth—initialling of files, etc.—and permitted to take his share in this most important work. The work involves not only the selection of railway routes, but the provision of water supplies, public works, roads, and the granting of Agricultural Bank loans, representing in all millions of money. At the end of last session a report was presented on the opening up of the country east of the Yillimining-Kondinin line, and from Lake Grace to Kalgarin. Unfortunately Mr. Sutton was prevented by routine duties from accompanying the board on that inspection. A few days ago we received a report of the board's visit to the district from Mollerin east, where it is proposed to

build 70 miles of railway. I have no doubt that the members of the board who inspected that country selected the right route, but there is a little foot note to the effect that Mr. Sutton was precluded by his duties from accompanying the board on that very important inspection. In the Press a few days ago I read that members of the board had gone to Wiluna. While the proposed railway to Wiluna is mainly for mining purposes, it will also traverse pastoral country. The report, however, stated that Mr. Sutton had been precluded by his work in Perth from accompanying the board there. It is the duty of the Government to relieve Mr. Sutton of whatever routine work is preventing him from making those trips. The country should have the benefit of his experience, knowledge and judgment on the important work of selecting the routes of agricultural and other lines. Parliament practically always accepts the report of the Railway Advisory Board when considering a Bill to authorise the construction of a railway, because we have confidence in the professional officers, but it seems to me that in an era of agricultural development it is most important that the Director of Agriculture should participate in such inspections in order that we may be assured that the routes for agricultural railways are being chosen according to the intimate knowledge of such an expert on the requirements of the industry. I feel that this matter has only to be brought under the notice of the Government, and they will recognise how important it is for Mr. Sutton to be free to carry out the important work allotted to him in this respect. If he is unable to do it the Government should appoint an officer of equal capacity—if one be available—to represent the Department of Agriculture. Then, if Mr. Sutton could not accompany the board at any time, we may be assured that a professional officer has taken part in the selection of the chosen route. I am one of those who have always supported whatever railway route the Advisory Board had chosen. It is the proper tribunal to select railway routes. I hope the innovation of a representative of the Department of Agriculture not being present on such inspections will not be permitted to continue. There is one other matter to which I wish to direct the Minister's attention, and that is the small salary paid to the sheep and wool inspector, Mr. McCallum, in comparison

with the salary paid to other officers of the department. Mr. McCallum is one of the most valuable officers of the department. He certainly delivers more lectures and does more work than any other. He is most enthusiastic, and yet it is surprising to find that he is paid a salary of only £456 a year. The dairy and pig expert is paid £672 a year. I know both of those officers. I have no desire to compare public officials, but the work of Mr. McCallum is quite as valuable and important as that of any other officer of the department.

The Minister for Works: His name warrants an increase.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I hope his name has not proved any handicap in the past. I do not suggest that it has.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is the only objectionable thing about him.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I know there is no relationship between him and the Minister for Works.

Mr. Davy: There is no one McCallum that is not related to the other.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am not aware of any relationship. It is the duty of the Government to see that this officer gets a fair salary for the important work he is doing. He should be paid not only an adequate salary, but should be given transport to get about the country. At present he is dependent upon the railways, and upon settlers, who are always glad to convey him from one point to another to lecture. The Government might well supply him with proper facilities, at the expense of the department, for the performance of his official duties. I have only to add that the work of the Agricultural Department is highly valuable to the man on the land, and that I am satisfied with its general administration.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet—in reply) [9.16]: The Leader of the Country Party spoke about the activities of Mr. McCallum, the wool expert, and of the remuneration paid to that officer. The remuneration, as hon. members know, is entirely out of my hands; it rests solely with the Public Service Commissioner. I cannot select one particular officer for recommendation in that respect without creating a very bad precedent. However, I am indeed pleased to hear the remarks made concerning Mr. McCallum's value. I have learnt to know him as a most valuable officer, and the ser-

vices he renders to the country are certainly not being adequately remunerated. I fully agree with the Leader of the Country Party that Mr. McCallum is one of the most able and at the same time instructive lecturers we have ever had in the service. In matters of wool he seems to be a natural teacher. As regards travelling, there is a scale of mileage allowances applying to motor cars used by officers in the service of the Government.

Mr. Thomson: I do not think Mr. McCallum wants a motor car.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. McCallum, I have been given to understand, is not satisfied with the scale in question. However, if other officers find it reasonable, he should be able to find it reasonable also.

Mr. Thomson: My point is that the country would get a greater return from Mr. McCallum's services if he were enabled to travel with more facility.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If Mr. McCallum is prepared to travel by motor car on the same basis as other officers, the matter can be arranged. I may mention that the Pastoralists' Association have on several occasions requested that Mr. McCallum should be allowed to go to the East to attend conferences of pastoralists; and certainly they do not pick duds; our pastoralists want to be represented by a top-notch. It is a great advertisement and testimonial for Mr. McCallum when the pastoralists pick him as one of three men to represent Western Australia.

Hon. G. Taylor: He is really a good man.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Without depreciating other men, the pastoralists say he is a highly qualified expert.

Mr. Lindsay: His great asset is his enthusiasm.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. McCallum has a natural bent towards the duties of his position.

Hon. G. Taylor: He knows his job.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: He is a very useful man indeed. If the Public Service Commissioner saw fit to raise Mr. McCallum's salary, I would appreciate the action; but the matter is out of my hands. Regarding the Director of Agriculture, I have to admit that there is a great deal in what the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) said. The Director, I agree, ought not to be troubled with office work at all when there is so much to be done in the country

with regard to education. The Director's time could be well spent in country districts teaching and educating, and creating enthusiasm for production. The great area of wheat country alone is sufficient to absorb his energies. I do not care to contemplate what would happen in that country after one bad season. A great percentage of the farmers there would fail with the first bad season, because they do not farm properly. The Director would be splendidly employed on behalf of the State if he carried on an intense propaganda for farming with safety as well as with advantage.

Hon. G. Taylor: Some of the farmers will not do that until they have met their Waterloo.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But the trouble is that when they meet their Waterloo, the State meets with its Waterloo also, encounters a definite setback. If all farming were on a sound basis, a bad season would not mean a great disaster. The Director's energies should be specially applied to education, and also to creation in the numerous activities which come under his control; the creation of new types of wheat and other cereals, and also plants. The Director is richly endowed for such investigations. Moreover, he never shirks his work.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: His work on the Railway Advisory Board has been very good.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I feel, however, that the Director has been dissipating his energies over too many occupations. The member for Beverley (Mr. C. P. Wansbrough) spoke about the braxy-like disease. It would not be important if Mr. Bennett did make progress reports concerning his investigations. Such men do not like making progress reports. It is unfair to ask a man who has not solved his problem to make such reports, since he may make them on wrong lines. Indeed, men of that type will not make progress reports. I am glad, however, that the member for Beverley appreciates the fact that Mr. Bennett has given of his best towards the diagnosis of the disease, which so far has baffled all the scientists in the country.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—College of Agriculture, £5,197—agreed to.

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

Resolution reported.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Council's Further Message.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following message from the Legislative Council:—

The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly in reply to its message No. 26, that, having regard to the importance of the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill, and the adverse effect on the finances even if the Bill were only temporarily laid aside, the Legislative Council, without prejudice to its constitutional rights and privileges, is prepared to give the Bill further consideration if the Legislative Assembly will agree with the Legislative Council—(a) to refer the matter at present subject of dispute to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council for decision, and (b) pending the determination by such tribunal of the respective rights of the two Houses, the Legislative Assembly will refrain from further persistence in the view now advanced by the Legislative Assembly that the pressing of a request is illegal. The Bill is returned herewith.

May I venture to remark that when this matter comes up for further consideration I shall have something to say, and I would suggest to the Premier that he does not take the message into consideration tonight.

On motion by the Premier, resolved that the consideration of the Council's message be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES—STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutley in the Chair.

Division—State Brickworks, £41,991 :

Mr. THOMSON: When these Estimates were before the Chamber in the last session, I asked the Minister in charge whether he could inform us of the conditions applying to the sale of bricks in the city, as it was understood that one firm had practically the sole right of selling them in the metropolitan area. I also asked for information as to the conditions governing the arrangement. Unfortunately the Minister was not in a position to give par-

ticulars of the rate of commission being paid. Can the Minister now inform the Committee regarding those matters?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot say what commission is being paid to the individual referred to, but it is certainly not correct to say that any individual has a monopoly of the output of the State Brickworks.

Mr. Thomson: That is the statement that has been made.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no truth in it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Perhaps it referred to the retail business.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, because the great bulk of that is done direct through the State Brickworks, while the State Sawmills also sell bricks direct to their clients. There is one contractor who takes big orders and sells to smaller contractors.

Mr. Mann: He is a speculator.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At any rate, he is a contractor and has been doing that business with the State Brickworks since their establishment. He gets them at the same price as anyone else, and retails them at the same price as the other contractors get. I cannot say what commission he receives, but certainly it is untrue that anyone has a monopoly. Every big contractor, practically speaking, deals with the brickworks because that is the only place where they can get the pressed bricks that they want. There is a shortage of bricks everywhere, and it is impossible to get supplies under three months. The whole of our output is booked for more than three months ahead. That is holding up the building trade seriously.

Mr. MANN: Regarding the point raised by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson), the gentleman in question is a man who has spare cash and he gambles on the demand for bricks. He takes a risk by ordering bricks and therefore always has a good supply on hand. He has bricks at call for small contractors when they require them.

Mr. Sleeman: We heard a lot about gambling last night.

Hon. G. Taylor: But this is a matter of speculation.

Mr. Latham: You mean the man corners all the spare bricks.

Mr. MANN: No, he takes a risk when ordering the supplies.

Mr. Latham: And other people cannot get them at all.

Mr. MANN: He has them on hand when the contractors require them.

Mr. Latham: If he is permitted to do that and other contractors cannot get bricks, then surely he is cornering them.

Mr. MANN: That is not so. This man will order thousands of bricks at a time, and when the contractors want them they are available.

Mr. Chesson: And he lays out his own money.

Mr. MANN: That is so. He buys bricks when the trade is slack, and then if a contractor wants to get a number, the man makes a small profit and also gets the carting.

Mr. Latham: Then that is wrong.

Mr. MANN: He gets two small profits, one on the bricks and one on the carting.

Mr. Latham: And commission too.

Mr. MANN: I do not know anything about the commission.

The Minister for Works: He sells at the same price as the State Brickworks.

Mr. MANN: He is game and will order bricks, whether he has orders on hand or not. The result is he has bricks when they are wanted. The majority of small contractors cannot afford to buy bricks to have them when they are required.

Mr. Sleeman: Possibly he can buy bricks when others cannot obtain them.

Mr. MANN: But he buys when bricks are not wanted, and then when the demand sets in and everyone wants bricks, and cannot get them from the kilns, he is able to supply.

Mr. LATHAM: In the country districts building operations are repeatedly held up because of the inability to secure bricks.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is so in the city as well.

Mr. LATHAM: It seems most remarkable that one man can procure the bricks and corner them. I would like to have the name of that particular gentleman with a view to ascertaining whether we can buy bricks from him when they are required in the country districts.

Mr. Mann: I will give you his name.

Mr. LATHAM: I venture the assertion that it will not be possible to buy bricks from him at the same price as is paid to the State Brickworks. The Government should look into this matter now the point has been raised.

Division put and passed.

Division—State Ferries, £16,135:

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: There was a proposal to hand over the ferries running to South Perth to the local governing body. When I was living in South Perth that seemed to me to be the natural thing to do. Has anything further been heard of that proposal?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We will consider any offer that may be made. No offer has been received.

Division put and passed

Division—State Hotels, £61,383:

Mr. FERGUSON: Additions are required to the State hotel at Wongan Hills. I wish to pay a tribute to the conduct of the State hotel there. The manager and his wife do their utmost to run the hotel on ideal lines, but the premises are totally inadequate for the requirements of the district. As the State has a monopoly at Wongan Hills, the least we can do is to provide adequate facilities. If the license were held by a private individual, no doubt the Licensing Court would insist upon better facilities being provided. The dining room is too small and there are not half enough bedrooms.

Mr. Mann: The Government had better sell the State hotels.

The Premier: I will take an offer.

Mr. FERGUSON: If there is any social function at Wongan Hills, difficulty is always experienced in securing accommodation. Everything is on too small a scale to meet present requirements. The township is in the centre of a thriving agricultural district and the Government should provide £10,000 or £12,000 to enable the necessary improvements to be effected.

The Premier: Do you think there is anyone there who would be likely to lease the hotel?

Mr. FERGUSON: I do not know.

Mr. Latham: I do.

The Premier: Well, I am prepared to do business.

Mr. FERGUSON: I suggest that the Premier approach the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston), for I am sure one more little hotel would not do him any harm. At the same time, I know that the people there are satisfied with State control and probably will not desire their hotel to be leased.

Mr. LATHAM: There is a rumour prevalent throughout the State that the Government propose to lease the State hotels.

The Premier: Where did you hear that?

Mr. LATHAM: I have heard it.

Mr. Ferguson: We heard it just now.

Mr. LATHAM: I hope it is true, because we might get the Licensing Bench to take more interest in the hotels that are now run by the State.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They have no control over the State hotels.

Mr. LATHAM: They have a fair amount of control over them.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: No, none at all.

Mr. LATHAM: At Bruce Rock we have one of the most up to date hotel buildings in the State, yet there is no hot water service there. Every hotel throughout the country districts has been made to provide hot water supplies, yet it is not required where the State hotel at Bruce Rock is concerned. If a decent hot water supply were installed there, it would help the Government to secure better terms should they lease the hotel. At Kwolyn, which is an isolated centre, a sewerage system has been installed on the hotel premises, and yet at the Bruce Rock hotel, there is no hot water system, nor is there any sewerage system.

The Premier: The State hotel at Kwolyn is not paying, so that is why the money was spent there.

Mr. LATHAM: The hotel at Bruce Rock is providing the Government with revenue. I do not desire to criticise the State hotels from the standpoint of the management, because they are very well run.

Mr. Mann: Are they run better than the privately owned hotels?

Mr. LATHAM: Better than some of them. I daresay they can compare favourably with other country hotels and certainly they are better and cheaper than the hotels in the country districts of New South Wales.

The Minister for Works: They are superior, too.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes, and certainly cheaper.

The Premier: Do you think we could transfer the sewerage system from the Kwolyn hotel to the Bruce Rock hotel?

Mr. LATHAM: The Premier had better refer that matter to the Minister for Health.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In justice to the licensing court, I wish to say the State hotels do not come under the Licensing Act, do not pay license fees, do not have to go to the licensing court for renewals, and that the licensing court has no say whatever in

their accommodation or lack of accommodation. When improvements or additions are made to any private hotel in the State, they must be submitted to the experts of the licensing court. No alterations can be made without the consent of that court, but when the State hotels department wish to make alterations, their plans do not have to go before the licensing court. I think that is wrong. Still, I would not have mentioned it but for the references made, suggesting that the members of the Licensing court were failing in their duty in not ordering improvements for the State hotels. The licensing court has no say whatever in respect of State hotels.

Division put and passed.

Division—State Implement and Engineering Works, £204,449:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Here we have an estimated expenditure of £204,449, while the estimated contribution to Consolidated Revenue is nil.

The Premier: Well, that compares favourably with the contribution of last year.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes, that is the trouble. Has the Premier ever taken into consideration the selling of this business?

The Premier: It would be up to us to consider a reasonable offer.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: But of course before you could sell you would require to bring down a Bill to rescind a section in the State Trading Concerns Act. I think we are carrying on some of these industries that could well be handed over to private people.

Mr. THOMSON: It is a pity this enterprise was ever established, because without it probably we would have had private implement works.

Mr. Sleeman: There would be no need to look for an offer for it if it were patronised by the farmers.

Mr. THOMSON: I take it that those who with experience have come to the conclusion that the machinery from the State Implement Works does not stand as well as machinery supplied by private firms.

Mr. Sleeman: Some people think differently.

Mr. THOMSON: It is remarkable that after all these years they have not been able to put these works on a profitable footing.

Mr. Sleeman: Is it not prejudice?

Mr. THOMSON: No. Many people would purchase the locally made machinery if it would stand up to the job. When, on a pre-

vious occasion, these Estimates were introduced, the Minister said he was providing a considerable sum of money for new machinery. The member for York suggested that these works would be more profitably utilised if they were manufacturing railway trucks in which the wheat could be hauled to the port.

Hon. G. Taylor: We require to hand the works over to private industry.

Mr. THOMSON: I am quite sure that McKay's or any of the other companies would show a profit after so much capital expenditure. Although these works certainly pay out considerable sums in salaries and wages, nevertheless they do not have to pay rates and taxes.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is regrettable that members should get up and decry local industry.

Hon. G. Taylor: Especially if it is in Fremantle.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not care where it is, so long as it is in this State. When the member for Katanning decries the State Implement Works, he is not doing those works any good. Plenty of farmers have said the State implements are second to none in Australia. A little time ago there was some trouble over the harvesters, but I understand that those machines have since been improved. Not only is there a local prejudice against the State Implement Works, but it is exercised also against all sorts of local industries. We had a jam factory, but people would not buy the jam.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is no great prejudice shown against Swan beer.

Mr. SLEEMAN: That is the only exception to the rule. If the farmers would but patronise the State Implement Works, it would soon be a profitable concern.

Mr. MANN: When we had these Estimates last year the Minister dealt at length with them and told us he had selected an experienced manager from South Australia, and that consequently he expected improved results. We have not seen the improvement. Recently one of the daily papers published an article that, I think, merited a reply.

The Minister for Works: It was replied to by the management.

Mr. MANN: I did not see the reply. Probably the Minister will tell us something about it.

The Minister for Works: I am not going to deal with that kind of tripe.

Mr. MANN: The newspaper made a definite statement.

The Minister for Works: It did not.

Mr. Latham: And it demanded a Royal Commission to inquire.

The Premier: Anybody can demand that.

Mr. MANN: One of the statements made was that the number of artisans in the works had been reduced, but that the number of overseers and foremen remained the same.

The Minister for Works: The management replied to it.

The Premier: Yes. The "Daily News" was a bit short of copy that day, so they flung a few disjointed sentences together and filled up a column with them.

Mr. MANN: The management permit their sales to be in the hands of the same people as are selling McKay's machines and Bagshaw's.

Mr. Latham: Who is that?

Mr. MANN: The Co-operative Company.

Mr. Latham: No, they are not handling any of McKay's machines.

The Premier: In any case, the hon. member would not suggest that the Co-operative Company would not do their very best for all their clients.

Mr. MANN: Of course they would, but I do not know whether the Premier, if he owned these works himself, would be satisfied to leave his interests with an agent that was looking after rival interests also.

The Premier: No, not with ordinary agents, but I would trust this Co-operative Company.

Mr. MANN: The Premier is not in serious mind to-night, although he should be when he looks at these Estimates. I know that the Co-operative Company can offer McKay's implements and those from the State Implement Works.

The Minister for Works: No, not one of the Co-operative branches is handling both our machines and McKay's.

Mr. MANN: At all events, I thought it was worth bringing under the Minister's notice that the expected improvement in the State Implement Works, due to new management, has not yet eventuated.

The Premier: It has not had time to get going.

Mr. MANN: I will live in the hope that the change of agents may make a difference. I use a State implement on my own farm, and I find it a very serviceable article. I have two of them.

Hon. G. Taylor: And neither of them is any good.

Mr. MANN: Yes, they are both good. I do not think there is any public prejudice against these machines. It is a matter of pushing the lines.

Division put and passed.

Division—State Quarries, £29,650—agreed to.

Division—State Shipping Service, £189,900:

Mr. LAMOND: I should like the Government to indicate their intention regarding the boats on the North-West coast.

Mr. Mann: They have just taken the "Duchess" off the river.

Mr. LAMOND: We want something better than the "Duchess" up there. The "Koolinda" gave excellent service, and but for the unfortunate grounding in Shark Bay, she would have established a record. She is a particularly good passenger boat.

Mr. Mann: All the accidents along that coast seem to happen to the State ships.

Mr. LAMOND: The hon. member is referring to the grounding of the "Koolinda" in Shark Bay. As a matter of fact, the opposition line's steamer was stuck on the same bank for 24 hours prior to the "Koolinda" coming along. I hope it is the intention of the Government to provide another steamer for the North-West coast. It is necessary that this should be done if a regular service is to be maintained. The "Koolinda" has been well patronised, and no doubt she would have shown a fair profit if she had not run on the sandbank. She is the best passenger vessel on the coast, and the fares charged on her are less than those charged by opposition lines. No doubt that is why so many mothers coming south patronise the State ship. It was found on the opposition boats that the railings along the decks were not close enough to prevent any child from falling through and they have now placed netting or canvas around the railings. The "Koolinda" railings are likewise dangerous, and some protection should be afforded for the children who travel on her. This would greatly relieve the anxiety of mothers. I would point out that the "Kangaroo" does not call at Port Hedland. If the Minister issued instructions that the vessel should call there, the position regarding the shortage of petrol at that port

would be relieved. Almost every wool-carting season there is an acute position set up by the shortage of petrol. If the "Kangaroo" were allowed to call there, arrangements could probably be made with the oil companies for consignments of petrol to be brought direct from Java and unshipped at Port Hedland. This would reduce the price of petrol to the local consumers. Under the Navigation Act the supply of petrol that can be carried by passenger boats has recently been limited. I think the limit is now 200 cases. One hundred cases may be required by Port Hedland, Broome, Roebourne and Onslow, but owing to the limitation those ports may not receive more than the totally inadequate supply of 20 or 30 cases.

Mr. Mann: Does the petrol have to go to Fremantle before it is sent North again?

Mr. LAMOND: Yes, and two freights have to be paid. I was advised that the "Kangaroo" could not negotiate Port Hedland. Captain Norris, who was in charge of the "Kangaroo," told me that if he were ordered to take the ship in he would do so without any more risk than would be the case with the "Koolinda." He said he had done what he had been told by the manager of the State Shipping Service. That gentleman is not a practical seaman, I understand. At any rate the vessel has never been to Port Hedland.

Mr. Mann: Is that because of the sand-bar?

Mr. LAMOND: It is alleged that she is too long, but I doubt if she draws more than does the "Koolinda." The Minister might, at any rate, inquire into the matter. When he was in the North-West with me a year or so ago he visited many stations, where operations were held up because of the shortage of petrol due to the regulations under the Navigation Act.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Probably the Treasurer will be unable to meet the wishes of the member for Pilbara, who wants a new steamer added to the State fleet. I want him to sell all the State ships, and leave the North-West coast to be treated in the same way that any other coast is treated.

Mr. Sleeman: Do you want black crews to supplant white men?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I believe the people would be better off if they were in the hands of private enterprise.

Mr. Mann: It is all right for the people along the Queensland coast.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I think I had better confine myself to the suggestion that the Premier should take the earliest opportunity of disposing of the State fleet.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hope the Government will soon be able to announce that they are adding another vessel to the State fleet. I should be very surprised if they took any notice of the suggestion of the member for Mt. Margaret. If they did black crews would still be engaged along the coast, and white men would be put out of employment. I do not know whether the hon. member wants that. Black crews are no good to this country. Not only have the Commonwealth Government granted exemptions in the case of steamers employing black crews, but they employ blackfellows on their own ships. I have here a photograph which shows that the Commonwealth are employing aborigines along the coast of Australia, and all of them are wearing His Majesty's uniform.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They were here before we were.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Yes, and we are using them to take the place of men for whom the prescribed wage is 2s. 8d. per hour. The four men shown in the photograph that I hold in my hand get 6d. per day and the little chap with the anchor on his coat gets 9d. per day. Those men are not being employed out of love for the blacks. If the Commonwealth Government had any love for them they would provide for them. They are being employed to reduce the standard of living and to take the place of white men. Whereas white men would have to be paid 2s. 8d. an hour, those men are getting 6d. per day. I hope the Premier will make an arrangement under the Trades Facilities Act so that in the near future we shall have another "Koolinda" sailing up the coast and the boats carrying black crews will be driven off the coast.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The speech of the member for Fremantle was a strange one. According to him the poor unfortunate people from whom we took this country should not be allowed to live.

Mr. Sleeman: They should be allowed to live, but if they work they should be paid a decent wage.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I believe the people disagree with that, but the hon. member does not want them to work at all.

Mr. Sleeman: I do not wish to see them employed as cheap labour.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If a man is employed on the coast, he ought to get pretty good money. I should like to see the member for Fremantle working in a steamer's stokehold between Fremantle and Wyndham.

Mr. Sleeman: And at the same wages as are paid to black men.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know whether the hon. member would earn them. If he earned them I would not mind.

Mr. Sleeman: If you had your way black men would get the work and white men would be out of work.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, I believe in a white Australia.

Mr. Sleeman: If you did you would not have recommended the Federal Government to grant exemption to the boats carrying coloured crews.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have always believed in a White Australia, but not for the reason that the hon. member does. He would not mind coloured people being in Australia so long as they received the same rate of wages as was paid to whites. I object to their being here at all; but I do not object to the black people from whom we have taken the country being allowed to live. That is a vastly different matter. I did not know that they were sailors.

Mr. Sleeman: Have a look at this picture.

Mr. Latham: They were some chap-decked out in fancy dress.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suppose they are employed to watch the boats while in port, or something of that kind. Under my friends' method of handling the situation there was 60,000 tons less shipping on our coast. To-day people find it difficult to get their goods carried along the coast by the State Shipping Service. The people in the North have to depend on the State ships because the other boats have been taken off the coast.

Mr. Chesson: The other boats went off themselves to chase high freights.

Mr. Mann: They are not chasing high freights to-day.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The "Kangaroo" went off the coast to chase high freights. All the arguments of members opposite are thoroughly illogical. To the people of the North-West the shipping service stands in much the same relation

as does the railway service to people down here, but I should prefer to see the work done by private owners. So would the Premier. We are losing money on the State ships every year. If we were particular to see that we bought only goods made by white people, we should be rendering much greater service. Many people talk a great deal. It is easier to talk in favour of a proposal than to work in order that it may be given effect to. That sort of thing has continued for years. I notice that by some strange happening the interest on capital and overdraft is being reduced from £56,800 last year to £26,400 this year. That is an achievement of which I entirely approve, provided it is genuine. The sinking fund is to be reduced from £350 to £250. If it were a genuine sinking fund the hon. member should approve of it.

Mr. Sleeman: You would not doubt the figures, would you?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not doubt the figures; they are printed for everyone to read, but the truth is we have wiped £500,000 off the debt against the shipping service, and in future the interest is to be charged to ordinary revenue and not against the shipping service.

The Premier: That is so; it ought to have been done years ago.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It could not have been done years ago because it did not amount to £500,000.

The Premier: Well, it amounted to a considerable sum.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It ought not to be done now. It means that the shipping service, which showed an expenditure last year of £222,100, shows an estimate this year of only £184,400, and the loss is expected to be £23,000. The real loss would be that plus £30,000 interest on the £500,000, which is being debited to a Loan Suspense Account. The £500,000 loss is the accumulation of years. The results, however, are not to be any better than they were last year. By the way, the receipts for last year are not shown. As a matter of fact, with the £30,000 added, we should not be much better on the expenditure side and I doubt whether we should be much better on the revenue side. It is not to be expected that the boats running along the coast can pay, in view of all the high charges that are necessarily placed against them. The traffic is not sufficient to enable them to pay; the population is not there. The people on the coast have to be served.

The Premier: We have sometimes found two ships leaving Fremantle on the same day and they have not had sufficient loading to fill one ship.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so. The ships run to Singapore and carry the wool and other produce from the North-West to meet British shipping at Singapore. We cannot expect it to be otherwise. We cannot expect to divert wool this way when it can be conveyed more cheaply to England by the Singapore route.

Mr. Lamond: Pastoralists advise me that it is not cheaper that way.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am told it is. There must be some advantage; otherwise they would not send it that way. The hon. member is a little prejudiced in favour of State vessels.

Mr. Lamond: Very little of it goes that way.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The wool goes that way.

The Premier: Very little of it.

Mr. Lamond: It was not cheaper to send it that way until recently, when an opposition line cut the freight.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Well, that is good for the North-West. The Singapore boats ran along the coast for many years before State ships existed. I regret that the loss on State ships has been written up to Loan, since it means that the interest will have to be paid from ordinary revenue. State shipping, of course, is not likely to pay; but undoubtedly we must serve the North-West coast just as we serve the South-West.

Mr. Lamond: Money has not been lost on the North-West coast as in other services.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is justification for losing money in the service of the people of the North, but there could be no justification for losing money in overseas trading. In fact, there is no justification whatever for losing money in State trading, from which the people derive no benefit whatever.

Mr. Lamond: A man told me the other day that by travelling on a State vessel along the North-West coast he saved £30.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But the people lost that £30. When the Treasurer loses money on State trading, he has not that money to spend in other directions and thus create more work for the people. If the money invested in State trading were placed in other avenues of production, it would provide three times the work that

results from State trading. Besides, on top of their ordinary work Ministers are bothered by State trading concerns to an extent which hon. members hardly realise. I would have got rid of the State trading concerns if I could. Had I succeeded, the present Treasurer would have felt greatly obliged to me.

Mr. COVERLEY: I might not have risen but for the remarks of the member for Mt. Margaret and the Leader of the Opposition. The former would scrap the State ships immediately.

Hon. G. Taylor: No; dispose of them at their fair value.

Mr. COVERLEY: To the North-West, State shipping is just as necessary as a State railway is to Mt. Margaret. The people of the North-West are just as much entitled to have their food supplies and other necessities of life assured to them as are the electors of Mt. Margaret and Northam. It is amusing to hear the Leader of the Opposition make an apologetic speech about State ships in this Chamber, whereas during general elections the telegraph lines to the North are red-hot with messages about improvements in the State Shipping Service. Nothing is heard at election time about the abolition of the State ships. Then Opposition members speak of the State ships as a public utility. Let Opposition members be frank on the subject when they are in the North-West. The Leader of the Opposition commented on the finances of the State Shipping Service. When the service made profits during his Treasurership, he grabbed those profits and put them into revenue. On the other hand, alterations costing £40,000 were debited against the ships. The old derelict "Bambra" served her purpose fairly well, and did great service for North-West residents. While that ship probably did not earn much profit to boost the Treasurer, she did keep down fares and freights on the coast, and so benefited the people of the North. We should not forget that the "Koolinda" has been on the coast for only eight months. After she has been running for 18 months there will probably be a better balance sheet for the State Shipping Service.

Hon. G. Taylor: It will not take much to improve it. It is nil now.

Mr. COVERLEY: It was nil while the hon. member supported people who were opposed to the State steamers.

Hon. G. Taylor: I have always opposed them, and I was opposed to the proposition

when I was a member of the party that purchased the first of them.

Mr. COVERLEY: The hon. member has been inconsistent in this regard as he has been in everything else. We want another State steamer on the coast.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, why not two more?

Mr. COVERLEY: One will suffice if it is on the lines of the "Koolinda." We could then run a monthly service to Darwin.

Mr. Lamond: We want a fortnightly service.

Mr. COVERLEY: At present we lose a lot of cargo because the State steamer runs to Darwin once every two months only. We also lose a lot of trade that would be available for the merchants at Fremantle and Perth. The people in the North would prefer to deal from those merchants rather than from the merchants who operate in Melbourne or Brisbane. As it is, the boat service does not fit in with the requirements of the merchants at Darwin who have to transact the whole of their trade with the merchants in the Eastern States.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There are only about a couple of people there.

Mr. COVERLEY: There would not be anyone if the hon. member had his way. I understand one of the boats manned by a coloured crew is to be taken off the coast, and that the company will apply for a permit to replace that vessel with a cargo boat. I hope the Premier will protest emphatically against any further permits being issued to any cargo boat replacing a passenger boat. The passenger trade should be catered for as well as the cargo trade. The majority of the people along the North-West coast desire at present to travel by the "Koolinda," but at times it is more convenient to travel by the boats employing coloured crews. It is not fair to the people there to allow the shipping company to remove one of the passenger vessels merely because they have awakened to the fact that the "Koolinda" is getting the bulk of the passenger trade. The Leader of the Opposition made a few caustic remarks a few minutes ago regarding wool. I would point out to him that formerly the private companies charged the Kimberley people £1 per bale for freight. The State boats have been able to carry the wool for 15s. per bale.

Hon. G. Taylor: No wonder we are losing money there.

Mr. COVERLEY: However, at present the price per bale for wool shipped from

Derby is 15s. 6d., so that the effect of the State Shipping Service in that direction has been to make the private companies reduce their freight per bale by 4s. 6d. If the Leader of the Opposition is so mindful of the interests of the primary producers, he will keep that point in mind. The fact that the West Kimberley growers are able to benefit to the extent of 4s. 6d. per bale is directly due to the State Shipping Service. I hope the Premier will keep in mind that we cannot do much good with the State ships unless we get another of the type of the "Koolinda." At present we have one passenger boat competing with four others, with the result that the "Koolinda" generally sails from a port one or two days after one of the privately owned steamers has left with the bulk of the passenger and cargo traffic. The "Koolinda" has to pick up the debris. If we had two passenger boats enabling a fortnightly service to be run, better results would be obtained.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (Honorary Minister): Despite the views of Opposition members, there is a general agreement that it is the policy of this country that the State should supply a reliable, regular and guaranteed shipping service on the North-West coast.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You cannot guarantee it.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: The only way that can be done is by providing the facilities the Government are doing. As to the remarks of the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley) it should be remembered that when the Premier was in the Old Country he endeavoured to arrange for the purchase of two boats similar to the "Koolinda." He endeavoured to achieve his objective under the provisions of the Imperial Trade Facilities Act. He was successful in getting the "Koolinda," but he could not get the second boat. However, the fact that he endeavoured to procure two boats is an indication that the Government realise the necessities of the North-West coast.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The State vessel runs too close after the other boats, and if we had two boats, that would mean that they would run still more closely after them.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: There is no co-ordination in the running of the vessels on the North-West coast and in fact the arrangements clash.

Mr. Lamond: But the "Koolinda" has been a full ship both ways.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I can understand the attitude of members representing the North-West of this State. Of course we know that Opposition members do not like the provision of State steamers as a trading concern, and therefore they invented the name of public utilities to be applied to them.

Mr. Thomson: They look upon those steamers as we do upon the railways.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: Yes. I presume the members for the North-West would not be as excited as the member for Mt. Margaret if it were proposed to pull up the Laverton railway, which does not pay. The point is that we propose to provide an adequate service for the North-West coast, even although it is not always a commercial proposition. With the provision of these up to date boats it will become a commercial proposition in time. As to the other remarks made, they will be referred to the Minister in charge, and I am confident that the utmost consideration will be given to them.

Division put and passed.

Divisions—State Saw Mills, £772,978; Wyndham Freezing, Canning and Meat Export Works, £310,000—agreed to.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 22nd November, 1927.

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

MOTION—CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.

Completion of Parliament House.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [4.35]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the completion of the front of Parliament House should be associated with the centenary celebrations.

The subject of this motion is set out so clearly that members will recognise at once what it is about. The centenary of Western Australia is now so close that I am taking this early opportunity of asking members to discuss with me the best method of commemorating it. Every reflecting person will admit that the event deserves substantial recognition, especially when we remember the initial difficulties our forefathers had to contend with when they landed in Western Australia. As a young man I had some experience in pioneering difficulties. I have been hard pushed for food, etc., but nothing I went through, and nothing any of my contemporaries went through, could have equalled what those unfortunate people who first landed here had to contend with. Those who have read history will remember that the original white people landed in the worst season of the year, in June, when the winter was exceptionally wet. They had little or no food, hostile blacks to contend with, and no shelters prepared. Worst of all, they were people who were quite unfitted and unprepared for such an experience. When we remember what their initial difficulties were, and when we see what has been achieved since by them and their descendants, we must agree that it would be very fitting that some memorial to them should be erected. As in June, 1929, the hundred years will have expired, we should consider now what we should do to commemorate the work of the pioneers. In the days of which I speak the means of communication were so rare that it was not easy for the newcomers to get any assistance. When they ran short of food they could not get it easily from the other States, as would be possible to-day. There were no ships, trading with the East, such as Java and those places, so that people here were practically isolated from the world. Many ways have been suggested by which this occasion should be commemorated. Unfortunately all of them are connected with the expenditure of money. The position of West-