

It was not usual for the House to sit on Friday, but it was hoped that we would have the Appropriation Bill before us tomorrow. If that were so the Assembly would have practically finished their labours and at the Council meeting tomorrow we would be able to consider the Appropriation Bill, and if necessary members would be asked to meet on Saturday next to finish the Bills before Parliament and enable the prorogation to take place.

Question passed.

House adjourned at 5.21 p.m.

Legislative Assembly, Thursday, 4th February, 1909.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—STATE HOTEL, TRADE WITH ASIATICS.

Mr. O'LOGHLIN asked the Minister for Mines: 1. Is he aware that the greater portion of the commodities required by the State hotel are supplied by Asiatics? 2. Will he issue instructions that the practice of patronising Asiatics must cease at the State hotel?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1. No. 2. Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—RAILWAY GOODS TRAFFIC. DELIVERY.

Mr. COLLIER (for Mr. Gill) asked the Minister for Railways: 1. Is he aware that serious delays occur at the

Perth railway station in the delivery of perishable goods booked at parcel rates? 2. Will he ascertain if the trouble is caused by the present system of loading parcels and goods in a goods truck, and thus causing confusion and delay at the terminal station?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1. Delays have occurred in one or two instances. 2. It is only in very exceptional cases that parcels are loaded into goods trucks.

QUESTION—MINES VENTILATION.

Mr. TAYLOR (for Mr. Scaddan) asked the Minister for Mines: 1. Has his attention been drawn to a letter by Mr. A. E. Johnson, a miner of Kalgoorlie, in to-day's *West Australian* wherein he states, "that stopes are carried nearer 25ft. than 14ft. high; that there are mines on the Golden Mile where the ventilation rises are covered over with sand or mullock ready to run down into the stopes as soon as it is beaten out, so when the blasting of big rock and firing-out occurs, generally at crib-time or knock-off time, one gets the smoke and fumes from the last shift, or from one's own firing at crib-time." Further, "that there are a lot of men suffering from this cause already on this young field, and nearly all of them men from 20 to 30 years of age." 2. In view of this testimony from a practical miner will he cause further inquiries to be made into the assertions made by goldfields members during the passage of the Mines Estimates before finally accepting the statements of Inspector Hudson in contradiction of those assertions?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1. Yes. Statements of this sort have been inquired into repeatedly and found to be exaggerated and incorrect, and I have no knowledge of Mr. A. E. Johnson that would lead me to give more credence to his statement than to those of others who have made similar ones, or to accept it against that of the inspectors of mines. If persons knowing of cases where complaint could fairly be made would report the same to the inspectors, through the secretary

of the Miners' Union, if they like, instead of writing to the Press and members of the House, they would do far more good than by making general and unspecific charges. Every such complaint received by the inspectors is fully investigated, and they are always ready and anxious to receive information that will lead to the reform of abuses and remedying of defects which might otherwise escape their notice when going through the mines. 2, No, but specific complaints, giving precise particulars of the matters complained about, will always be fully inquired into.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 3rd February; Mr. Dalglish in the Chair.

Agricultural Department (Honorary Minister, Hon. J. Mitchell).

Vote—Agriculture, £49,425:

The HONORARY MINISTER, in introducing the Agricultural Estimates, said: I may first be permitted to call attention to the fact that as economy is the order of the day, we have endeavoured to practise economy in this department. If members will take the trouble to compare the cost of this department to-day with what it was in the past, they will see that we have not only practised economy by means of cutting down the cost, but we have done that in the best way possible—by completing more work without spending as much as was spent before. During the first year I had control of the department, there was a saving of something like £10,600 on the previous year, and last year the amount saved was £4,830 on the expenditure in 1905-6. In explanation of the fact that the decrease this year as compared with my first year of office, was not so great as it was previously, I would point out that among other things automatic increases have had to be provided for. Again, we are now purchasing stock for all the departments, and although in this connection a considerable saving is effected generally yet it costs our department £640 per year to bring

about this result. In the past the practice followed was that if a contract had been concluded, the horses and drays were sold by public auction, and when a new contract was to be let a new set of horses and drays had to be purchased. The Premier decided that this should not be continued and handed over to our department the work of controlling this stock. It is necessary to have an officer to look after the work. There has to be a man at the stables, and we have to feed the horses pending the letting of the next contract. The cost of this work amounts, as I said, to about £640 per year. Another additional expense is that we are now paying nearly £2,000 a year more to the agricultural societies. No member will object to this expenditure, because after all if we look at it as a business arrangement, we will see that the expenditure of the additional sum pays us very well. It means increased revenue from the railways, for large numbers of stock are sent to the various shows, and many people travel from place to place, and, altogether, the indirect benefit is considerable. The national show was recently held at Busselton. Some members visited the town, and I am quite sure they will all agree with me that the object lesson provided was well worth the money the show cost the State. The exhibits at the show were good, and it was well that it should have been held at Busselton, for that is a place that needs waking up. I am sorry to have to say that, for the district is represented by my colleague the Treasurer, but there is no doubt about it, Busselton is a place of great possibilities, and it was with the idea of endeavouring to develop those possibilities that we decided that the national show should be held there this year. By the holding of these shows, money is circulated in all directions, and as from almost all these sources the Treasury reaps some benefit, an indirect return is obtained by the State for the money they grant the agricultural societies. Many members have visited the various shows in the State during the past few months and will agree they have been a great success. A marked improvement has been noticeable in the stock, and altogether the shows

have provided an object lesson to the agricultural community which will undoubtedly be taken full advantage of and will produce good results from one end of the State to the other. By attending these shows the producers obtain a much better idea as to what they should do with regard to stock production, and agriculture generally. Then again, money has been spent in holding agricultural conferences in Perth. The sum of £370 appears on the Estimates for a conference. There is no doubt that these meetings of skilled agriculturists do an immense amount of good. I remember that at the first conference I called together I brought up the question of the food supplies of the people, and said it was essential that the necessity for importing food stuffs for the people of Western Australia should be done away with. The producers should be encouraged to overtake the demand, and do their best to provide all the food stuffs required in the State. The fact will be well appreciated that the expenditure of £370 on a conference of this character is a good investment. Considering the time lost by those who attended these conferences, there is no doubt they make a greater sacrifice monetarily than the State. All, however, gain considerably in knowledge by this expenditure. The expenditure has to be incurred by the State, and appears on the Estimates of my department. Then it has been necessary to have additional stock inspectors, as part of the duty of the Government is to protect the stock-owners from the spreading of diseases. Money must be spent in that connection. The expenditure has increased by £6,000 since I assumed control of the department. Notwithstanding this, however, I have managed to effect a saving of something like £18,000 as compared with the year previously to the one in which I took office. Then, too, I may take some credit for the work in connection with the rabbit-proof fence. I am now controlling 1,400 miles more of rabbit-proof fence than there was when I assumed control of the department, and we are doing the work for £1,000 less than it was done then. The cost of this department, which does very much good for the people, is

£34,655 and if one takes from that £13,700 spent on the rabbit-proof fence, it will be seen that the sum of £20,000 is about the amount spent on agriculture generally. With regard to the rabbit-proof fence, the only control I have in that regard is in connection with administration. When one considers the vast area of the State, and the immense possibilities of the agricultural industry, it must be realised that it is an important duty to carry out the duties connected with the department. With regard to the various trade concerns brought under the control of the department, my desire is that each one of these undertakings should be made to pay. That has been the burden of my song since I undertook the work of the department. At the present time the State farms, almost without exception, are paying their way. The markets and the freezing works also pay. In this connection, since the present manager assumed control in 1906, there has been a surplus of £1,685 over working expenses. Freezing works would be quite justified because freezing is one of those things which can easily become a monopoly. Apart from that we ought to have control of cold storage, because in a climate such as we have, it must play an important part in connection with the food supplies of the people. Everyone knows this country has a high summer temperature and our production requires, especially in connection with fruit, some means of prolonging the season. By means of cold storage you can prolong the season for fruit some four or five weeks and in the case of apples you could prolong the season to cover the whole year. We have not spent less on agriculture, but we have made money out of what we have spent. In connection with the Agricultural Bank there has been a large increase in the expenditure, but the increase has been only commensurate with the increase in business. In 1906-7 we spent £3,928; in 1907-8 we spent £7,086, and this year the expenditure is estimated at £9,720. I want to say that this amount is paid out of the profits made by the bank. We do not ask the Treasurer to contribute one penny of this ex-

penditure. The profit last year amounted to £4,637, and altogether we have standing to our credit £18,194 as the result of the operations of the bank. It is not a large sum, and no trading concern could live on such a small profit, but this bank has been designed to do work which no other bank would take up. It provides work for the people, and if it had not been for the liberalisation of this bank and the energy put into the management by the officers there would have been many more people wanting work in this State. If you take the figures you will see that we have provided an enormous amount of work. May I refer for one moment to the system of management by trustees. The first trustees appointed were Mr. Richardson, who was a former Minister for Lands, and Mr. Hopkins, who was also an ex-Minister for Lands. Mr. Paterson inaugurated this new system of management and it has worked well and has obviated delays. In connection with this bank, when the proposal for its establishment was first introduced to Parliament by Sir John Forrest it was said that it would do no good, and if members turn up the discussions they will find that those who were in opposition in those days, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Leake, and others, had not one good word to say for the idea.

Mr. Troy: Mr. Gregory and Mr. Wilson were in opposition too.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If they were I hope they were not culprits. At any rate those in opposition said that it could not work any good. Sir John Forrest proved that it would and everything that he said would happen has happened. The result has been most satisfactory, and anything I have had to say in connection with this bank has also been realised. When Mr. Hopkins retired from the trusteeship, as he was compelled to do when we had the good fortune to welcome him to this House, I asked a successful farmer at Northam, Mr. Frank Cook, a man who had made his way with little assistance, and who had become independent at a comparatively early age. I asked him to undertake this work. The remuneration is

very small, being merely £2 2s. a sitting. My friend said that he would and that he would help the State as much as he possibly could. Mr. Cook has since accepted the position of trustee and is doing very good work. The trustees generally have done splendid work and practically at a loss to themselves.

Mr. Brown: Why do you override the trustees?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I did not hear that remark. We have advanced £743,498 from this institution, and the improvements which have been effected include the clearing of 378,000 acres, the cultivation of 205,000 acres, the fencing of 455,000 chains, while water conservation is valued at £55,000, and buildings are valued at £78,000. In addition on the purchase of stock £71,999 has been spent, and we have paid off liabilities to the extent of £42,144. The total loans authorised on the 30th June last came to £1,045,000. If you will allow me to tell you something that happened during the financial year of 1907-8 you will realise why the expenditure in connection with this institution has increased. The trustees dealt with 2,534 applications for the sum of £352,000 in the one year. Of this total 2,329 applications for £380,700 were approved, and 124 applications for £16,075 were declined in full. The other applications were amended and granted in some degree. The sum paid to borrowers in the same period amounted to £218,420, for which the improvements effected during the year were—and this is a point I want to emphasise because it will satisfy the member for Pilbara—we cleared 102,128 acres, cultivated 23,966 acres, ringbarked 175,208 acres, and put up 175,996 chains of fencing. Draining and water supply was worth £15,027, and buildings £2,372. For the four months ended 31st October last we authorised advances to the extent of £123,900, which is something like £30,000 a month, and hon. members will realise that this is paid in wages for work which is being done. May I say that that is why we succeed. Our neighbours in the Eastern States have had some trouble with their advances. In South

Australia they have lost a considerable amount of money and in New Zealand too.

Mr. Bath: Not in South Australia according to their last report.

The HONORARY MINISTER: At any rate I want to point out that we have succeeded because we add to the land the cost of the work to be done, which is something to be added to the security. May I say a word in connection with these advances. Sometimes I am approached by members and by people outside, who, when there is a disappointed application, say that the bank is no good, and that it is not doing what it was designed to do. I want to say, however, that it is a well managed business and that so far the losses have been very small, and the assistance given to the people to the extent of £750,000 has worked an immense amount of good. There is no doubt that we do the work we set out to do. I have dealt with the cost to the country of this institution and the department. May I say again that this bank does not cost the country one penny, because the cost is deducted from the earnings. There is one thing I would like to say in connection with the capital of the bank. You see we have an authorised expenditure of one million pounds, and we have actually paid away three-quarters of a million; we have authority to raise another half-million, and we will want it in the coming year I think. I do not think that we should raise the money in the State, because wherever you find an energetic and enterprising people you will always find a shortage of cash. I think, therefore, it would be better to raise the money in London.

Mr. Bath: By what means would you find interest on savings bank deposits?

The HONORARY MINISTER: You would find an investment for savings bank money on ordinary mortgages.

Mr. Bath: You tie it up then.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I think we should probably make a mistake if we do not raise money outside, because everyone knows that without enterprise we cannot have work, and without money we cannot have enter-

prise or work. The country is hungering for bread and the greatest trouble of all just now is money. There is work to do in the country if we only had the money to do it with.

Mr. Bath: Better a local pawn-shop than one outside.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not agree with the hon. member and I have had some experience of money lending.

Mr. Underwood: How is it for an overdraft now?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I never refuse to advance a man money on personal security, and in offering him money I invite him to come into the strong room. I can offer the member for Pilbara as much as he likes if he will allow me to put him in such a safe place. Hon. members will appreciate the work of this department, and I am sure they will agree with me that the expenditure I have mentioned has been particularly well invested. The work of agriculture really represents the foundation of the future, the prosperity of the State, because the production is a perennial one; year by year we gather in our crops. Everyone knows that the work of the Agricultural Department is a work of encouragement and direction. It is because we desire to do this work and to do it thoroughly that we ask Parliament to grant this sum of money. When we remember the immense possibilities open to us and that each year missed is a year absolutely lost, the necessity will be seen for pushing on with the work. You cannot go back. If you leave a field uncropped for a year you cannot take two crops from it next season. The depression now hanging over the State can be removed, and will be removed, by agricultural development. There is no doubt about that. Hon. members will realise that when they remember what has been done during the last two or three years, I repeat that but for the work of this department the position would not have been even as good as it is to-day. We have suffered, and it is only because we have exerted ourselves that we have been able to do as well as

we have done. We have been most anxious to develop this State. There is work here for all the people in the State, and indeed for a great many more. Unfortunately the work is not to be had, but just the same it is there to be done. The Agricultural Bank is doing good work in assisting to keep the men employed. We have been particularly fortunate in securing the services of Professor Lowrie. I fully realise the necessity of having in the department an expert, a man capable of directing and encouraging the people to better things. Two years ago I realised that that man was Professor Lowrie. During the last two years I have struggled on, doing a large part of the work of a director myself. I have been waiting for Professor Lowrie, and we have got him to-day. You know how he increased the wheat yield in South Australia by the introduction of fertilisers. My friends opposite often quote South Australia, and rightly so, as a place of energy, enterprise, and go. The result that has been achieved over there has been due largely to the work of Professor Lowrie. He probably put pounds in value on every acre of wheat land in that State. His work there had an immense influence on the export trade. Then, too, his work in New Zealand was of great benefit to the Dominion. It was largely in connection with the improvement of sheep. His lambs from that country averaged 18s. for many years. Now he has come here to take a hand in the development of our vast resources, and I think he will make himself known. Apart from his Home experience he had had, as I say, experience in South Australia and in New Zealand. As far as wheat growing is concerned, we are quite equal to South Australia in regard to land; for intense culture we are quite the equal of New Zealand, except that we are absolutely undeveloped. Professor Lowrie now has a magnificent field, and I am sure he will not shirk his fences. It is not necessary for me to say much about Professor Lowrie's qualifications.

Mr. Johnson: How does he propose to work—in the office or in the field?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I think his proper place is in the field, and I am re-organising the office in such a way that his whole time will be devoted to the work of encouragement and direction.

Mr. Bolton: You are not going to hamper him, are you?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not in the habit of hampering any man. He is here to do his work, and he will do it. In regard to the work of the past, three years ago we had 408,000 acres under crop and under fallow; to-day we have 646,000 acres under crop and under fallow. That is 60 per cent. increase in that short time and it is, I think, bound to be regarded as satisfactory. Then, too, if hon. members will turn to the figures they will see that in 1905 we had 2,129,000 acres under cultivation or in preparation. As hon. members know, this work of preparation takes time; it takes much time to bring land under cultivation. You have to ringbark, and then you have to wait. Yet we have 3,481,000 acres under cultivation and in course of preparation to-day; an increase again of 60 per cent. That also is bound to be regarded as satisfactory because, in the near future, production will increase tremendously. There are at least 15,000,000 acres we know of fitted to grow wheat. You will realise that we have a fairly long step to take in this regard. I have myself visited a great portion of this area, extending from Albany in the South to the Murchison in the North, and to Nangeenan in the East. I have personally inspected a great deal of this area, and spent a great deal of time in doing so. The more I travel about the more convinced am I of the possibilities of wheat production in this State. Members will remember what was said in this connection five years ago, when it was declared that we could not feed our people, and that we could not grow sufficient flour for local requirements. To-day we have a glut of wheat in Fremantle. In our haste to ship it away we have caused a glut of wheat for the first time in the history of the State. I think

that is a glorious thing, because it means that so much more work is being done on the land. We are now facing the whole world with an unlimited market; and with unlimited possibilities. Then, too, whilst our wheat lands have received attention and their development has gone on apace, the pastoral industry also has flourished. If you take the figures you will find that in 1898 we had 2,251,000 sheep, whereas 10 years later we have 3,600,000 sheep; in cattle we had 10 years ago 269,000 head, whereas to-day we have 754,000 head, or three times as many in 10 short years. If hon. members will allow their minds to travel over the vastness of this great country and to note its possibilities as to stock, they will realise that in this connection there is a wonderful future before us. The only thing in connection with this pastoral industry is that a market should be provided. For you must have a market or you cannot carry on, and growers cannot go on increasing their herds unless they have an outlet for the stock. The figures are there, and they can be proved satisfactorily to any man who takes into consideration the duty of this Committee in regard to these vast possibilities. If you take the fruit industry you will find it has reached respectable proportions, and is still growing to-day. In 1899 we had 6,600 acres under crop, whereas in 1908 we had 18,000 acres under crop. That is no small increase. We have put on nearly 12,000 acres in 10 years. It is indeed something achieved. I really think that in this connection we have done something of which we can be justly proud. This fruit industry is going to be a great thing for our State. Some attempt is being made to export fruit, and that attempt is going to be successful. The apple industry is going to be one of our chief industries. Orchards are scattered about here and there all over a large portion of the State. In totting up the total I find that the area exceeds 10,000,000 acres. Not that we have 10,000,000 under orchard, but the climate is right for that vast area. Here again, we have vast possibilities. I think we have a right to be proud of that area and of what we have

done, and of what we are offering to the people. We have been engaged in providing facilities for the settlers. I do not know that we have done all that is necessary in this connection; but I know that in building these agricultural railways to intersect the country here and there, we have established a most desirable system. Because no country would leave any section of its producers unserved by railways when they can be built as cheaply as are our agricultural lines. We have built hundreds of miles of railway, with the result that the country has been opened up for fruit, for stock, and for wheat. Unless the producer has a market he cannot go on, and neither can the country go on unless agriculture be developed. It is quite impossible to go on with the production of stock in the South-West unless we provide facilities for shipping. I think we should provide these facilities straight away. We must ship our cattle from Wyndham and our fat lambs from the South-West corner of the State; and we must also ship our wheat and our fruit. In this respect we propose to provide the necessary facilities to enable the stuff to reach the market. There is a great deal to do in connection with intense culture, with dairying, and with the growth of fruit crops. That work will be undertaken in the South-West, and Professor Lowrie will devote a considerable portion of his time to it. I know that the work has to be done. This thousand pounds per day which we are sending away to the Eastern States will have to be retained within the State. It will be the duty of the Government to look into this question of the development of the South-West. I do not know that we are doing all that can be done by advances from the Agricultural Bank against clearing. It is slow work, and perhaps we could do it faster and more economically if the Government itself were to clear large areas with a view to the more rapid settling of the land. It often happens that by the time a man has grubbed out his trees and got rid of them, he runs short of cash, and does not become the producer we would expect. However, it is a question that will have to

receive consideration whether the Government cannot clear a large area of land more economically than by advancing through the Agricultural Bank to individual settlers. And in the matter of clearing two million acres, there is work to do, and so long as the Government hold the reins of power they will endeavour to do that work. We must develop our export trade. Some say there is objection to this; that we must not send away our wheat because it will create a shortage. But there is no possibility of doing that. They say the same with regard to grain and fruit; but I think that the only means of providing the home market with produce at fixed and moderate rates is to develop an export trade, because if we do that, we get our stuff at reasonable prices here, and we will not do so until that comes about. Apart from that, the development of our export trade will break down the cry of "No work to do." By no other means will we be able to find employment for these people who are here, and for the thousands who are coming here. There is just one thing I forgot to mention. Our average wheat yield since 1901 has been about 11¼ bushels, and there has been little difference in the average from 1901. In that year the yield averaged 10 bushels, in 1902 it was 10 bushels, and in the next year 13 bushels, while in the three succeeding years it was 11 bushels, and last season the average was 11.1 bushels. I do not wish to make any comparison with the Eastern States, but I want to point out that the producer here is on a better wicket, because his crop is more certain, the climate is more regular, and when he sets about development and incurs liabilities that necessitate regular payments he can do it better where the return is regular as it is in this State in regard to wheat. For instance, in the same period in South Australia the average yield has varied from 3.64 bushels to 11.46; and the figures for the other States are—Queensland, as low as 3.28 and as high as 19.40; Victoria, as low as 1.29 and as high as 14.49; and New South Wales as low as 1.24 and as high as 17.51.

Mr. Underwood: But the mean average for Queensland is better than ours.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is not the question. The question is, you get something here and you get it all the time. It is a perennial crop, and with the development of the fallow system, already being largely followed, our average will be considerably improved. I have not much more to say, but I want to point out that, notwithstanding the rapid development during the past three years, it must appear to hon. members we might have done much more. But we cannot do it without men and money. We import far too much in the way of food-stuffs, and this has to be altered. The butter that is made in Victoria, Queensland, and New South Wales might just as well be made here. The money paid to the 10,000 producers there must be paid to the 10,000 producers here. As I have already said, our duty clearly lies in the direction of development. There is no chance of progress unless we do this. The future of the State lies in the direction of the development of our agricultural resources. It is said that in America 50 farmers support a village. If that be the case, a very few hundred farmers will almost support Perth, because the development in agricultural resources will make possible manufactures and other industries that should exist in this State. I want also to repeat that there is no time for stopping or hanging back. We must get to work, because each year wasted is so much wealth lost to the people of the State. I do not suppose there is any place in the world that offers a better return for investment in connection with land. It is cheap, and our climate is good, and the return from the land is practically assured, and it naturally follows that under such conditions a man may invest his money without fear. Take New Zealand from which the member for Guildford comes, and which he knows so well. We find that they have there a big difficulty in making 5 per cent. on their investments in land. If the same money were invested in our State the return would probably be three times the return the New Zealand farmers get on the present price of land in that Dominion. I understand land there brings from £30 to £40 an acre, proving the extent to which

things have improved in the Dominion. Are we to allow our land to remain idle? Are we to allow the depression to hang over the country? We must not. Our possibilities are undoubted. We only want men and money to develop the many million acres of land available, and make it one great producing field to have wealth unfold. My work lies along the direction of development. I believe in the State and in its possibilities, and I believe, beyond all, our opportunity is the present. There should be no depression, and no men out of work; there should be enterprise and energy put into the broad acres of the State; and instead of men seeking work we should be seeking men. That will soon be the position. Apart from its interest-earning power, there is no other industry in this State that can afford to pay a man a better average wage than the land. There are no more comfortable people than those on the land, whether owners or employed. That seems to be the case; and my duty seems to be perfectly clear. I say again, the opportunity is the present, and that everybody should take it, whether they are the people who are here to-day or whether they are those to come. No doubt we must have the people and we must have the money, and we must get both as soon as possible.

Mr. BATH: We heard a really excellent speech from the Honorary Minister, but we had heard it so often that there were some members who could repeat it by heart. Indeed some of the well-worn phrases could be repeated by members without any trouble.

The Honorary Minister: They bear repeating.

Mr. BATH: Without spending £1 on what was called Development of Agriculture—and we had frittered away a good deal—any country could have made the same progress that we had made since agricultural development had begun in Western Australia. It was a fact that we had not made development proportionate to the amount of money spent, and to the amount of talk. The complaint of hon. members was, not that agriculture was not progressing, but that

it was not progressing in proportion to the alienation of land and the piling up of the public debt and the imposition of burdens on the people. The Minister was full of enthusiasm for the industry in the State, and recognised, as every member did, the great opportunities there were in the use of the Agricultural Bank for the assistance of those going on the land not in possession of a great amount of money; but there was no reason why we should not be careful in the administration of the Bank in a sense of being careful that we made no loans without seeing that the money was properly expended. There were many instances owing to lack of supervision where men secured advances for clearing at a certain rate, and then let contracts for the work at lower rates and regarded the difference as a profit on the transactions, forgetting that ultimately the money had to be repaid. Things like that led to looseness and to a lack of appreciation of the services rendered by the Bank, so that in lending money we should see that it was not in excess of what was reasonably necessary to carry out the improvements for which the loan was granted. The Minister thought it would be better to borrow outside the State the capital necessary for the Agricultural Bank, but he (Mr. Bath) knew no happier combination of circumstances than the relation of the Savings Bank and the Agricultural Bank. The two banks might be amalgamated, it would effect a saving in cost of administration, and there would be uniformity and homogeneity in management. When we on the one hand encouraged thrift by providing an institution that gave a reasonable rate of interest and then utilised the result of this collective energy in encouraging work and energy and development on the part of our population, it was one of our greatest tributes towards collective or socialistic effort. The Agricultural Bank was one of the outlets we had for the investment of our Savings Bank funds, by which we provided the interest paid annually on the deposits in the bank. If we were to secure the capital of the Agricultural Bank by loans from outside, we should find no such safe, remunerative and common-sense method of investing

the Savings Bank's loans as we now had in the Agricultural Bank. It had been said we should lend on mortgage, but even if by this means we secured a higher rate of interest, there was the difference that so far as wealth-producing characteristics were concerned, the mortgages could not be compared with loans of money to persons going on the land. These people were producing more wealth and in doing so were helping along the country.

Mr. Johnson: They would be subjected to political influence such as in the case of P. Stone.

Mr. BATH: That was so. That could not be compared with the Agricultural Bank for those who deposited their money in the Savings Bank knew that, instead of being invested in doubtful purposes, it was used to increase the wealth of the State, and by the very cheapness of the money made it possible for men with little means to secure assistance. Depositors in the Savings Bank knew they had a security which would be quite safe from any such financial failures as had overcome in the past what were regarded as the strongest financial institutions in Western Australia. The man from outside who lent money had not the same patriotic interest in Western Australia as the depositors in the Savings Bank. All he was concerned in was to see that he secured interest on his money. There had been too much of that kind of thing from those outside who were called bond holders in other words, capitalists, who had invested their capital in Western Australia, and had brought their influence to bear to defeat patriotic projects, to defeat the development of Australian national ideas, in the interest of mere material wealth and to interfere with the development of Australia, and the interests of the people of Australia. The Minister had referred also to what had been done in the development of the resources of Western Australia. What was the use of assisting men to come on the land, to clear the land, to put it under cultivation, and to produce crops, if we were not going to continue our interest in their welfare by making the scheme

complete, and see that when they produced their crops they could market them, and secure the best possible return free from the piracy of outside individuals who contributed nothing. Look at the position of our producers now; they produced wheat and got for it 3s. 5d. or 3s. 5½d. per bushel.

The Honorary Minister: Where, at Fremantle or Northam?

Mr. BATH: At Fremantle.

The Honorary Minister: They get 3s. 8d. there.

Mr. BATH: The comparisons he intended to make were taken from the ruling prices on one day. While the producer here was getting 3s. 5½d. for the best quality marketed on that day, the producers in Melbourne were receiving 3s. 9d. and those in Adelaide 3s. 9½d. For months past there had been a disparity of from threepence to sixpence per bushel running in the prices secured by our producers as compared with the prices secured in Victoria and South Australia. On the other hand, when our producers desired to buy bran and pollard, the by-products of the milling industry, they had to pay on that particular day £6 5s. for bran, and £6 15s. for pollard. In Victoria and South Australia on the other hand the agriculturalists who needed these articles could buy them on that day for £5 for bran and £5 5s. for pollard, although the miller here was giving from threepence to sixpence per bushel less for the wheat.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: I deny that, as I have done before. I challenge the member to prove it.

Mr. BATH would take the hon. member to the reading room and show him the papers containing the prices.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: I challenge him before this House to prove it.

Mr. BATH: Then under these circumstances he would prove it. While the producer was getting from threepence to sixpence per bushel less for wheat than was secured by the producer in Melbourne or Adelaide, he had to pay nearly £1 per ton more for the by-products bran and pollard. There was a screw loose somewhere, and if the Minister were going to develop the industry

he would have to see that by some means or other, and it would need inquiry, the producer was protected. It was no use assisting the producer to grow crops unless we saw he got a fair price for them when grown. If we found it necessary for the protection of the prospector to erect State mining mills for the treatment of ore, circumstances such as those he had narrated made it equally necessary for us to erect State flour mills for the protection of the people.

Hon. F. H. Piessé: You can have mine any day, and I shall be only too glad to get rid of it.

Mr. BATH: There was another matter to be considered, and that was in connection with the large amount of agricultural machinery that would be required in the future for the production of the crops. The evidence given before the Tariff Commission by those who occupied a prominent position in connection with the manufacture of agricultural implements, went to show that the finished articles were turned out from the shops at a price of something like 50 per cent. less than the amount charged to the producer. That was, that a machine produced in the factory for about £40 or £50 would cost something like £80 to the agriculturist. Frequently, even after paying that high price, the article secured was found not to be durable. Before cheapness, the question of durability had to be considered. The attractiveness of a machine and its capacity to stand wear and tear had first to be taken into consideration, and then came the question of cheapness. We had the means here, not only to secure greater durability, but also to provide a cheaper article than the agriculturist could secure now. At an A.N.A. function organised for the purpose of encouraging consumers of Australian products, a manufacturer—he believed the president of the Chamber of Manufactures—put forward the following scheme, excellent from his point of view. He suggested that the Government should pay cash down to the manufacturer for agricultural implements, and buy all the machinery necessary for agricultural work in Western Australia. The idea was that the Government should pay cash,

and then they in their turn should sell the machines on long terms to the agriculturists. That was an example of the conception of the private enterpriser as to what should be done for him—he should get all the security and all the profits.

Mr. Hopkins: He would not want security if he got cash.

Mr. BATH: That was the security he meant. By such a scheme the Government would take all the risk. That sort of Government interference with private enterprise they would always welcome. If the State could turn out these machines without any very great alterations to their present plant, and supply a better article even at the existing price, and a more durable article, it would be in the interests of the producer, and they should do it. It was difficult to get away from the old idea of using the machinery of Government for the purpose of assisting those "in the swim." Recently he had read a book by F. T. Bullock and came across a reference to the habits of sharks that followed ships at sea. He could not help comparing many of these private enterprisers having the views he had enunciated, as a school of sharks who followed the ship of State. We should avoid, as far as possible, making our people pay something to those who gave no service in return. So long as that was permitted and the producers, as well as the consumers, were exploited, so long would proper progress be averted. The time had arrived when, if we were to progress, if the producers were to be really encouraged, we should give them the greatest encouragement and free them from the depredations of that kind of person. There was no hope of any substantial solution of the machinery problem as to cheapness and durability, until the State either undertook the manufacture entirely, or embarked upon experiments on a big scale, so as to show the producer that machines could be produced at a much lower price than was now charged to the farmer. Among the items included in the Loan Estimates for the development of agriculture we had the proposals for the erection of abattoirs, cold storage provisions, export depôt, grain sheds and sale yards, five different propositions and

the amount set down was £35,000. What did the Minister expect to do with a sum of £35,000? He was pleased to see that there was some proposal to carry out what he had advocated here for years past, and that was to make provision for the economical marketing of our surplus produce. We had seen the difficulties that shippers had been confronted with only recently in the shipping of wheat.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: That is in carrying wheat.

Mr. BATH: In season and out of season he had urged we should have better export facilities. If the Minister would read the book which has recently been added to the library, called "Modern Argentina," he would see in that what had been done in the way of facilitating the handling of wheat on a large scale. The Minister was probably well acquainted with what was done in Canada, and knowing that we had to compete in the same market we should follow in the same steps. We at least ought to do what was possible to enable producers to market their produce economically, and it would be infinitely better to spend money in this direction than to spend it in the way shown in the public accounts under the heading of "Expenditure from Loan for the development of agriculture." We found there such items as, producers conference, an exhibition, the egg-laying competition, the Hamel settlement, and explorations by naturalists in the North, and a number of other items which might be included in revenue vote for the encouragement of agriculture, but which could not be regarded as capital expenditure, which could not be charged to General Loan Fund. Rather than tinker and dribble our money away in this manner it would have been better if years ago we had started to allocate a certain portion of Loan Fund for the provision of those facilities for which we found need more and more as the years went on and as the output of produce was increased in Western Australia. He was at one with the Minister in the hope expressed for increased development of the agricultural industry in Western Australia, and he did not think any member would be found who would be unwilling

to render whatever assistance was necessary, not only in the minor details but on the question of providing roads for the producers and for the provision of railways, as long as we were sure that this expenditure was intended for the general encouragement of agricultural development, and as long as we knew precautions were taken to prevent the speculator from reaping the reward of the expenditure to the exclusion of the general producer on the land.

Mr. JOHNSON: It was not his desire to take up much time in discussing the general question, but generally speaking he desired to give every encouragement he could to the agricultural industry, and in doing so he wanted to emphasise what he had always emphasised, that we wanted to be sure the results we were getting justified our expenditure. He was inclined to think with the Leader of the Opposition that the development of agriculture in this State had been too great in comparison with the result, and he thought that was due to a large extent to the general administration and the cost of administration. He was inclined to believe that of late a great deal more direct attention had been devoted to the development of agriculture than previously; still, the fact remained the Minister in his enthusiasm was inclined to rush into concerns and methods of development without seriously considering the actual cost. He wanted to refer particularly to the experiment that the Minister had recently undertaken at Brunswick. He had recently had the opportunity of visiting the experimental farm there, and he desired to pay a tribute to the general management of that place. As an exhibition of what could be done in the way of intense culture by utilising the waste waters of the country, that undoubtedly was a great object lesson. The general scheme reflected the greatest credit on those responsible for it, and if the Government were only successful in getting others on experimental farms to carry out such schemes it would be far better for the State generally. Mr. Scott's method of irrigation was undoubtedly the best he had seen, and reflected much credit on the general management displayed by that

gentleman. It would well repay hon. members to visit that experimental farm, but we should remember that while one swallow did not make a summer, neither did one good result guarantee absolute success. Success of that kind was due to the fact that it had the right man to undertake it. He was of opinion that in many branches of the department there were employed the wrong men, consequently while the Minister could point with pride to the success of Brunswick there were other branches that would not reflect such credit on the management.

The Honorary Minister: Name them.

Mr. JOHNSON: It was his desire to only speak generally of the whole of the administration of the central branch of the department, which, to his mind, was in a bad state. The Minister devoted a good deal of his time to travelling through the country, and he had to a great extent to leave the department under the control of the under secretary and others. What we wanted was a better administrative head in that department to look after the general management while the Minister and the Director of Agriculture were in the country. He was pleased to hear it was the intention to encourage Professor Lowrie to devote his attention to the field and not burden him with the general administration of the office. But he (Mr. Johnson) would like to see associated with Professor Lowrie a capable man in the administration of the office. All would agree that the Government were to be commended for having been able to secure the services of Professor Lowrie. The Government were fortunate, indeed, in getting him to leave New Zealand. They were not the first Ministry who tried to get his services, and he believed now we would have better results from that gentleman's presence. As far as his (Mr. Johnson's) little power and influence would go he would give Professor Lowrie every encouragement, but he desired that gentleman to understand that we wanted him to carry out his experiments as economically as possible, and not to allow himself to be carried away by the enthusiasm which was generally given to the administration of the Agricultural Department by the Press of the country. He could

remember when land settlement was a popular theme and when we had a Minister of the Crown carried away by the enthusiasm of the Press. If one criticised the department then, he was charged with throwing cold water on the general land settlement scheme; everything that the Minister did and said was correct and beyond criticism with the result that it went on so wildly that we were paying the piper to-day. The cost of administration of the Lands Department increased by double the amount, and Minister after Minister had been endeavouring to reduce those costs without success, and so it would be in the Agricultural Department unless Parliament was careful. It was found that the Press of the country were not inclined to adversely criticise any action of the Minister, and if the Minister was criticised we found that the Press took care that the adverse criticism did not appear. The result was that the Minister was not careful. Just a few words in connection with the Agricultural Department. In previous years while speaking in connection with the Agricultural Bank he had complained of the fact that the Lands Department had been guilty of selling land to settlers at 10s. an acre, and that those settlers on applying to the bank for assistance found that the bank valued it at 3s. or 4s. an acre. He was glad to notice now by perusing the report of the bank that it had been arranged before the value was put on there should be a joint inspection by inspectors from the Lands Department and the bank. The result was that the difficulties which formerly existed would be overcome. He appealed to the Minister to try and improve the administration of the office. The management of the bank reflected credit on its officers so that we heard few complaints. In connection with the Agricultural Department, with Professor Lowrie in the field and a capable man in charge of the office we should get better results than we were getting at present. It was realised that the Minister could not give much time to his office because, rightly enough, he travelled so much through the country; and to overcome this position of affairs it was essential that some new method of organisation

should be introduced in connection with this department.

Mr. JACOBY: At the outset he wished to say that he very fully appreciated the good work done by the Honorary Minister in his department. It was recognised that his cheerful optimism had been a potent factor in assisting the development of agriculture, and in inducing people to agree that the finances of the State should be used to the fullest extent in the development of this industry. Still, it was to be feared that in some directions the early acclamation indulged in at the advent of the Minister to that position had resulted in some little disappointment. The Honorary Minister had at first appeared in the role of a fairy god-mother whose magic wand touching here and there was to banish all the troubles that afflicted the producer, but in many instances the good things promised had failed to materialise.

The Honorary Minister: Tell us one.

Mr. JACOBY: It had not been his intention to mention the fiasco in connection with the importation of stock; one of the best schemes ever devised by a Minister, but one which, nevertheless, had been absolutely muddled for want of decent administration, and by reason of the employment of men absolutely unfitted for their allotted tasks. He had urged upon the Minister not to spare pains to get the best possible men to take charge of this scheme; because it was realised that its execution would mean so much to the State. But as it had turned out, this magnificent scheme, instead of being a great thing for the country had really done more harm than good. He joined with hon. members in welcoming the advent of Professor Lowrie to this State, and he felt sure that the Minister needed no urging to give that gentleman a free hand in any reasonable scheme he might propose for assisting the development of agriculture on right lines. This country, as a wheat country, was going to reach the 20-bushel standard. If development proceeded along decent lines, instead of showing an average of from 10 to 11 bushels per acre, the State would get up to the 20-bushel mark. The great work in front of

the Department of Agriculture was not so much to extend the area of cultivation as to teach farmers to get more off these acres already under cultivation. Intense culture was the particular department in which it was expected that Professor Lowrie would make his mark. In passing, and in justice to a gentleman who had done much for agriculture, it should be said that Professor Custance had been the real author of the system of utilising superphosphates in South Australia. He regretted that there was not attached to this Department of Agriculture a botanist. A few years ago a sum of money was provided for the employment of a botanist in connection with the department, but for mistaken reasons of economy it had been decided to dispense with the services of Dr. Morrison, who was acting in this capacity. Since then there had grown up in the department an enormous accumulation of plants sent in for identification. Hon. members would agree that now was the time when every opportunity should be taken of classifying the grasses and other plants in this State; yet, as a matter of fact there were hundreds and probably thousands of specimens lying in the department awaiting identification. The Honorary Minister would be well advised to see that this branch of his department was placed in as good a position as it had been some years ago. He agreed with those hon. members who had expressed high opinions of the work of the Agricultural Bank, and he thought that the work of that bank was altogether too restricted. Under certain conditions it took a farmer to a certain point and then, just as he was getting into a fair position it dropped him and he was forced to go to the ordinary banking institutions for further assistance. There was no other banking institution so well fitted to understand the financing of the farmer; it was an expert bank, and it knew better than did any other institution how to finance the farmers, and at the same time to safeguard its own interests. He regretted that Parliament in its wisdom had seen fit to reduce the total amount which could be advanced to a farmer, and which stood to-

day at only £500. He hoped that the scope of the bank would be extended. He would like to see it do all the work of the farmer, and even to take charge of the exporting of his wheat. Indeed, he would like to see the farmers' wheat utilised by the Government through the Government bank for the payment of interest in London. It would be of great advantage not only to the farmers but to the State if the operations of the Agricultural Bank were to be extended, so that when the time came for the farmer to still further develop his holding, he could do it through the agency of this bank instead of going to other institutions. The Minister had pointed out the very great extension in the planting of orchards in this State. We had to-day some 14,800 acres of orchard, and over 3,000 acres of vineyard. This industry was going to reach a position of great importance, and the time must soon necessarily arrive when not only would the fresh fruits of Western Australia be known in the old country and on the Continent, but the dried fruits of Western Australia also would find a good market in the old world. We had an exceptionally favourable climate for the dried fruit industry. The best class of dried fruit was that dried through the direct agency of the sun instead of by evaporation. At the time when our fruit ripened we had a rainless period, which would enable orchardists to dry their fruit by natural means, and so command a price on the export market which would not be less than the highest obtained by the products of other countries. When the time came for us to enter seriously into that industry Western Australia would have nothing to fear from outside competition. It might interest hon. members to learn that the orchardists of the State had been able to make very satisfactory arrangements in respect to an export market for their surplus grapes. As hon. members knew, grapes had been a drug in the market for the last three or four years; but owing to the splendid efforts of Mr. George Barrett Lennard of the Swan, who had gone to great expense in this regard, satisfactory markets had

been discovered and an export trade on a profitable and sound basis had at last been established. During the last 10 days 700 cases had been sent away to oversea markets, and those who were familiar with the magnificent samples of grapes to be seen in the shop windows of Perth would realise the splendid advertisement Western Australia would gain by her grapes being distributed in Europe, in parts of Africa, and in India. He regretted that he could not compliment the Department of Agriculture upon the way in which it had dealt with this particular industry. The great difficulty to be found in respect of all Government experts in connection with horticulture throughout Australia was that of securing men with a sufficient knowledge of the expert work and a sound practical experience. He would suggest to the Minister that it might be of advantage if in this State we were to follow the example of Tasmania, where the Minister was advised by an honorary board of practical horticulturists who had been successful in the various branches of horticulture. In many parts of the State the industry had to suffer great disabilities. At the present time the orchards were being attacked by a disease for which as yet no remedy had been found. This disease was destroying a fair percentage of the trees in every orchard, and the Minister should for economic reasons recognise the need for something being done to prevent its continuing; but to show how the department had kept pace with this matter, the department's *Journal* ascribed the cause of this disease to want of drainage and other things, whereas it had been fully demonstrated years ago that these causes had nothing to do with it.

[Mr. Taylor took the Chair.]

Mr. JACOBY : The Minister would do well to establish a board of horticulturists who would advise as to the best way in which the industry could be helped. The action of the Minister in regard to cold storage was disappointing. Last year, there were three cold stores in Perth. A new-comer brought down the

rates for cold storage to the minimum ; but when the season was over, the Fresh Food and Ice Company purchased his plant, and there were now only two stores, the Government store and the Fresh Food and Ice Company's store. the result being that the rates for cold storage had been materially increased. Fruit-growers looked to the Government to see that they were safeguarded against anything in the shape of an undue appreciation of prices, and it was understood that the object of the Government in taking any fruit for storage was to assist the producer, and to keep the price for cold storage at a fair level ; but instead of that, the prices were now $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per case per week higher than previously, and were the highest in Australia. In this connection it was strange that long before the department informed the fruit-growers that the price was to be increased the manager of the Fresh Food and Ice Company was able to tell the fruit-growers that they would not get their fruit cold-stored in Perth at less than 2d. per case per week, because the Government were going to put up the price. Now, in the Eastern States, plants that were not kept going for the full period as our Government stores were could comfortably provide cold storage at the rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per case per week, and elsewhere in Western Australia cold storage could be obtained at from 1d. to $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per case per week, so that one failed to understand the justification for raising the price in Perth.

Mr. Angwin : You do not believe in the Government interfering with private enterprise ?

Mr. JACOBY : Certainly not ; not with reasonable private enterprise, but the Government should certainly interfere with unreasonable private enterprise. The Government came into this business to protect the producer, whereas as a matter of fact they now supported the private institution in raising the price. The Minister must recognise in this matter that the Western Australian fruit producers had to compete against the fruit producers in the Eastern States, and that all that stood between the local men and the Eastern men was the small

steamer freight. Sometimes not more than 12s. 6d. a ton, or about 12s. 6d. for each 30 cases of fruit, and further that Governments in Victoria and South Australia charged only 1d. to $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per case per week for cold storage, while he (the Minister) insisted on getting 2d.

Mr. Holman : Are there not inspection fees on fruit imported ?

Mr. JACOBY : They are practically nothing. The Government should not have raised the price for cold storage. A large percentage of fruit-growers who had been in the habit of cold-storing their fruit, would now be absolutely debarred from doing so, and after one season's experience the Minister would find that it would not pay the grower to cold-store his fruit, because the price asked could not be paid. The Minister no doubt thought that because on one occasion a case of fruit sold at £1 after being stored for nine months, and the value was only 10s. when it was put into the store, the producer could reasonably pay the increased price for storage ; but if he reckoned the cost of cold storage for nine months at 2d. per week per case, and took the average price realised for a quantity of fruit, which was generally 50 per cent. below the price realised for the one case mentioned, he would find that the charge was absolutely prohibitive, and would not allow for cold storage at all. At the last show the Government exhibited fruit taken from the cold store intimating that it was worth £1 a case, but as a matter of fact, a month afterwards the same kind of fruit, absolutely prime and taken from the store, was selling in the market as 10s. 6d. a case. Of course, an enormous price might be obtained for one case, but all the cases did not realise that price. We must go on the market conditions and not upon an exceptional case. If the Minister persisted in charging the fruit-growers 2d. a case per week for cold storage, it would be absolutely impossible for them to take advantage of the facilities for cold storage. The facilities offered would be destroyed for the sake of a few pounds a year for the Government. The Minister must also be criticised for his action in connection with the

treatment of the market gardeners' request for open markets. When the market gardeners at Wanneroo pointed out to the Minister that the present system of handling produce in Perth destroyed any hope of making a business pay, the Minister said, "Let us know what you want, and we will only be too glad to give it to you." This was just before the election. Later on, in reply to a deputation in Perth, the Minister said that if the market gardeners requested it, he would recommend the Government to establish open markets. These men were all white producers, but of course, in establishing open markets they recognised that it was necessary to have all the vegetables grown about the City sold under the one roof. The association made a personal canvass and then sent a petition to the Minister guaranteeing certain things more than fulfilling the requirements set forth by the Minister, but then the Minister calmly sent it on to the City council for consideration.

Mr. Gordon: Quite right too.

Mr. JACOBY: To some extent the provision of open markets was a municipal function; but though urged often to do something in this matter, the City council had done nothing. But now, when the Government really promised to do something, the City council said "Don't do it; we will do it." So the Minister sent along the request to the City council and that was the last that was heard of it. The Minister said he was as desirous as anyone else of assisting co-operative efforts among producers, and if we succeeded in establishing open markets under the control of the Government the first great step would be taken to assist co-operative effort among the producers. The internal affairs of the markets might be managed by a committee of producers while the general control would be in the hands of the Government. In addition to the main object of the markets there were several branches of co-operative effort which might be successfully carried out there. For instance, arrangements could be made for the disposal of surplus fruit in times of glut, for there could be estab-

lished a boiling down plant. The markets could be also utilised for the handling and grading of fruit for export and in many other useful ways. There was no objection to the City council doing something in the matter, but if they wanted to have markets and control them they should find the money themselves. On the other hand if the Government had to find the money they should retain control.

Mr. Bolton: You are a socialist; there is room for you over here.

Mr. JACOBY: It was to be hoped his opinions would be taken on their merits irrespective of what part of the House they were uttered from. The industry was at present in an extremely bad state, but the Government could by the expenditure of certain moneys provide a market that would be a reproductive concern. The Minister pledged the Government to establish markets but ultimately passed the whole thing over to the City council. An effort should be made to bring the producer and consumer together, as could be done if open markets were established. If this were done, while the producer would get a 50 per cent. better price for his product the consumer would be able to purchase at 50 per cent. less than he paid now. In addition he would get fruit and vegetables very much fresher. None valued the services of Mr. Mitchell to the State more than he did, and he regretted that to some extent he had been forced to criticise that gentleman somewhat adversely, but the sole object was to advance the interests of the producers of the State.

Mr. GORDON: As the result of personal experience on this question of the establishment of open markets he had lost all sympathy with the gardeners of Western Australia. Those people had the opportunity of establishing open markets here, under conditions exactly the same as existed in Victoria—where there were the cheapest and best facilities for producers that existed anywhere in Australia—but they would not take the matter up then nor would they do so to-day. The conditions here were not the same as on the other side with

regard to the seller or the producer. The grower had become used to big prices and would not bring his stuff in himself to market and stand behind his cart and sell it as they did in Victoria. Then he refused to get up early in the morning. Instead of making a start from his home at four or five o'clock, or earlier, as they did in the Eastern States, he would not come down to market until eight or nine o'clock. The same sort of thing could be said about the consumer. He would not go to the markets to purchase, because he was living in affluence, and it was not essential for him to go there in order to get products at a slightly smaller price. Until the day arrived when the production of vegetables and fruit was so great that a surplus was provided, open markets would not be a success. In connection with his personal experiences of open markets he had given space away free to growers if they would stand there with their carts and sell to the consumer. On one occasion there were as many as 20 carts in the yard and they were all cleared out of their products by eight o'clock. Then the time of glut came and the producers refused to sell their fruit at anything but a high price. They got a good price for half their stock but refused to sell the balance at a reduced rate, and consequently it was left on their hands. Again he had arranged during a period of four months to buy up all the stuff left in the carts after eight o'clock in the morning. What he bought he sent up to Kalgoorlie and sold for the best price it could bring. Even then the producers would not take the trouble to go in early enough to obtain buyers, while the householders would not go to the markets to take advantage of the cheap prices.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: With regard to the open markets question there would be no satisfaction either to the consumer or to the producer of market garden products until markets were established. The system in vogue here in the past had built up a ring, who would not pay a decent price to the producer and who robbed the consumer, making fruit and vegetables almost luxuries. Whether

the municipal council or the Government should build the markets he was not prepared to say. He thought they could be best controlled by the municipality, but if that body would not construct markets it was the duty of the Government to provide them. The member for Canning (Mr. Gordon) was incorrect in his references to the Melbourne market. At that place the producers sold almost wholly to the middlemen who hawked the fruit and vegetables round the suburbs. It had been found practically impossible there to bring the producer and the consumer together at the markets in the early morning. There were one or two items on the Estimates he took exception to and particularly that which gave subsidies to agricultural shows. His experience of shows was that they provided a holiday for the people and afforded an excellent opportunity for the Government to advertise themselves. He wished to enter his protest against the system of subsidising these shows, which were used absolutely for the purpose of party politics. At the Royal Agricultural Show, which cost some thousands of pounds, year after year the members of the Government told the farmers who had been brought down to Perth what a splendid Administration they formed, and the Leader of the Opposition was never allowed to have a word to say. Sir John Forrest and other people who were not in the local Parliament talked about anti-socialists, while the members of the Opposition were barred entirely. This House should not find money to be used for party politics. There were altogether too many country shows. At times it was a good thing to have a show, but it was a great mistake to have them at almost every small town in the agricultural districts. Under the system now adopted it was almost impossible to get a really good show. It would be far better in the interests of the agricultural industry that there should be fewer shows, for then those that were held might be of some value. However it was upon the item of subsidies to agricultural shows that a considerable saving could be effected. He was confident that it would be better to make a

road than to hold a show. There was an item provided on the Estimates for producers' conferences. He had not yet come to see the value of these conferences. He remembered one Bronsdon going to Adelaide to represent the producers and the agriculturists of this State. The Minister might be able to tell the Committee what good Bronsdon could do. It was doubtful whether Bronsdon knew the difference between spinifex and saltbush, or between a seed-drill and a rock-crusher.

The Honorary Minister: We did not appoint him.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: McPhee, an auditor, also had gone with Bronsdon.

The Honorary Minister: Well, they were not appointed by the Government but by the agriculturists themselves.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If the agriculturists had not more intelligence than to appoint two such representatives, it was hopeless for the Government to attempt to assist them.

The Honorary Minister: Well, they had no assistance whatever in this matter.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No practical good had ever resulted from these producers' conferences, and he for one objected to the Government lending them monetary assistance. As hon. members knew, the inspectors of the Agricultural Bank went around and inspected the land held by an applicant for a loan. In some cases these inspectors, in addition to being Government employees, were agents for agricultural machinery. When such an inspector came to a man who had applied for a loan and told him that he had a plough to sell, of course the man who wanted the loan gathered the impression that he would get on better perhaps if he bought the plough; and so he bought the plough. It would be better if those Government inspectors were not allowed to represent private firms of machinery agents. With regard to the progress being made by agriculture, he agreed with other hon. members that it was not nearly so great as it should be for the amount of money being expended on it. The Minister had told them of the millions of acres of land still available; but he had

not told them anything about this 13,000,000 acres of land alienated but not being put to use. That was the land the hon. members wanted to know something about. Until the Minister could get that land under cultivation, and show a better percentage than one in 14, of acres cleared to acres alienated, he could not claim to be making progress. He agreed with the Minister that the possibilities of the wheat land were immense; and he had believed the member for Swan when that member said that in the course of time our wheat lands would average 20 bushels to the acre. But what was the use of that land? Sommers and those people had it, and while not using it themselves would not allow anybody else to use it. As for the glut of wheat at Fremantle about which so much had been heard, in his opinion the whole thing had been very well stage-managed. On inquiring into it he had found that there was scarcely sufficient there to load a ship. Moreover, it was to be remembered that according to the *Statistical Abstract*, only last year we had imported wheat; so where was the sense in talking about the glut of locally-grown wheat. Unless the unused lands alongside the railways were forced open we in Western Australia would build up a system of land-lordism such as that built up in Victoria; and in the course of time we would have the child slaves as they had in the East, and as were advocated in the *Journal of the Department of Agriculture*. The Minister for Agriculture was doing his best to produce that condition of affairs in Western Australia by his advocacy of child slavery on the dairy farms. He was not with the Minister in the belief that if we had to borrow money it should be borrowed from beyond the State. He was sure that the more self-contained a nation could be the better it was for that nation, and the more likely was it to progress. There was any amount of money in Australia to be borrowed, and we should avail ourselves of it. The Minister might know more about this question than he (Mr. Underwood); but the Minister's early associations with private banking companies and private enterprise gener-

ally had probably biased his mind in favour of this sort of thing. He (Mr. Underwood) was sure that the Agricultural Bank could do a great deal more business than it was doing to-day. Unfortunately, to do so would be to interfere with private banks; and as those private banks were somewhat influential they would be jealously protected by the Minister and his Government.

Mr. TROY: Before the Minister replied he wished to have a word or two to say on this department. He had listened very attentively to the Minister, during the time he was speaking in regard to the marvellous progress that was being made as to the production of those things that are so valuable to Western Australia insofar as our food-stuffs were concerned. He had taken occasion after listening to the Minister's remarks to look up the monthly report and to find out just what progress had been made. Whilst in this State there had been considerable progress in the production of wheat, and a few other grain products, there had been a decrease in a variety of products which the Minister, every time he had spoken in the House, had told members we must produce and that it was his intention to give every encouragement to produce. Let us take those products which the State imported a great deal of from the other States, and for which the Honorary Minister assured members from time to time the State was sending half a million of money every year to the other States for. Take potatoes for instance—eight years ago there were 1,000 acres more under crop of that product than there was to-day. In 1900 the acreage under crop was 2,837, and to-day the acreage under crop of potatoes was 1,854, showing that in spite of the statements we had made in the House from time to time, and in spite of the Minister's alleged determination to encourage the production of such crops, there had been a steady decrease in the acreage under crop.

The Honorary Minister: Generally.

Mr. TROY: Yes.

The Honorary Minister: There are 600,000 as against 400,000.

Mr. TROY was speaking of the production of potatoes. Every time the Minister had spoken about his department he told members that he had set himself out to encourage the production of these crops, and also told members from time to time that we were sending half a million of money to the other States for these things.

The Honorary Minister: Half a million for potatoes?

Mr. TROY: Potatoes, onions, and butter.

The Honorary Minister: A million and a half you mean.

Mr. TROY: In regard to onions in 1899 there were 96 acres under crop, in 1900 there were 137 acres under crop, and to-day, despite the assurance of the Honorary Minister there were only 54 acres under crop, which showed there was a decrease in the production of that vegetable. If we followed the yields we found that in 1900 there was produced in the State 8,370 tons of potatoes, and last year we only produced 5,671 tons—a decrease, despite the marvellous work of the Agricultural Department. The same appertained to onions; in 1900 there were 350 tons produced, in 1908 there were only 231 tons. In eight years there had been no increase, but rather a decrease of over 100 tons. If these figures were correct, there could not be any marvellous development in connection with the Agricultural Department, rather there was a decrease, and he was afraid the Minister could not take any credit to himself for having made any progress, insofar as the production of these crops was concerned. There had been a decrease in regard to maize, and rye crops. The only lines in which the production had been increased had been in regard to wheat and oats.

Mr. Angwin: Why are potatoes £2 a ton cheaper here than they are in Sydney?

Mr. TROY: One could not tell. The member for Swan told the Committee about the probabilities of the vintage of Western Australia, pointing out that a few years hence we should have Western Australian grapes sold and eaten throughout the world, and that they would be

found, not only on the tables of the people in Europe, but in Africa also. How was this to be done, because he noticed that there was a decrease in the acreage of vineyards. How was Western Australia going to supply all these countries with grapes if we had a decrease rather than an increase in regard to vineyards?

Mr. Jacoby : These are only grapes for wine-making, the others are increasing all the time.

Mr. TROY hoped so. Nevertheless in 1902 there were 3,639 acres under crop, in 1908 only 3,231 acres, or 400 acres less than there were six years ago.

Mr. Jacoby : I pulled nearly all mine out.

The Honorary Minister : The cause was Federation.

Mr. TROY : The Minister said Federation. Let us have some better excuse, an honest excuse and then we should be prepared to believe him. The Minister ought to have more sense than to put every little tiddlywinking thing down to Federation. We had been promised too much. As to the wine production, in 1902 Western Australia produced 185,000 gallons, in 1908 we only produced 153,000 gallons. It did appear that the decrease was in regard to grapes used for making wine, but that there had been a decrease there was no doubt. This decrease unfortunately extended over a number of years. Let us take the production of live stock. There had truly been an increase in sheep and cattle and horses.

The Honorary Minister : And donkeys.

Mr. TROY : Perhaps there had. There had been an increase in these animals, but we found that in regard to that animal which we utilised for making bacon there had been a decrease. There again also the Minister had pointed out from time to time that we imported a very great deal of bacon, and he set himself about to encourage the production of pigs in Western Australia, yet we found that for the last seven years in regard to the raising of pigs there had been a steady decrease. In 1904 the production was 70,229 pigs and in 1907 only 53,000, showing a decrease of about 27,000 pigs during the last three years. If this were the case how could we in

Western Australia have that production in regard to bacon which the Minister from time to time assured members there would be in Western Australia. When we saw cold facts, we were inclined to think that we could not hope for the production which the Minister assured members we should have, nor was that progress being made in connection with the Agricultural Department which we were told by the Minister was being made. We had no figures in regard to the production of butter, but he supposed, insofar as that article was concerned, the production had been infinitesimal. There were only two butter factories in existence at the present time. One was at the Vasse, and while he did not wish to speak deprecatingly of anything which the State produced, he had heard it said that very little butter was produced there, but that butter was imported and put into packages which were labeled with the name of the local factory.

Mr. Collier : They have had a loan of £1,400 for a long time.

Mr. TROY : Unfortunately there did not seem to be anything to show so far as the production of butter was concerned. The Bunbury factory was opened with a flourish of trumpets, and with optimistic remarks by the Minister and others, but in spite of that factory having been open for some time there was no assurance that there would be any increase in the production of butter.

Mr. Collier : The Government are going to buy a brewery at South Perth and make a butter factory of it.

Mr. TROY : The Government were not sufficiently corrupt to go into a job of that nature. They might do many things, but they would not buy a brewery at South Perth to make a butter factory of. That was one of the jobs the Government would not be guilty of. The Honorary Minister had introduced into this State during the past few years a number of dairy stock. We were led to believe that that action would bring about the millennium as far as the butter production was concerned but we heard nothing about that stock or the whereabouts of it. In the reports of the Department of Agriculture it was found that numbers

of these stock were sent back to the department, farmers being dissatisfied with them. They were sent back to the department and the department sent them to the Brunswick farm so as to fatten them.

The Honorary Minister: That is not so.

Mr. Hopkins: If it were so, what harm would it be?

Mr. TROY: If it were not so why was it in the report? The Minister admitted that some of these stock were most unsuitable, and the purchase of them was excused from the fact that the cows fell ill, and that some were unsuitable.

The Honorary Minister: Does the report say so?

Mr. TROY: The report added to it.

The Honorary Minister: Read it then.

Mr. Collier: The Auditor General says that purchasers of the cows are £14,000 behind in their payments.

Mr. TROY: The report of the Auditor General was not to his hand now, but he would show it to the Minister later on. What members wanted to know was, if all this money was expended in the purchase of stock, where was the result to-day? We heard very little regarding the increase of butter, in fact there had been no increase, the Minister admitted that. There was nothing to show, so far as the purchase of these dairy cows was concerned. He (*Mr. Troy*) believed that the most suitable man was not sent to the East to purchase the stock.

Mr. Collier: Who went?

Mr. TROY: Mr. Gull was sent over to the East. He might have done his best but he did not know anything about dairy stock. The fact that he was connected with a dairy in Western Australia for years did not give him the experience that he should have possessed to purchase dairy stock. Mr. Gull had no experience in regard to Victoria, and as a result the stock purchased in Victoria was not of the best quality by any means. We might have paid for the very best quality. We paid a pretty high price for the stock purchase for the State, and the State did not get a return for the stock which were purchased. There was still another complaint to make in regard to the money spent by

the Agricultural Department. We found in the Auditor General's report that reference was made to the manner in which the Minister was spending money from Loan Fund. It was shown in this report that there was a sum of £122 19s. 1d. paid to Macfarlane and Company, in connection with the development of the dairying industry. This was under what was called "Development of Agriculture." What was this money given for and what had Macfarlane and Company done for the development of the industry? Then, again, we found that £50 was paid for the production of a pamphlet on dairying by Mr. Dreyer. He had not seen this pamphlet: anyhow, did the Minister deem the pamphlet worth £50. If it was worth such a big sum of money what had become of it, and members would like to know what knowledge Mr. Dreyer possessed of dairying, which made the pamphlet so valuable to the Government. He had heard it said with regard to the purchase of sheep that some of the sheep were given on no security, while in some respects the security was valueless. He had heard that one man in the York district got a number of sheep from the department and that he had no land to put them on.

The Honorary Minister: Will you give me his name?

Mr. TROY: Later on. Sheep had been given without any or without adequate security, but he hoped this was not the case in connection with advances which had been made by the Agricultural Bank. In his opinion it was desirable that a committee of inquiry should be appointed to investigate the securities which were offered to the Agricultural Bank. If all that was said was true regarding the loans made there was an absolute necessity for a committee to be appointed to inquire into the securities. With regard to the Tammy settlement, he would like the Minister to tell the Committee something about it, because it was one which members wanted to see succeed. It was started to assist a lot of people who were out of work, and to enable them to make homes for themselves. Since then it had been said that the people had been hard put to it for water, and that they were

in a bad state at the present time. With regard to the experimental farms, he had not had an opportunity during the past year of visiting any of them, but he hoped to have the opportunity during the approaching recess. He was prepared to believe that as far as the Brunswick farm was concerned a great deal of useful work was being done, and he thought the same thing would apply to Nangeenan and Narrogin. Was it not possible also to have experimental farms, especially in the dry regions where the rainfall was good in certain years and bad in others? For instance, far out in the Murchison the rainfall was not too bad and he would suggest that such a farm be started there and experiments made with wheat which would ripen early. This was done in parts of America. He saw a picture in a South Australian newspaper recently, showing wheat which had been grown with a three inch rainfall.

Mr. Gill: One and a half inch rainfall.

Mr. TROY: What he saw was a three inch rainfall. He was told that was correct, and that a certain amount of wheat could be grown under such conditions. The Government should make some effort to experiment with regard to such wheat in our dry regions, and the Minister would do something to make a monument for himself if he started an experimental farm in some of these localities to experiment with those wheats. Regarding the purchase of the Oakabella estate, the Government in his opinion did not make a wise deal. He was assured by many people resident there that they could not take out of the 600 acres 40 acres of good land.

Mr. Nanson: You have been misinformed.

Mr. TROY: Very likely, and he hoped he had been. But unfortunately in the hon. member's own electorate the feeling obtained that the Government had paid too much for this estate. He had received letters from people who had gone through and noticed where the land was fit for settlement, and they had assured him that it would not be possible to settle there successfully because the Govern-

ment, having paid a high price for the land, it would be necessary to ask the settlers to pay a price which would not leave them any profit. While he hoped this was not the case he had to admit that the people in the Greenough electorate held this opinion. It was not a wise policy for the Government to pay too much for these estates. It had to be remembered too that the land at Oakabella had not produced much in the past. It was admitted that Mr. Elliott grew some fine crops of rape there, but that was on the best portion of the land. He (*Mr. Troy*) felt that there was something in the rumours which had been heard. The Government assured the Committee that there was any amount of agricultural land awaiting settlement. The Minister for Lands told the Committee that there were half a million acres in the vicinity of Kellerberrin and Bridgetown available for settlement. If we had all this land close to the existing railways where was the necessity for buying these large estates? He felt with regard to land settlement that there was not that area of land available for settlement within reasonable distance of a railway the Premier would have the Committee to believe. If one made inquiries he could never get any satisfactory information as to where this land was situated. It was not possible to find land within a reasonable distance of a railway, and one could not expect the man who had made a few pounds in mining and who wanted to settle on the land, to go out some 25 miles or more from the railway line. It would not pay him to do so.

Mr. Hopkins: Then what is wrong with Oakabella for that man?

Mr. TROY: Just so; Oakabella would be all right if it was good, but if, as we were told, the prices of that land were to be abnormal a man would not be able to produce enough to pay the charges which would be made.

Mr. Hopkins: What do you think of the purchase board?

Mr. TROY: He knew nothing about it.

Mr. Hopkins: But you ought to know.

Mr. TROY: The board could make mistakes as well as anyone else.

Mr. Nanson: Have you any objection to giving me the names of these people who gave you that information.

Mr. TROY: The hon. member could have the names if he wished later on. One of his informants was a large land owner who lived in the hon. member's own electorate and who wrote to him only the previous day. If there was so much land available why did not the Government tell the settlers where it could be found? He desired to know also what the Government intended to do with regard to the recent phosphate discoveries. In this respect he would commend to them the action of the Government of South Australia. In that State the Government had erected a mill for the crushing of phosphatic rock, which they bagged and sent out to the farmers. When in South Australia recently he had been struck by the wonderful work being carried on by that Government, which he thought might well be taken as an example by the Government of Western Australia.

Mr. NANSON: It was to be hoped that he remarks of the hon. member in reference to re-purchased estates in the vicinity of Geraldton would not force the Government to pause in their policy of carrying out closer settlement in that district. A great deal had been said by the hon. member as to the alleged excessive price paid for Oakabella, and of the operations of the land purchase board in that part of the country. As a matter of fact, in the past the difficulty in respect to the board had been that it took a highly conservative view of the value of property, with the result that it was very difficult to do business. However, with experience came knowledge, and the more agricultural operations were conducted in that part of the State, and the more land was thrown open, the greater would be the appreciation of that land. To get an idea of the stock-raising and agricultural value of the land in that district, one might reasonably turn to what had been done at the Chapman experimental farm. He

remembered that on the institution of that farm an outcry was raised in Geraldton and the adjacent districts against the action of the late Dr. Jameson in venturing to take up land which had lain derelict for many years. Yet the Minister had persisted in his determination to establish an experimental farm upon that despised area of land. The farm was only 1,275 acres in extent: of this, 700 acres had been cleared and 300 acres put under crop. This latter area had given a return of 17 bushels to the acre. In addition to that there were on the farm 650 sheep, 26 cattle, 100 pigs, and a number of horses and miscellaneous stock. When it was realised that all this could be done in so small an area: and when it was remembered that five years ago the land had been neglected by the resident settlers and regarded as of no use, he thought there was no occasion to entertain any fears as to the Oakabella estate. He remembered that when the late owner of that estate had first gone into the district, that gentleman was one of a considerable number of very conservative people who declared that it was impossible to profitably farm in that part of the district. That had been the general cry among large landowners up there; for they were averse to seeing the small selector coming in and taking up land. With considerable difficulty a certain amount of land had been taken out of the Oakabella run and the Bowes estate and thrown open to settlement, with a result truly magnificent. If anybody desired testimony as to this he only had to go to the Commissioner of Railways and hear from him how the position of the Northampton line had been changed from a very bad one to an exceptionally good one since that land was thrown open to settlement. And although there might be some in his (Mr. Nanson's) own district who still took a pessimistic view in regard to the quality of that land, he had no doubt that there would be plenty of people within the district eager to take up the Oakabella land; and if any were left over there would be plenty of people from outside the district perfectly ready to secure it. Seeing

the good results which had been obtained from the re-purchase of the Mount Erin estate, and in view of the equally good results bound to follow from the re-purchase of this Oakabella estate, he hoped that before long the Government would be found re-purchasing, as opportunity offered, several more of these large estates, which, for the benefit of Geraldton and the surrounding country, should be brought into the market as soon as possible.

Mr. HOPKINS: Personally he desired to offer his congratulations to the Minister in that he, in an honorary capacity, had been able to do such valuable work for the department and for the industry for whose well-being the department had been brought into existence. There had been many political heads of the Department of Agriculture, but he (Mr. Hopkins) knew of none who had done anything like as much as the present Minister to aid the development of the agricultural industry, whether in the administration of the department or in the appointment of field officers, right down to the latest appointment by which, fortunately, the State had secured the services of Professor Lowrie. The Leader of the Opposition had complained of the optimistic utterances of the Honorary Minister: utterances which he had declared had become so familiar that almost the prize stock at our leading shows were capable of repeating them. However he (Mr. Hopkins) would say that many of those utterances contained such solid truths that in his opinion, they could not be repeated too often; and when in this respect he had listened to the member for Pilbara and others, he had been led to think that if these truths were to be repeated from now till doomsday it was questionable whether they would be able to soak into their understandings. The Leader of the Opposition had declared that there was no virtue in the raising of foreign loans. It was but a very small community in Western Australia. Neither the people, the wealth, nor, perhaps, even the State could be compared to the State of New South Wales, with its relatively dense population and its rich areas highly developed. He (Mr. Hopkins) would

offer no objection to loans being raised in Australia; but when it came to a question of raising loans from the very limited resources in Western Australia it certainly would serve to absorb all the surplus capital, with the result that commercial enterprise would have to look elsewhere for its necessary funds. The Leader of the Opposition had complained—and if his figures were correct, rightly so, too—that the Agricultural Bank was lending to settlers a sum equivalent to 25s. per acre for clearing, whereas the settlers obtaining the loan went off and let a contract for a price from 15s. to 20s. per acre, and pocketed the difference. But after many years of close observation of the Agricultural Bank and with an intimate knowledge of the capabilities of the several inspectors employed by the bank, and of the careful scrutiny exercised by the manager of the bank he (Mr. Hopkins) thought it was not at all likely that instances of that sort could occur. As a matter of fact when it was remembered that practically without any losses £750,000 had been advanced to various settlers and that in every instance the bank had the security of their farms and holdings, it would be seen that instances must be very rare in which the bank had been cheated in this fashion. Moved by a desire to ascertain whether the bank was making mistakes he personally had inquired into several alleged instances of misjudgment; but he was pleased to say that in every case it had been found that the bank was more than amply protected, and that the scrutiny was in reality far in excess of what was required. He thought the Government would be amply justified in providing for an amendment of the Act whereby the bank could increase the maximum loans from £500 as at present to £1,000. He could see no virtue in an Act of Parliament which enabled £500 to be advanced to a man holding, say, 500 acres of land, whereas no greater sum could be advanced to a man with perhaps 3,000 acres of still better country. As to the proposal to combine the Savings Bank and the Agricultural Bank, he saw nothing akin in the management of the two institutions. They were both admirable in their differ-

ent spheres, but there was nothing appertaining to the management of the Agricultural Bank that would make Mr. Paterson particularly proficient in the management of a Savings Bank, any more than Mr. Leschen would be qualified to take over the Agricultural Department. It would be a great calamity on the State if we placed the management of the Agricultural Bank in the hands of a purely clerical man. Complaint was frequently made that the trustees of this institution advanced money without sufficient security. The State had spent about £3,000,000 on the Goldfields Water Supply, but what security had we then except the problematical development of the mining industry: and though the working costs of the mines had been reduced all round by 1s. a ton, not one member of the Opposition suggested a special impost on the very people who reaped that great benefit. An instance had come under his notice where it was said that a man borrowed £500 from the Agricultural Bank, and did not spend the money on the stipulated improvements, but inquiry in this case showed that the man had not let contracts for doing the improvements, but had done them by the unaided efforts of himself and his family, and had used the money advanced from the bank as current expenses. By that means this man built up a farm which now offered a margin of £500 additional security over the advance made by the bank. The member for Mount Magnet complained of the purchase of the Oakabella Estate. It was rather astonishing to find a member of the Labour party taking umbrage at the repurchase of a huge estate for closer settlement and subdivision, more particularly when land was cheap. In the Eastern States they were doing this extensively and paying £5 an acre for land. Even if the Government had to issue debentures to buy big estates in order to settle 50 families where one was now settled, it would confer a great benefit on the community. There were many new settlers, especially from England, who were not accustomed to doing pioneering work, but who, nevertheless, would make admirable settlers if we could only find improved

estates such as the Oakabella Estate for them to settle on.

Mr. Troy: You misunderstood me. I only took umbrage at the price paid.

Mr. HOPKINS apologised for the mistake. The Lands Purchase Board consisted of the Hon. E. M. Clarke, one of the most successful men engaged in the agricultural industry; Mr. Richard Gell of Wagin, another successful farmer, Mr. W. D. Mitchell of Dongarra—an appointment he (Mr. Hopkins) had made, being satisfied that Mr. Mitchell was the best man with knowledge of the northern areas—Mr. John Robinson, and Mr. Harry Johnston, Surveyor General; while just prior to his departure for an extended trip, Mr. Paterson, the manager of the Agricultural Bank, was also a member of the board. No doubt now Mr. Paterson had returned, the Government would make representations to him again to secure his services for the board. The mention of these names showed that the board were above suspicion and that if any people were qualified to express an opinion upon the merits of any property offered for sale we would not within the boundaries of the State find any other five gentlemen so highly competent as these. They were men of practical experience with a sound knowledge of the country from one end to the other, and it was a little over the odds when a mining member, at any rate a man without great agricultural experience in this country, no matter what he might have had in another country, took their judgment to task. The member for Mount Magnet also spoke of the stock imported by the Government. Just at the time the Government imported sheep, Copley Brothers imported 1,000 sheep for which they paid £1 a head in Adelaide, and 330 of those were lost on the trip over to Fremantle. Had that happened to a Government shipment what a hue and cry there would have been! When it was a matter of handling live stock and shipping them as we were obliged to do, it must be expected that there would be considerable disabilities. As a matter of fact a dairy cow was perhaps the most difficult animal to handle at certain periods. It was not to be expected that

general satisfaction would be given. He held no brief for the gentleman buying the cattle; that gentleman might not perhaps be as expert as others; but some of the disabilities would arise irrespective of the person engaged. In another instance 25 aged mares bought for breeding purposes from Victoria, when turned out in this State, were lost; and the man who bought them was one who was looked upon as one of the shrewdest men in the country in matters agricultural. When members talked about the production of potatoes they forgot that the price was now considerably reduced. Potatoes were £20 a ton at one time here; now they were from £6 to £8 a ton, and one could not find a bag of imported potatoes in any market in Perth to-day.

The Premier: They have been exported this year.

Mr. HOPKINS: By careful management and observation the Hon. E. M. Clarke, a member of the Lands Purchase Board, had grown potatoes successfully for a number of years, and those potatoes would favourably compare with those of the Eastern States. This was saying a great deal, because the potatoes grown in the swamp land round Perth could not be compared with the potatoes from Victoria and Tasmania. The member for Swan complained that the importation of stock was a complete fiasco, but it was questionable whether we were justified in accepting the opinion of the hon. member as being an expert opinion. There was room for criticism in regard to any shipment of stock to this country, because of the disabilities of conveying stock on vessels. As a matter of fact, in

regard to the sheep and dairy cattle imported it could be accepted that they were a very fair, average lot, and the result of the importation of breeding ewes was very apparent last season, because, as the result of over-production, lambs were sold for 3s., 4s., and 6s. per head along the Great Sothern Railway in markets where previously the small settlers were compelled to pay 20s. and 25s. a head for aged and inferior ewes that almost invariably died before they could be used for the purposes of breeding for which they were purchased. That certainly was

a benefit the Honorary Minister was able to confer. The member for Pilbara was going on the land. Inside a year the hon. member would probably know more and talk less about the industry than he did at present. The hon. member complained of too many shows being held. As a matter of fact the show was about the only annual gathering agriculturists in the back country had, and what little subsidies were offered by the Government to encourage the breeding of stock were amply returned by the railway and other revenue derived from the people attending these shows. As a matter of fact it was practically said by the member for Pilbara that we should do nothing to develop the dairying industry for the simple reason that, if we did, we would have child slavery.

Mr. Underwood: I did not speak of the dairying industry. I said that selling the land would bring that condition about.

Mr. HOPKINS: The hon. member was evidently a philosopher and we were not aware that he was posing in that guise. In any event he was correct in saying that one of that gentleman's observations was that an agricultural bank inspector had sold ploughs to settlers. It may have happened that an isolated instance arose where an inspector was conferring a benefit on a settler by saying he could buy a second-hand plough at such a place. To say that an inspector sold ploughs for any particular firm was wrong, and he would take the responsibility of denying it point blank. If the hon. member were in possession of information of that kind it was his duty as a public man to supply that information to the manager of the bank. If he did it would be promptly inquired into and if it were proved true there would be a vacancy in the bank at once. Members would pardon him, he hoped, for speaking at some considerable length on this question, but he claimed that in regard to stock he had special facilities for enabling him to express an opinion on questions members might be somewhat hazy upon. He desired to offer his hearty congratulations to the Minister who, in an honorary capacity had done better for the agricultural in-

dustry and for the country generally than any Minister who had preceded him.

The HONORARY MINISTER (in reply): There were one or two observations made by members to which he wished to reply. With regard to the cold storage of fruit, no arrangement had been made with the Fresh Food and Ice Company manager as to the price to be charged. Last year the price was 1½d. per case and the department lost money on it, so this year there was a charge of 2d. per case per week. In the Eastern States the price was less than that certainly, but one must consider that fruit was worth very much more here than over there. The holder of fruit here could better afford to pay 2d. per case than the holder of fruit in the Eastern States could afford to pay one penny per case. Sometimes it was the producer here who paid for the storage and on other occasions the middleman, and in either case he did well to pay the amount charged by the department. Certainly he would like to give the cold storage free of cost if he could, but there was always this aspect that, even if that were done, it was very doubtful whether the consumer would benefit one iota. With regard to the markets, he realised that they were needed, but it was the duty of the municipality to provide them. The whole matter had been referred to the Perth City Council, who were still considering it. If that body decided they could not build the markets then the matter would be again considered by the Government. The member for Mr. Magnet (Mr. Troy) had a great deal to say, particularly in regard to the dairy cattle. Certainly some few cattle had been taken back by the Government and they were now at Nangeenan. He would admit frankly that there were a few cattle that should not have been distributed. The cows and sheep distributed had brought comfort to very many homes and had done much good. Every one knew that the cattle were breeding continuously, and the number in the State had increased from 500 to probably 1,250. A man who had a home on the Eastern Goldfields line had told him that the possession of a cow he had obtained

from the Government was relieving him of half the cost of his living. He was a married man, so this spoke well for the action taken by the Government.

Mr. Troy: Whatever sort of a living was he making then?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Had the hon. member any idea of what a cow was?

Mr. Troy: Yes, more than you have. It is a ridiculous statement.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mention had been made of Macfarlane and Company. With regard to that firm he had arranged to have an experiment as to the storage of butter. They paid the storage and interest on the money. Reference had been made of the phosphates. He might inform members that it was the intention of the Government to work these themselves. The Government would deliver to the farmer, he hoped, at cost price. Inquiries had been made, and probably it would cost 10s. a ton to bring the phosphates from where they were found to Fremantle. There would be an additional cost for bagging, etcetera, but the total cost would not be great.

Mr. Johnson: Have you experimented with them yet?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, experiments were being entered into but there was not yet time to get any result. Some of the crops at the State farm were grown with the aid of this fertiliser. As to the settlement at Tainuin, there always were complaints from an establishment like that. So far as he was concerned, if a man there did not earn a living he would be turned off and he had already written to one man in that regard. There were difficulties there of course in many respects. Mention had been made of the water supply, but the Government were seeing that the people got sufficient water to carry on with.

Mr. Angwin: Over 90 per cent. are perfectly satisfied.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That was the case. One family he knew of had earned between July and December £150 under the contract system. Many

families averaged over £50, and the majority of the workers were doing well. They were given an opportunity there to make homes for themselves, which they would not have had but for this settlement. If those people were true to themselves and to the class they represented the settlement would be a flourishing and considerable one before very long. In a few months some of the settlers had brought their accounts to credit, having paid back the few pounds advanced to them. The settlers received no more from the Government than the customers of the Agricultural Bank got from that institution. The result was most gratifying and was but the forerunner of much good work that would be done in a similar direction. Members had criticised the work of the department rather kindly and certainly he had no objection to take to anything that had been said. The department were doing their best, and he believed their work was representative of the splendid advance agricultural development had made during the past three years.

Item, Director (six months), £500:

Mr. JOHNSON congratulated the Government upon securing the services of Professor Lowrie. With regard to the duties of that gentleman it was to be hoped he would be given many opportunities to be in the field and would not be hampered by attending too much to supervising work in the head office. There was plenty of scope for economy in the department in connection with field operations and if the new director were able to get about the country he would be able to put these matters right in addition to having an excellent influence upon the work of settlement generally.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

Item—Sub-editor of *Journal*, £190:

Mr. TROY: Would the Minister inform the Committee who occupied this position at present, and how the salary was paid. A certain vote was provided last year but the whole expenditure was not incurred.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This officer was away for part of the year and his *locum tenens* was paid out of the casual labour vote at the rate of £3 a week. Mr. G. C. Baker was the editor of the journal and Mr. Cowper was the temporary editor.

Item—Wages of Farm Hands, Caretakers of Markets, Casual Labour, etc., £3,662:

Mr. GILL: The Minister might give the Committee some information on this subject. In another part of the Estimates there was another item in connection with the Perth City Markets.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This amount represented the wages paid to the men employed in the City markets. The markets had to be kept in order.

Mr. COLLIER: The Minister surely did not understand the question. This item also referred to wages of farm hands. Did that really apply to only farm hands engaged on the State Experimental Farms, or did it include the hands engaged in clearing and ringbarking some of the land of the State?

The HONORARY MINISTER: This item applied to the wages of men on the State farms in connection with production. £250 was paid to the City markets, £250 to the fruit sheds at Fremantle, and £300 in connection with the Egg-laying Competition.

Mr. GILL: With regard to the markets, he understood that the Government were conducting the Perth markets and further along in the Estimates there was an item for the maintenance of the Perth markets. What was the expense of the management of the markets? The Committee might also be given an idea of the income of the markets. The Minister's reply was not altogether satisfactory. We had a market here, but it was not sufficient for the requirements of the public, and he was sorry that the Minister did not take the matter of providing suitable accommodation for the people more seriously into consideration. The Government had taken over the control of these markets from the City Council. When we were dealing with the City Council we were dealing with a body which did not show too much energy in

regard to these matters. At present the difficulty the people had to contend with was the extent of the competition of the Asiatics; and in making inquiries one learned that the reason why the public did not deal with the Europeans was that from the Asiatics it was possible to get produce which was much cheaper and fresher.

Mr. Gordon: Would you bar Asiatics from going into the markets?

Mr. GILL: No; but if we had open markets the plea that the Asiatics could supply these goods cheaper and fresher would be done away with. The Government should take the matter in hand, seeing that strong representations had been made by the growers. The Minister for Agriculture practically gave a promise that markets would be established provided the growers were unanimous on the subject, and these people were as unanimous as they could possibly be. The Minister told them that he preferred to build suitable markets for them, and they went away under the impression that he was serious in his statement. Judging from his attitude since then, however, he did not appear to be too anxious. He hoped the Minister would not wait for the City Council, who were playing with this question. The Council were not in a position to go on with markets and they were evidently trying to block the Government. The City Council had quite enough on their hands.

Mr. JACOBY: Perhaps the Minister recollected when the deputation waited on him asking him to make provision in the new markets for market gardeners, he made a promise that he would. In the meantime arrangements might be made to utilise the existing markets: they would give a measure of relief and would accommodate something like 50 carts.

Mr. GORDON: It would be absurd to establish open markets except sufficient accommodation were provided for over 300 carts. And when those markets were established it should be made compulsory for the carts to go to the market. Again the Government ought not to attempt to establish markets except they had at least 10 or 11 acres of land. If the Government were going into the

scheme at all it should be done thoroughly.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The existing markets were altogether unsuitable for the purpose. He quite agreed that a market was required for Perth, and he thought that the municipality should provide such an establishment. However, they had the matter under consideration and he was in correspondence with them at the present time.

Item, Producers' Conference, £370:

Mr. COLLIER: It was gratifying to know that this item had been transferred from loan to revenue. The Auditor General had mentioned in his report that arrangements had been made to transfer the account to revenue. It was a ridiculous charge to make against the Loan Fund. He desired to know how the money was expended. He understood that this was an annual conference held in Perth. The conference appeared to be something in the nature of a meeting of members of a certain trading class, who discussed matters relating to their own particular interests and welfare. If that were so how came it that the State provided the expenditure? It was not done in connection with the annual conference of miners. Moreover, it seemed that last year these delegates were entertained at a banquet, at which speeches of a strong party nature were delivered. He was speaking from memory, but if this had been the case he did not think that the State funds should be used for such a purpose.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The item represented an amount well invested. The conference was one of producers appointed by the various agricultural bodies throughout the State. The delegates were by no means all Ministerial supporters; in fact he did not know what their politics were at all. It might be that he had made some remarks at the last conference; but if he did he was safe in saying that they concerned only his own work in respect to agriculture. In any case he thought he was at liberty to tell the producers, if he so desired, that they had a good Government.

Mr. HEITMANN: Hon. members desired to know what was the result of this expenditure, and what were the actual benefits, if any, to the State?

Mr. COLLIER: The Honorary Minister ought to give the Committee some little information as to how the money was expended. There had been a conference of prospectors down in Perth but they had not been treated as these agricultural delegates were treated.

The Treasurer: Their fares were paid.

Mr. COLLIER: No assistance, at all events, had been given to the annual conference of miners. He desired to know how this particular item had been expended.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Apparently the hon. member objected to the item on the score that some other conference had not been entertained in the same way as had these agricultural delegates. He thought that if the miners were not so entertained they ought to have been. This item covered the expenses in connection with railway passes, and with the conduct of the conference, such as the printing of papers and the like. The entertaining of the delegates at a banquet was also included. He was sorry to hear that the miners were not as well treated as were the agriculturists. It was impossible to tell the member for Cue exactly what was the result of these conferences. The delegates met and discussed agricultural matters for the benefit of the whole of the people of the State. They had brought to the conference a good deal of useful information which was of great value to the producers of the State generally. These conferences left on record the result of years of experience and good advice that could be followed by people settling on the land. He was glad the member for Boulder did not oppose the item, but merely wished to know how the money was spent.

Mr. JACOBY: The hon. member should not press any opposition to this item. These conferences were held throughout Australia, primarily for the purpose of education. Men who had succeeded on the land gave their experiences at these conferences, which experi-

ence was eminently useful to selectors and others in various branches of agricultural and pastoral work; and if by means of efforts of this description we could only to a small degree increase the output of the State, this expenditure was amply justified. In America these conferences were made a feature. Enormous sums were spent in extending them in every direction, and their deliberations were published broadcast.

Mr. Collier: They should not be used for party purposes.

Mr. JACOBY: Those who attended them, no matter who was Minister, naturally through the medium of the toast list returned the compliment to the Minister entertaining them.

Mr. SCADDAN: There was no exception taken to the item. These conferences did good. People were able to gain by the experience of others so liberally offered. But there were other industries in which it was essential to have conferences to bring about better conditions. Mining conferences were frequently held by mining managers, and the Government did not give them any more assistance than was given to clergymen travelling about the country to preach. The Minister for Mines should give the same assistance to the Prospectors' Association.

The Minister for Mines: So we did; we brought them down here and gave them a picnic.

Mr. SCADDAN: Conferences of friendly societies should be assisted. They did a considerable amount of good. It was a work that should be recognised.

Item, Agricultural and Horticultural Societies, subsidies, £5,000:

Mr. GILL: These shows were multiplied to a great extent. All the little towns along the Great Southern and South-Western Railways should combine and have one decent show, instead of having so many little shows not worthy of the name.

Mr. BUTCHER: There were too many shows. The Minister should try to induce the different societies to amalgamate. Each agricultural district had its agricultural show, and expected a subsidy, but the money would be better spent if

the shows were amalgamated and the subsidy given to one good show.

Mr. COLLIER: The money given to these societies was probably well spent, but the objection was as to the manner in which some of the shows were run. He objected to some members of Parliament being singled out for special treatment. All last year he had not received one invitation to attend a show except the National Show and the Royal Agricultural Society's Show at Claremont.

The Treasurer: The invitations are in the hands of the local committees. They do not discriminate.

Mr. COLLIER: They should send invitations to members of the Opposition as well as to members sitting on the Government side. At the Royal Agricultural Society's Show he attended the luncheon by invitation, but members of the Ministry were accorded special prominence, and though the toast list lasted for two hours, the Leader of the Opposition was not asked to speak. It gave a distinctly party taste to the whole proceeding.

The Premier: The toast of Parliament is always responded to by the Premier.

Mr. Angwin: And by the Leader of the Opposition, if he is there.

Mr. COLLIER: The Honorary Minister made two speeches. The toast list lasted two hours.

The Premier: It was an hour too long.

Mr. COLLIER: It was very wearisome, though, undoubtedly, the Premier did not make a long speech, and had consideration for his hearers. The various shows were made occasions for the making of eulogistic speeches concerning the Government.

The Premier: All the societies are only too glad to see members of Parliament there. A member of the Opposition spoke at the Bunbury show.

Mr. COLLIER: The societies should be told it was their duty to send invitations to members of the Opposition as well as to members on the Government side of the House.

Mr. GILL: What was the object of the increase in the vote this year?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Government gave a 10s. subsidy on the prize money paid away and

the increase was, therefore, automatic. Unless the system were discontinued, the Government must contribute to each show. He agreed with the suggestion that some of the smaller places might combine to hold one show instead of there being a number of small ones. The trouble was to know how to bring this about, for if the suggestion were made to some of the societies, they would strongly object to it. Shows did a considerable amount of good. He hoped the societies would in the future see that invitations were sent to all members.

Mr. HAYWARD: If invitations were sent to all members of Parliament, the whole of the Government grant to the societies would be spent in entertaining those gentlemen. Were it not for that, he was certain all the societies would be only too glad to see every member of Parliament.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: With regard to the Royal show, he had always strongly objected to the fact that all the speeches were made by members of the Government side of the House, and that not even the Leader of the Opposition was allowed to make a speech on the occasion of the show luncheon.

Mr. SCADDAN: On every occasion except one when he had attended country shows, he had received the same welcome as members of the Government party. Of the four shows he had gone to he had spoken at each one except the National show at Geraldton. With regard to that show members, including Ministers, were treated so discourteously as even to be stopped at the gates, and asked for their entrance money. The Minister present there representing the Labour Government had to find a seat for himself, and no attention whatever was paid to him. Members of the present Government were treated very differently, as they should be, considering they were representing the Government as a whole. There were occasions when the members of the Opposition were overlooked. The leader of that party should be recognised not only by the societies, but by all bodies in the State, owing to the position he held. It was certain that if the Government had

known the position, they would have insisted that the Leader of the Opposition should get proper treatment. When Mr. Rason was Leader of the Opposition, he was duly recognised at every function.

Mr. JACOBY: In connection with the Geraldton Show, a member of the then Government was prominently associated with it, and if there were any want of courtesy to members, it must have been due to the oversight of the then Minister for Lands, Mr. Drew. From information he had received he knew that the officers of the society were very busy at that time and trusted to the member for the district to look after the prominent visitors.

Mr. Scaddan: The member for the district apologised to the Minister afterwards for the way in which he had been treated.

Mr. TROY: The remarks of the member for Swan (Mr. Jacoby) were most uncalled for, and it was very doubtful whether that member would have the courage to make them in the presence of Mr. Drew. While there was very great bungling at that Geraldton show, Mr. Drew had nothing whatever to do with it, and it was doubtful whether he then held a position on the committee. That gentleman was so disgusted at the lack of courtesy shown by the Geraldton people, that he apologised to the leader of the then Government. Mr. Drew was a straightforward, honourable and courteous man, and would never allow discourtesy to be shown to members of Parliament. As to the item, he believed in supporting the agricultural shows as they were very necessary to the advancement of the industry. He enjoyed nothing more than attending a show. The majority of members received invitations to shows, and if they did not get them, those who suffered most, were the societies themselves, and the people of the district. It was their loss if the people in Parliament who had to legislate on their behalf had no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the work that was being done. After all he did not think there should be any complaint. The most dignified attitude to take would be to ignore any lack of courtesy and ascribe it to want of under-

standing on the part of those responsible for it. In connection with the Royal Show the same position obtained. If the people who conducted those shows did not know what was due to visitors it was their look-out. This conduct reflected only on the person responsible for the discourtesy.

Mr. SCADDAN: As far as the member for Geraldton was concerned he did everything possible to make the visit of the Minister of the Crown as enjoyable as possible.

Mr. ANGWIN: Assistance was rendered to the societies by the Government, but the money, he was given to understand, was being expended on improvements to the show grounds. If that were so we could well reduce the vote.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This money was given away in prizes, and it could not be used for improvements. A regulation to this effect was brought in two years ago and it was rigidly enforced.

Item—Rabbit destruction, £275:

Mr. HEITMANN: The Minister had told the Committee that economies had been effected in this department in various directions; but he was inclined to think that if the conduct of the chief of this department right through was on a par with one piece of work to which he would refer, the economy was brought about by sweating the workers. Some time ago a request was made for a deviation of the rabbit-proof fence at Barrambie. The fence went through a mining lease there and caused trouble to the miners. The request was granted and the chief inspector sent men to do the work, and he (Mr. Heitmann) was led to believe that the labourers were paid under the rate of wages ruling in the district. It seemed a small matter but this was the first opportunity that had been given of mentioning it and showing that the information given to the Minister by his officers was not always correct. He wrote to the Minister about it, and the Minister said point blank that it was not true. He repeated it to the Minister, and then the Minister told him to his face again that what he had said was not true. He could not help informing the Committee that what the Minister had been told by the chief of his department was absolutely false. Infor-

mation had been given to him (Mr. Heitmann) from the mining manager in that district that the ruling wages there were 12s. a day, and the Minister knew well that this was not what was paid to the labourers working on the fence. The Minister gave as an excuse that these men were told that they could take out three months' provisions from Nannine and get them carted out by Government teams.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The department paid the standard rate of wages in that district; the rate which was paid to men working there above ground. The labourers at first were paid 11s. 4d., and subsequently the wages were raised to 12s. a day, and this sum was paid to the men on the fence. As far as wages were concerned the department always paid what was a fair wage and what was the standard rate.

Mr. HEITMANN: The information given to the Minister was not true. These men were never paid the standard rate. The standard rate during the time this work was being carried out was 12s. right through and not 11s. 4d. As a matter of fact the department paid their men 11s.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Agricultural Bank*, £9,720:

Item—Deputy Manager, £405:

Mr. COLLIER: Perhaps the Minister would explain this item, which showed a large increase. Was it because of an increased amount given to the Deputy manager during the absence of the managing trustee?

The HONORARY MINISTER: This was really a new appointment. Mr. McLarty, the officer in question, was paid as accountant last year, and when the Government appointed trustees and Mr. Paterson managing trustee, it was thought advisable to appoint Mr. McLarty deputy manager of the bank, and his salary was increased. Mr. McLarty did not receive any extra pay during the absence of the managing trustee.

Item—Chief Inspectors, £350:

Mr. COLLIER: A foot-note to this item stated that the salary included £150 for travelling expenses. That would leave a salary of only £200.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This officer was the only permanent inspector on this staff. The others were temporary men appointed by the trustees from time to time as required. The amount voted last year was £700, to cover the salaries of two inspectors, one of whom had since died. The permanent officer was underpaid and the question of his salary would have to come up for consideration. He would be classified and paid according to the new duties which it was proposed he should carry out.

Item—Extra Clerical and Field Assistance, £2,500:

Mr. UNDERWOOD: This seemed a large amount. How was it that such a large amount was required for extra work?

The HONORARY MINISTER: This item included the cost of inspections. The hon. member knew that the department charged fees and that the fees more than covered the cost of the various inspectors other than the chief inspector.

Mr. COLLIER: How is it that it is so much higher than it was last year?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Because the work is so much more. We have dealt with something like 2,500 applications in the last year. It was necessary not only to make inspections on each new application, but to make subsequent inspections to see that the improvements were being carried out.

Item—Rent, £450:

Mr. SCADDAN: This appeared to be a very heavy item. He thought the time had arrived when the Government should construct a building of its own for the bank. He would like to know if these premises had been taken on a lease.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The bank had been removed from the old building because that building was most unsuitable, and because, moreover, it was considered unsafe for the storage of the bank's documents. The rent for these new premises was by no means excessive. He realised that it would be better if the Government could erect its own building for the bank. This probably would be done, but it could not

be done in five minutes. There was no lease in regard to the premises. The bank was merely a weekly tenant.

Mr. COLLIER: Probably the premises were well worth the rental. Still, if that rent of £9 a week were capitalised at 10 per cent. the Government could erect a building costing £4,000.

Mr. Butcher: They could erect one at £10,000 and save money.

Mr. COLLIER: It was to be hoped the Minister did not contemplate the retention of the rented premises for any length of time. Of course he realised that it was not advisable to erect small buildings all over the place for the accommodation of separate departments; but surely some better arrangement might be made.

The PREMIER: The whole question of accommodation had been hung up owing to the fact that the question of the town hall site had not yet been finally decided. Again, lately the Federal people had seemed inclined to give up the present post office buildings. If this were done it would afford additional accommodation for the State departments. It was proposed to erect offices for the bank just as soon as these two questions were settled. At the present time rent was being paid, not only on behalf of the Agricultural Bank but also on behalf of the Taxation Department. If the Government were to get a chance to sell the buildings accommodating the Mines Department a building would be erected either on the town hall site or on the Government block in Irwin-street. Better accommodation was required for the draftsman's branch of the Lands Department also. That was the reason why only temporary arrangements had been made so far as the bank premises were concerned.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Sale of Government Property Trust Account, £31,224:

Mr. BATH: Seeing that since last this vote was before the Committee there had been a general election and a change in the personnel of the Assembly he was going to test the feeling of hon. members as to the desirability of this practice of using the proceeds of the

sales of property purchased out of loan funds; thus really reducing our capital account and using the proceeds as current revenue. It was true that the Premier, in order to put as good a face as possible on this procedure, had introduced a Bill at a time when the Government majority were so pliant that no question whatever was raised as to the desirability or the legality of the procedure, or as to how it conformed to the principles of sound finance. That Bill had passed into law and so had given the stamp of legislative approval to the action of the Treasurer. But, however the passing of such a measure might have given to the procedure the stamp of the approval of the majority of the Assembly anybody who investigated the subject and who knew whence this money was derived must agree that since Mr. Rason had been Treasurer the Committee had adopted a practice which was partly responsible for the difficulties in which we found ourselves to-day. It was amongst the causes of our present depression, and of the fact that our revenue only sufficed to pay interest and sinking fund charges and the civil servants. It must be included among those causes that had brought about that position, and which now denied us the opportunity of providing from Consolidated Revenue certain sums for the construction of public works. We were on the very margin of non-safety so far as the Consolidated Revenue Fund was concerned. It was true that we might regard the present amount of Consolidated Revenue Fund as being at the lowest; still it was to be remembered that there were always possibilities of a falling-off in railway revenue, or in the revenue derived from the water scheme. If that were to occur we would be in the position of having a revenue insufficient to pay even the charges which he had mentioned. Faced with a possibility such as this we needed to be extra careful, and extra scrupulous in the methods adopted for financing. The methods here adopted did not conform to the canons of good finance. Under these circumstances and for the purpose of testing the feelings of hon. members he proposed to reduce the vote

by the sum of £224. He knew that the Treasurer had legislative approval for this procedure, but his (Mr. Bath's) purpose would be served by having this amount struck off; because if the hon. members so expressed disapproval of the practice which the Treasurer had adopted he (the Treasurer) would of course accept that expression of opinion as an indication that the practice should not be pursued in the future. He moved—

That the vote be reduced by £224.

The TREASURER: The Leader of the Opposition had briefly stated his usual objection to this appropriation. Of course the Leader of the Opposition was perfectly within his rights in endeavouring to get hon. members to see the matter in the light in which he looked upon it. At the same time he (the Treasurer) desired to point out that the proper course would have been, not to interfere with the appropriation but to endeavour to repeal the Act itself.

Mr. Bath: When the Act was going through the Minister said that the proper time to attack the principle was when on the Estimates; now that we are on the Estimates he tells me that the principle should have been attacked when the Act was going through.

The TREASURER: The Leader of the Opposition had said that any expression of disapproval from members of the Committee ought to be taken as an instruction not to bring in these Estimates in the future. But it was the law. The Act provided that these funds, the proceeds of sale of certain property, should be placed to the trust account in the Treasury and should only be expended by appropriation of Parliament. Here was the appropriation. The hon. member well knew that when he (the Treasurer) first discovered these funds had been lying for four years to the account of the Treasury he said, "Why not utilise this money?" and had come to Parliament with Estimates and got Parliament to approve of the expenditure. Next year he ascertained from the Auditor General that it was not sufficient, that an appropriation did not give legal authority to keep the accounts as they had been kept: therefore

he introduced a Bill to utilise these funds, and no resolution of the Committee could instruct him to act differently to what the Act laid down. It was an Act he approved of. If the Leader of the Opposition disapproved of it let the hon. member move to repeal it.

Mr. Bath: I could not get a Message from His Excellency.

The TREASURER: The hon. member opposed this expenditure on works of national benefit. A few minutes ago it was urged that the Government should borrow money to build a new Agricultural Bank; now the hon. member opposed the using of borrowed moneys in building public schools. Where did the difference come in? The Bill was not passed without investigation. The matter was discussed when it was first brought down in the shape of an appropriation, and again the following year when the Bill was brought in, and again when the appropriation was brought down that year; and on each occasion the hon. member criticised this expenditure as he did to-night. The hon. member's argument that the expenditure was the cause of the depression could not hold water. Stronger arguments would need to be advanced to convince one that spending £33,000 on necessary works and buildings, though the money be from the proceeds of other Government properties purchased out of loan moneys, was the cause of the depression. We had spent loan moneys in developing the resources of the country and in providing buildings, and roads and bridges to some extent, and in putting holes into the ground to help prospectors to develop reefs, and we spent £150,000 of borrowed money on the public battery system, which had not returned interest. Did that expenditure cause the depression? The hon. member, on page 83 of the Public Accounts, would find a list of the expenditure from borrowed money in these directions. We spent £150,000 on State batteries, £62,000 on telegraphs, £34,000 on roads and bridges, £31,000 on public buildings, and we spent £762,000 on water supplies, tanks and bores, wells, water conservation, dams and condensers, and in other directions. All these items were legiti-

mate expenditure to assist our industries, and we provided subsidies for deep sinking. This was money that did not come back, but although we could find nothing tangible for it we knew that the indirect return was being felt in the country. Surely, when we had all this money expended in those items alone, it was idle to argue that the expenditure on these Estimates to provide educational facilities for our children was utterly wrong, and was going to intensify any depression in our midst? Therefore, the hon. member should withdraw his proposal.

Mr. WALKER: It was true whatever the Committee did it could not alter the attitude taken up by the Treasurer, but this was brought about by the Treasurer having been reproved by the Auditor General.

The Treasurer: Not reproved.

Mr. WALKER: Absolutely. At any rate, the Treasurer was severely rebuked and in order to fortify himself brought down the Bill. What chance was there to criticise that measure with the majority the Ministry possessed during last Parliament? There were then no corner champions of fair play. The Opposition could not help the Bill going through, and now could only protest against the existence of the Act and suggest the wisdom of its repeal. No private member could bring down a Bill to repeal the Act. A Message would be needed from the Governor.

The Treasurer: No Message would be required. It is only a machinery measure.

Mr. WALKER: At any rate, it would need to be a Ministerial Bill. The hint was now thrown out that we should return to the methods urged as sound by the Auditor General.

The Treasurer: No: the Auditor General did not deal with the principle, only with the system of accountancy.

Mr. WALKER: Was it a sound principle that the proceeds of property sold should go into a sort of floating loan fund instead of being put in the ledger to the balance sheet of the original capital account dealing with the matter. Supposing we sold the Goldfields Water Scheme, would it be sound to leave the

debt on the scheme standing as it was and spend the money derived from the sale as revenue for building bridges. It would be exceedingly foolish, not to mention a stronger term. No doubt the State was responsible for the original debt all the same, but we should have a system of keeping the accounts to show the credits against the debits. Some things in connection with the Goldfields Water Scheme were sold, yet they did not go towards the reduction of the capital account of the scheme on which the goldfields people had to pay such a high tax, nor did it go to reduce the cost of water, but it went, perhaps, to build a monkey house at South Perth. Each public enterprise should stand on its own bottom, and all its credits and debits should be kept apart from those of other accounts. Then we would know how we stood. The sales could go to extinguish the debt on the particular work. How far would we go in this direction? The position of the fund on the 30th June, 1908, showed a total credit of £94,268, made up of loan £93,262, and revenue £1,005; while the debits were £63,037, made up of £41,982 in 1906-7 and £21,055 in 1907-8. Thus there was a balance of £31,230 available for expenditure. From that sum £31,224 was taken, leaving a balance of £6. How long would that state of things be allowed to continue? We did not show what was actually expended. This could not be considered as revenue, and it was a case of absolutely robbing the loans. It was disguising from the public the real position of our finances. It made it appear that we were working the State less extravagantly by taking less from revenue. We did not appear to be taking it either from the General Loan Fund or the Consolidated Revenue. The money was being taken in a surreptitious way.

Mr. Scaddan: Would the property be sold at the original cost?

Mr. WALKER: No; not half the cost. It was immoral finance, and provided a bad example for the State as a whole.

Mr. BATH: In regard to his proposition to reduce the vote in order to secure an expression of opinion, he was aware that such a vote, even if the am-

endment were carried, would not have the effect of repealing the Act which the Treasurer introduced in order to legalise procedure which prior to the introduction of the Act had been characterised by the Auditor General as illegal.

The Treasurer: It was illegal because it required the Act.

Mr. BATH: The Auditor General did not say it required an Act, but dealt with it just as the Treasurer had done.

The Treasurer: He had never questioned the action since.

Mr. BATH: No. The Treasurer knew that this Legislature was supreme over the Auditor General, and if that officer pointed out an illegality and Parliament passed an Act to dispose of certain moneys in a certain way, his duties were to see that the moneys were disposed of in the very way this Assembly dictated. No doubt in the present state of the finances, and with the public friends of the Government crying out against taxation proposals, the Treasurer was rejoiced when he found the trust funds had accumulated to a nice sum. Probably he was right in the contention that there was nothing to be gained by that trust money being allowed to lie idle but surely every member must agree that the money should be so disposed as to keep the asset intact.

The Treasurer: We could not keep it intact for it does not realise sufficient.

Mr. BATH: It could go towards the purpose as far as the money would provide.

Mr. Jacoby: How could you see it in that way?

Mr. BATH: The Treasury had absolute knowledge of the particular loan votes from which the money was derived and there would be no difficulty in allocating the sums to the accounts from which they were derived.

The Treasurer: Your Government found a difficulty. You created a trust fund.

Mr. BATH: There should be no difficulty. If material in connection with the Goldfields Water Supply were sold, the sum realised should be credited to that account. Although reappropriations

might confuse the issue, anyone really desirous to do the right thing, would not find it a very great difficulty. The Minister for Works had interjected, when the member for Kanowna was speaking, asking what was the security we offered for our loans? The security was the credit of the State. When we were placing a loan authorisation on the market, we were always very careful to detail how our loan moneys were expended.

The Minister for Works: We can reappropriate.

Mr. BATH: Yes, but in the circumstances alluded to we said that so many millions were spent in reproductive works, and were producing so much revenue and so much contribution towards the sinking fund. In the disposal of the proceeds of property purchased from loan funds, and purchased on such conditions, we should be very careful in the disposal of the money. With the authority the Treasurer possessed, the item might amount to even as much as £1,000,000. The Treasurer might do practically what an impecunious individual did when he went to a pawn shop to raise money on property to secure something for his current expenses. The Treasurer, in order to avoid the necessity of adopting taxation which might be objectionable to his political friends, sold property paid for out of loan money, and used the proceeds as revenue. What would he said of a private firm who did a thing of that sort? The Committee should express an opinion on this point, so that the decision should act as guidance in the future. If the Committee expressed the opinion that the practice was undesirable, an amending measure might be introduced to provide for the disposal of the money more in consonance with commercial dictates. The suggestion that a member on this side should introduce such a Bill was absurd. In the first place it would probably have to be introduced by Message from the Governor, or if that were unnecessary, the Bill would have very little chance of ever getting past the introductory stages.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker)

appeared to be under the impression that if property on an undertaking such as the Goldfields Water Supply were sold, that scheme received no credit for the sale of the property. Under existing conditions the capitalisation of the scheme would be reduced by the value of the property sold.

Mr. Scaddan : Has that been done in this case ?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : The Act specified that it must be done.

Mr. Walker : That makes it all the worse.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : The argument was that the people on the fields were paying rates, etc., to cover the interest on the capitalisation, and to pay the expenses of the scheme, and the hon. member suggested that if we sold £20,000 or £30,000 worth of property, the proceeds should go to lessen the capitalisation, otherwise the people on the fields would be paying rates on amounts which had been credited to this Government Property Trust Account. That was not the case, for the Goldfields Water Supply capitalisation would be reduced by the amount realised from the sale of the property. The main question for us to consider was whether the money was being used for reproductive works. It must be remembered that the State had as an asset a large amount of undeveloped land. By inducing settlement, and the provision of roads and bridges, etcetera, it seemed to him that we were improving the State, and making it so that every one who was put on the land had something at stake. When one became a successful settler he contributed to the revenue through the customs. Then schools were erected. If we settled the country and sold land, we must provide school accommodation. A few years ago he looked upon a school or a road as an unproductive work, but he could not help thinking there was another side to the question which one saw subsequently, and it seemed to him that in the important work of developing a State like this, any useful work which induced settlement in the country might be described as reproductive. If a private individual or a half a dozen

persons in the House owned a few million acres of good agricultural land in the State, they would think nothing of opening it up by roads and bridges. If such a procedure were justified in the building of roads, why was it not justifiable that we should get the proceeds from the sale of this property. Situated as we were, with that money lying idle, there was no valid reason why it should not be put to the use provided on the estimates.

Mr. WALKER : We borrowed money for specific purposes and with that money we bought specific goods.

The Treasurer : Not always.

Mr. WALKER : In a big scheme we borrowed money for a definite purpose, and while it was true that the State became responsible for that money borrowed, the money was allocated to a particular work. We bought our goods, and afterwards we sold them and merely crediting the sale did not fulfil the obligation.

The Minister for Works : But it does no injustice to the ratepayer.

Mr. WALKER : It was a matter of honesty. The whole of the State had to pay the whole of the debts however they were incurred. We wanted every beast of burden to carry its own burden. The illustration he had given, the Coolgardie Water Scheme, was one that the original loan would not cover. There must be up-keep and replacement over and over again, and we would have to go over the same expenditure. The contention of the Leader of the Opposition was that we had an obligation in connection with that scheme for which we borrowed money, and then if we had an income from any source, whether from the sale of effects connected with that scheme, or anything else, it should be credited to that scheme, not only upon the ledger, but absolutely that money should be utilised again and placed to the credit of that scheme, to use it for the purpose of keeping it in order. This was seizing trust funds for any vote whatever. Ultimately it went out of the country he knew, and it did not matter whether we borrowed money for this work or that. It was to the secret way in which it was

possible to do these things so that we did not have a proper showing of the costs of these specific works which he had alluded to, that he objected. He did not care what subtlety of language was used to cover the offence, it remained an offence in finance. We did want to have the benefit of every particle sold in the way of goods in connection with that scheme, and that scheme should be credited with every item if it only be a screw so that ultimately we might, as we should be able to do, reduce the rates charged at the other end.

The TREASURER: There were only two ways of dealing with this matter, one was by appropriation as we were doing and the other by placing the money to the credit of the sinking fund. In his opinion, and in the opinion of the majority of members, the sinking fund was quite heavy enough. We were paying at present on this water scheme $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. We were paying $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in connection with the purchase of the Great Southern Railway which was in better order to-day than ever it was. We were paying $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on local inscribed stock, and 1 per cent. on inscribed stock. Surely, therefore we were not justified in increasing that any further; indeed, it must be reduced now, and he hoped the House would sanction that reduction later on. It was absurd to argue that the Treasurer would go and dispose of hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of public property, and do what he liked with the money. Such an idea was laughable. The hon. member knew it could not be done. The Treasurer did not sell this property; it was sold by the several departments, and there was nothing hidden, everything was done openly.

Mr Bath: Last year this was passed by six members in the House.

The TREASURER: Perhaps the hon. member was responsible for that, for he kept the House sitting until six o'clock in the morning. He desired to point out that the principle was right. He had done his duty, and to say that the Auditor General questioned the legality of this procedure was absurd. The Auditor General did nothing of the sort, he questioned the legality of appropriating

this money without an Act authorising it to be dealt with in the way it was being dealt with from the time of the Labour Government in 1904. The Labour Government had been the first to discover that they had difficulties to contend with. They found they could not credit each loan authorisation with the little sales going on year by year of goods purchased out of that authorisation. It meant that the whole loan statements were altered by a few shillings or a few pounds day in and day out. They had found that it was impossible to keep the accounts. It meant hundreds and thousands of little items. They themselves had to take this account and say that they could not do it and that the money should be put to a suspense account. This they had done, illegally enough. When he (the Treasurer) came along and found the money there he had determined to see if it could not be legally spent. With this end in view he had come to Parliament, and Parliament had said, "Yes, we will give you authority." Then the Auditor General had* said "Yes, it is all right, you have Parliamentary sanction; but the way in which you are dealing with the fund is contrary to the Audit Act." The Auditor General had said that the money having been raised on the authority of an Act the re-appropriation also must have the authority of an Act. So he (the Treasurer) had introduced a measure and Parliament had agreed to it. Now the hon. member said that the asset should be kept intact. It was impossible to keep it intact; the only way to keep it intact was by paying this heavy sinking fund which was being contributed out of Consolidated Revenue. The capital expenditure had to be taken into account. The hon. member had argued that the Government were putting an erroneous statement before the country. The Government were doing nothing of the sort; each trading department of the Government kept its own books and its own accounts, and showed its own balance-sheet each year. And the Act provided that if any of those departments sold any property and it came into this account then the department was immediately to

credit its capital account with it and so reduce the capital assets. It amounted to this, that what might be deemed advisable in theory could not be followed out in practice. It was to be remembered that even if they were showing some depreciation in the assets; and if they were to spend this money again in providing the same property, there would still be a difference. In the past thousands of pounds had been spent out of revenue to increase the assets. But apart from all that, the lender had the taxable value of lands and property, and had the people of the State as security.

Mr. Scaddan : It is a question of the capability of the people to bear the tax.

The TREASURER : That was so. The fact that the money had been spent in reproductive works, such as railways and harbours, would be borne in mind by the lender, and would serve to establish the credit of the country. Hon. members should consider the national debt of Great Britain and the enormous debts of France and Russia, and the older countries that had had to borrow money to preserve their very existence. What asset had the lender in these countries other than the asset of the people settled on the land and their capacity to bear taxation to pay the interest? Here we had a small sum of money which he could not deal with improperly no matter how he might wish to do so. Was it wise then to pay this money into the sinking fund and so increase the already very heavy payments for the redemption of loans, and then to come to the House and ask for authority to raise further money to carry out these very necessary works. To do this would be to pay twice—to raise the money twice, to pay the discounts twice, and so to lose money on both sides. Surely it was an unreasonable proposition.

Mr. Bath : Why not construct them out of revenue?

The TREASURER : How could that be done when the revenue was not there? Only this evening he had been urged to construct a building for the Agricultural Bank out of loan money. The member for Boulder had asked why did not the Government borrow money from the

savings bank for the purpose of building premises for the Agricultural Bank. He had been urged to do the very thing he was doing; and on the other hand he had been roundly condemned for it. He hoped the Committee would not endorse the proposal to reduce the amount.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	24
Majority against				5

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Bath	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Swan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gill	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Walker
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Ware
Mr. Horan	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Troy
Mr. McDowall	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Barnett	Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Brown	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Male
Mr. Carson	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Davies	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Price
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Quintan
Mr. Hayward	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Layman
	(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Vote put and passed.

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

Resolutions as passed in Committee of Supply granting supplies amounting to £2,354,898, and a further sum of £31,224 from the Sale of Government Property Trust Account, were formally reported.

On motion by the Treasurer report from Committee of Supply adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

The House having resolved into Committee of Ways and Means.

The TREASURER : moved—

That towards making good the supply to be granted to His Majesty, a sum not exceeding £2,354,898 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of

Western Australia, and a sum not exceeding £31,224 from the Sale of Government Property Trust Account.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, the report adopted.

BILL—LOAN, £1,445,000.

Second Reading.

Resumed from the 2nd February.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): The introduction of the Loan Bill at the late stage when it was introduced, and the speedy way in which it had been placed after the Estimates, is certainly not conducive to the proper consideration of the measure, especially a Bill which seeks to obtain the authorisation to raise another million and a half of money. We have grown into this practice for the past two or three years of bringing on the Loan Bill at the very latest stage possible and, by the use of the majority supporting the Government, of forcing it on without any possible chance of due consideration. I defy any member of thi House who devotes any attention to the other matters we are called upon to consider, and who attended here at 2.30 o'clock to-day to have had anything like reasonable time to give consideration to this Loan Bill and the schedule attached thereto. In a matter of this kind where it involves a very large increase, not only in the aggregate indebtedness but also in the amount per head of the population, I think it is time the Treasurer considered the interests of the public generally, and gave more opportunity and time for the consideration of this measure. The Treasurer in the course of his speech the other day may not have intended to indulge in humour, possibly it was of the unconscious variety, but I cannot understand any member expressing the opinion that it requires courage to go in for a borrowing policy. As a matter of fact, from the history of this and other States, it is evident that no courage whatever has been needed to go on the London market to borrow money. It has always been the means by which the Treasurer has sought to evade the responsibility and

avoid the necessity for courageously facing a financial stringency, and the method he has adopted of dodging the difficulty. The Treasurer himself admitted the other day that he had been in Queensland when there was a depression, and in New South Wales when there was a depression, and in Victoria when there was a depression, and I am not quite sure that he was not in South Australia when there was a depression, but it seems to me that wherever the Treasurer sets his foot depression is sure to follow.

The Premier: The Treasurer arrived here in 1894.

Mr. BATH: And evidently when the hon. gentleman is unfortunately entrusted with the finances of any State the depression is intensified. I cannot understand why a gentleman such as the Treasurer, or any other financier, can lay down one line of conduct as desirable for the State and another as desirable for private or commercial concerns. We find in connection with the matter we have just previously discussed, the use of the proceeds derived from the sale of Government property, that if any private individual—and I want to put this to those members who voted for the last procedure—got rid of his assets, representing loan expenditure, and blew it in the ordinary expenditure of his living or upkeep, he would soon be in Queer-street, and would not proceed very far on that course before the institution financing him would come down on him like a ton of bricks, and not only refuse him any further credit but probably call in the credit already extended. But we find that what would be deemed outrageous in commercial circles is regarded as a desirable thing to do in regard to State finance. We know that in private life that if any individual, no matter how wealthy he might be, started to hypothecate his inheritance and dispose of it or mortgage it to the money lender and so build up indebtedness against his inheritance as to gradually contract the surplus of revenue which he would have at his disposal over and above the interest he would have to pay, that individual would be characterised as idle and dissolute, and as one who would get rid

of his substance and make a fool of himself ; but this is a course which, when adopted by a Treasurer on behalf of a State, is regarded as a perfectly desirable course to pursue and, apparently, entirely above criticism. It seems to me when we are approaching a time such as we have had for the past three years increasing in intensity, and when there are financial problems to be faced, the truly courageous man is the one who either effects economy wisely in those directions where it will not impair efficiency, or, if this is not possible or desirable, proceeds to so adjust his taxation that it may meet his expenditure ; but we find that the course adopted by the present Treasurer with a shortage of revenue and a growing expenditure in those directions which have to be met, such as, for instance, the natural increase in the cost of education, and the increase in the amount to be provided for interest and sinking fund, instead of facing that difficulty has resorted more and more to the practice of sneaking loan funds here and there and applying them to purposes of revenue. I do not want to make that charge without evidence to back it up. We find, for instance, that from 1901 to 1905, in the erection of State batteries the whole of the money was provided from revenue because it was being used in mining development and there was no desire to see that it paid interest and sinking fund, and it was, therefore, not regarded as reproductive work in the strictest sense of the term, or, what one might say, the stern sense of the term ; but in 1905-6 this vote has been wholly dropped from revenue, and whatever public batteries have been erected have been built out of loan funds, and we find provision on the Loan Estimates this year for £27,000 to be expended in the erection of State batteries, notwithstanding the fact that each year we are involved in a loss on the working of these batteries. Again, in connection with the railways, in what are termed additions and improvements, since Mr. Rason was Treasurer and since the present Treasurer succeeded Mr. Rason, we have had considerable sums expended in these works which have not in any way added to the

earning capacity of the railways. They may have provided conveniences in different directions that are necessary, but have not warranted the addition of these accounts to the capital cost of the railways. Before 1905-6, and until Mr. Rason adopted this means of staving off the need for taxation, many of these works were provided for from revenue. Only those works which could reasonably be expected to increase the earning capacity of the railways were provided for on loan schedules. Then we find this practice of lopping off so much of the public works salaries, an increased amount, from the revenue vote, and find it in the departmental vote under the Loan Estimates. The same thing occurs in the railways. We find that in the Mines Department now this practice is being resorted to. These are those little secret ways of making it appear that we are reducing expenditure, economising in the utilisation of revenue, when as a matter of fact, we are not saving, but, instead of providing this departmental and administrative expenditure from revenue, we are finding it from loan funds. There is also the replacement of obsolete stock, and the agricultural and mining development votes. There are many items which cannot by any stretch of the imagination be characterised as coming within the scope of capital development, and they should not be provided for from the General Loan Fund. The Auditor General has referred to this for we find he has pointed out that the producers' dinner at the Palace Hotel was provided for out of the vote for development of agriculture.

The Premier : Instructions have been given to transfer that to revenue.

Mr. BATH : Then in connection with the rabbit-proof fence the money for funeral expenses of one of the employees was provided for from the Loan Fund. Right through the report of the Auditor General I find cases where the Government, in order to make it appear that they have reduced expenditure from revenue in conformity with the reduced revenue, have simply transferred the expenditure to General Loan Fund. We find it to an even greater extent in connection with

the erection of public buildings, and for the provision of roads. In 1902, when Mr. Gardiner was Treasurer, it was laid down as a rule which should be followed, and it was followed then, that these were not items which could legitimately be called reproductive, and that, therefore, they should not be provided for from General Loan Fund. The practice of transferring administrative expenditure to Loan Fund is also growing. The Auditor General says—

“It is worthy of consideration that no charges be allowed to loan in respect to the permanent or ordinary staff of a department, as there is always a temptation to reduce the ordinary revenue expenses if loan is available. It is noticed in some places that this is now the rule.”

In another place we find in connection with the Nangeenan farm, that the department administering the farm are at the present time paying the expenses out of Loan Fund. Whatever revenue is derived is put into the Consolidated Revenue, and goes to swell the revenue receipts. How can any man who wants to carry on legitimately and honestly countenance a thing of that sort? If this is done in the future, and no attention is paid to the protests of the Auditor General in this respect, we shall be going from bad to worse and accentuating the present position. There could be no better index of the position to which we have come by the misuse of loan funds. I wish to discriminate between a rigid, straight-forward policy of using loan funds for developmental works and deriving revenue from them which goes to pay interest and sinking fund, and makes no increasing call on the ordinary revenue derived from taxation and the policy to which I have just referred. In 1902 the year with which the Treasurer compared the present to try and make the present year show to advantage the sinking fund charges absorbed 19 per cent. of the revenue : in 1905-6, the first year of the present Government, the interest and sinking fund absorbed 23 per cent. ; in 1907-8, 27 per cent. ; and for the half year ended December, 1908, 31 per cent. ; and this item is increasing.

As a matter of fact since the present Government have been in office the interest and sinking fund charges we have to pay on loans have absorbed an increase of 8 per cent. This is sufficiently serious to demand the attention of members and it shows that there is a lack of wisdom, a shortsightedness, and a looseness in the Government's expenditure from the General Loan Fund. Before this House gives authorisation for the raising of a loan which will increase the indebtedness of the State and will place more burdens on the shoulders of the people, we should be assured that the position will not recur, and that there will not be this great increase in percentage in interest and sinking fund ; and that whatever policy of loan authorisation we commit ourselves to, the money will be wisely expended so that in a few years we might hope to see it bringing in that revenue which will maintain the balance between the revenue and the interest and sinking fund charges. It may be urged that the increase in percentage is due to the fact that there has been a decline in revenue. As a matter of fact the decline of revenue in the term during which the percentage has increased 8 per cent. has been £182,298 ; and while it may be claimed that the reduction in revenue derived from the Commonwealth is responsible for that, I would impress upon the Premier that it is not responsible for the whole of the reduction. As a matter of fact the decline in the amount received from the Commonwealth was only £119,000 ; so that, apart from that, we have gone to the bad to the extent of £63,000. While that is so, we have increased our indebtedness in those three years by the amount of two and a half millions. Although we make a public boast that we are expending this money in reproductive works, while we have increased our indebtedness to 2½ millions, our revenue has declined by £182,000.

The Premier : You must recollect that the trading concerns provide interest for the whole of the debt.

Mr. BATH : Yes, but we have to provide sinking fund. The Treasurer in his attempt to show that the indebtedness per head of the population is less now

than in 1902, ingeniously juggled with the figures.

The Treasurer: Less in March 1910, than in 1902.

Mr. BATH: The Treasurer said that the indebtedness per head of the population on the 30th June last was £66 12s. 9d. Since then there was the flotation of £650,000, and by the 31st of December, the indebtedness per head of the population had increased to £68 1s. 7d. The Treasurer added that that did not by any means constitute a record so far as Western Australia was concerned, as on the 30th of June, 1902, the indebtedness was £69 16s. 5d. per head. If the Treasurer is going to make a comparison with 1902, it should be on an equality, and in order to make it appear that our debt on 30th June, was only £66, instead of £69 as shown in the returns provided in the *Statistical Abstract*, he deducted from the net indebtedness the amount of the loans not raised or utilised.

The Treasurer: Loans which had not been received; never raised.

Mr. BATH: If the Treasurer wanted to make a comparison on that basis, he should have credited the year 1902 with the loans not raised then.

The Treasurer: There were no loans unraised then.

Mr. BATH: There was the sum of £1,050,000.

The Treasurer: I made a comparison with the 31st of December, 1902, and included that sum.

Mr. BATH: If the same allowance had been made for that year, the debt per head of the population in June, 1902 would only have been £63 6s. The debt was never greater than it is now. In the year in question the Treasurer did not deduct the sum of £1,050,000. We cannot attach any importance to the Treasurer as a prophet for, in introducing the Loan Bill of 1906, he indulged in certain prophecies; for instance, he told us that at the end of June, 1908, the population of the State would be 283,000. He was not making allowance for the fact that his Government would be in power and that the percentage would therefore drop back considerably. He did not know that in one year we were going to

lose population by excess of departures over arrivals, and that we could only show an increase by excess of births over deaths. He also pointed out that at the end of the financial year, supposing the amount had been raised, which it had been with the exception of £18,000, the debt per head of the population would only be £66 3s. 5d.; whereas as a matter of fact we find it is £69 16s. 5d. These comparisons of the debt per head of the population are likely to mislead. We cannot safely put as big a debt per head of the population on the unit in Western Australia now, and carry it with the same security we did even in 1902, for the reason that our population is made up of much greater percentage of children who are not earning money, who are not assisting to carry the burden, and who, in fact, up to the age of 15 and 16 years are really a charge upon the community for the provision of those educational facilities which will fit them to be citizens later on. Under these circumstances such a comparison is erroneous. But taking the comparison for what it is worth, we have at present a great increase in the amount of debt per head of the population. The increase is the result of the loan authorisations in 1906, and we will have a big increase per head of the population as the result of the authorisations which we are now asked to pass, an increase which will be all the more serious because we have got to that position now where our revenue only suffices to pay interest and sinking fund and pay our ordinary administration expenses. We have not the slightest margin, and we are almost on the verge of trouble as far as the finances are concerned. We have a proposition in the present Bill which seeks to reduce the sinking fund to one-half per cent. I do not know of anything which could be such a confession of failure and inability to meet our obligations; an advertisement of the very worst nature on the eve of our application to the London market for a new loan. One recognises in view of the unfortunate result of the last flotation, that we do not want to go to the London market with our hands as it were tied behind our backs.

The Treasurer: It was a good result.

Mr. BATH : When it is necessary to leave 90 per cent in the hands of the underwriters one cannot regard it as a good result. I certainly do not agree with the Treasurer that it was a good result in view of the favourable circumstances under which, as far as the market was concerned, the loan was launched. To seek to raise an additional amount and at the same time tell them that the provision we previously made in the way of sinking fund cannot be continued in the future, is, as I have already said, the confession of failure which is not going to raise our credit in the London market. We are told about the great security we have for our loans. I heard the member for Swan some time ago declare that there was no need for a sinking fund in connection with the railways. We have in the information supplied by a gentleman with whom the hon. member is acquainted, Mr. Harper—a gentleman whose opinion can be given a considerable degree of weight—in regard to Brennan's invention, the mono-rail, the patent rights of which have been offered to the Commonwealth—

The Premier : And which have been refused.

Mr. BATH : It is a question of money. If within the next 20 years—I am allowing a big margin—that invention becomes a commercial success, if the mono-rail becomes an established fact and will provide for the carriage of produce and passengers, then our existing railways will be so much scrap.

Mr. Jacoby : No. A large proportion of the permanent way will still be used.

Mr. BATH : If the hon. gentleman has read anything about the invention he will know that it will mean a complete revolution in the method of travelling, and the alleged security for those lines which the hon. gentleman said requires no sinking fund — —

Mr. Jacoby : Will not that apply to the private railways of Great Britain ?

Mr. BATH : They do what we are not doing : they make provision for a very ample reserve fund.

Mr. Nanson : Not the English railways.

Mr. BATH : Then the English Railways differ from ours.

Mr. Jacoby : I have not seen any figures which show a reserve fund.

Mr. BATH : Anyhow in other places there is a big reserve fund to meet this possibility, and we find that anywhere where they are up-to-date they have no scruple about scrapping obsolete methods in favour of those which are more up-to-date and more effective. Whatever private enterprise does, will the hon. member tell me that it will be a good thing for future generations that if this invention or any other development—we might say traffic in the air—supersedes our present means of locomotion, will not the value of our assets disappear by reason of their uselessness ?

Mr. Jacoby : Still it would be better than a war loan for which no sinking fund is provided.

Mr. BATH : As a matter of fact the hon. member knows with regard to war loans the old country has often made provision far and away above the provision we have made for a sinking fund. After the Peninsular War when the debt amounted to some £800,000,000 they reduced it during a period of peace by £200,000,000 and reduced it by a much greater method than a $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. sinking fund would have done. As other wars occurred the debt was again piled up. But do we want to drift into the same position as those countries where the piling up of unproductive burdens has driven a large proportion of the population into the deepest depths of poverty and despair. We do not want to build up that sort of thing in Western Australia : we want to strike out on our own. We want to do better and strike upon an ideal which will lift us far ahead into a position which will be one to be envied, and not one by which on comparison with New South Wales, South Australia, or Victoria it will be possible to say that they are in a slight degree worse off than we are. The Treasurer has admitted what the result of an unwise borrowing policy has been. Queensland had a depression from which she has only recently been lifted by proper financing methods, and although it has been said that her present decision to refrain from borrowing is due to the

borrowing of past years, we know that the continuous Ministry only managed to keep going by covering up existing difficulties by fresh borrowing; and it was only when they found a difficulty in providing interest on these loans that the people of Queensland rose up and threw out the continuous Ministry, recognising that their difficulties had been brought about by the unwise borrowing policy of that Government. The same thing obtained in Victoria. I am not declaiming against the policy of borrowing money for development work which will, within a reasonable period, begin to bring in revenue to provide interest and sinking fund. But this policy of dodging difficulties, of practically deferring to the prejudices of friends and supporters who oppose any re-adjustment of taxation, or any economy in the public service; of borrowing in order that loan moneys may be used where revenue was used before—this is a policy that can only end in disaster and bring us later on face to face with what every other State in the Commonwealth has had to face in the past. I want Western Australia to be beyond the necessity of facing that situation, to have that steady development, and steady progress which is altogether different from the boom and burst policy of the other States. It is with that desire that I criticise this expenditure of loan money on unproductive works. Again, it seems to me there are one or two details in connection with this Loan Bill which are only throwing dust in the eyes of the public. We have here a list in connection with the loan expenditure on authorised works, and included in it we have a reference to the Fremantle dock and slip. It is just as well that we should know what are the proposals of the Government in this direction. We find here that £237,000 has been raised under various appropriations; and of this £105,000 has been reappropriated for other works, leaving an amount of £132,000. The unexpended balance as shown here is £107,637. We have under the heading of "Progress made for expenditure for year ending June, 1908," "borings and investigations, also

sinking of trial shaft completed." And in the proposals for the year ending 30th June, 1909, we have the completion of new slipway which is not part of the dock scheme.

The Treasurer : It had to be removed to a new site.

Mr. BATH : But really it is no part of the dock scheme. It is altogether apart from the provision of a dock.

The Treasurer : No, it had to be removed.

Mr. BATH : We have "removal of slipway, commencement of excavations of dock at Rous Head, and preparation of special plant." We want to know what the Government intend to do, and we do not want this pretence in regard to this work. It is well that the House should be taken into confidence, and be told whether the Government intend to proceed with the work or, in the circumstances, to hang it up until some more fortunate circumstances intervene. I do not think there is much to be gained by further discussion on this Loan Bill, as opportunities for discussion will crop up on the various items. But in regard to railways, which have such a large proportion of the provision under this Bill I wish to say that I believe in the policy of providing railways for the development of the country. But I believe that we want more care exercised to see that this development policy is for the good of the people, and not for the good of the speculators. That is what we want to look to. And the necessity for greater care and greater consideration is proved by the circumstance that in spite of the fact that we have built so many new railways the revenue from railways has declined. There is a screw loose somewhere. The people have been burdened with the extra indebtedness. I am not complaining against that, for I believe that we can carry it with safety so long as the people are securing the advantage in the production of articles, whether from agriculture or from mining industries. But if we are only to expend loan moneys simply that someone shall be enabled to sell undeveloped property at double the price he could get before, then our railway policy is a fraud and a

delusion. I would also like to say that in connection with this, I notice we have a proposition for a railway from Dowerin Eastward. When was the authority of this House sought for the work? We have had no opportunity whatever of discussing it.

The Treasurer: We are only asking authority to raise the money.

The Premier: Did not the last Loan Bill provide authority when only two or three railways had been passed?

Mr. BATH: But if we secure the authority to raise the money, and if Parliament does not agree to the work, will it not mean a re-appropriation? Now I object to these re-appropriations. It is a breach of faith with the House and with those from whom the money is borrowed. I presume that when the proposition for the loan is put in train by the Agent General, some idea is given as to the proposals, and as to how the money is to be expended. I think this House ought to be consulted. We ought to know exactly what the proposition is, what are the results likely to accrue from the construction of the railway, before we are asked to authorise the raising of the money. This is what it amounts to—the Government relies on the fact that they have only to say, "We want to do this," and they may depend on their majority to carry it, whether it is desirable or not.

The Premier: What do you propose—an amount for railways generally?

Mr. BATH: I propose that the Bill be introduced for the specific railway; then when the work is authorised we can raise the money.

The Premier: You cannot go to the market at any time—there are certain favourable times.

Mr. BATH: Well we can adapt the legislation to the proper time for going on the market. This is a vague proposal. It says "A railway from Dowerin, Eastward." I do not know whether it is going near the property of the member for Kanowna. But this proposed railway Eastward from Dowerin may run through desert; it may run through sand plain; we have no knowledge whatever. We did inspect the Dowerin railway after it

was constructed, and we ran through sand plain here and there, and when we got to the end we asked where the good land was and were told it was over the hill.

The Premier: That has been a paying line.

Mr. BATH: I do not think it has paid expenses yet, not according to the reports submitted. However, I do not want to weary the House by dissertations on these railways. Probably we will have another opportunity of dealing with them, but it appears to me to be putting the cart before the horse, and it appears to me, as in other propositions, that we want more detailed information of the Government's intentions before the House should be called upon to give authorisation for this large sum of money.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair; the *Treasurer* in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Contribution to Sinking Fund:

Mr. BATH: As this was a controversial point he would ask the *Treasurer* to report progress.

Progress reported

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 2nd February; *Mr. Daglish* in the Chair.

Mr. TAYLOR: Without any desire to detain the Committee at any length there were certain votes in the Estimates against which he desired to raise protest. There was an item of about £25,000 for the Fremantle dock. It was his intention to oppose that item if he were the only member taking that course, and his principal reason for doing so was the stringency of the finances of the State at the present time. Considering this fact, we were not warranted in embarking upon that expenditure. His opinion might be most objectionable to some of

his friends sitting alongside of him, but that did not worry him, for he was convinced that we could well wait for at least two or three years before spending so large an amount on a work, the progress of which might well be delayed for a time. The work should not be continued until we had in our State that financial stability which would warrant an expenditure of that character. One must not forget that expenditure of money was absolutely necessary in the mining and agricultural areas, and this fact should be taken into consideration when the item was being considered. Another matter to which he took exception was the manner in which the Loan Estimates were grouped. Under the vote for mining development a sum was set apart for expenditure in the Eastern goldfields. It was unfair that the sum should be allocated in that manner, as it gave into the hands of the Minister for Mines the power to distribute that vote among the various mining centres in the Eastern Goldfields exactly as he thought fit. It must not be forgotten that embraced in the term "Eastern Goldfields" were such large and important centres as Kalgoorlie, Menzies, Mount Margaret and Norseman, and it would have been far better had the Minister in fixing this grant, set out in the Loan Estimates that a certain sum of money should be expended in each of these mining centres rather than that the one lump sum should be allocated to the Eastern Goldfields, and thus leave it to the Minister to use his discretion as to what amount should be expended in the various centres. It was not fair to the Minister himself that this course should have been adopted, for it might be said, and, in fact, it had been said, that the Minister used the power in that direction against the best interests of certain parts of the Eastern Goldfields. Were he a member of the Ministry at the present time he would speak on this question exactly as he did now. He would refer at no greater length to the Loan Estimates on the general discussion, because he knew that members on both sides of the House were anxious to get through the work and let the Government get into recess until next July.

Mr. NANSON : It had not been his intention to speak generally on the Loan Estimates, for he recognised that it was more convenient to take the items as they stood ; but he had found that an item upon which he particularly wished to speak had no number opposite to it on the Estimates, and, therefore, if he did not refer to the question now, he might not be given an opportunity to do so later on. He referred to the Upper Chapman railway. It would be well to remind the Committee that provision was made for the Upper Chapman Railway Bill on the Loan Bill of 1906, when the sum of £16,000 was included in the Schedule of that Bill for the purpose, and it was expected, therefore, that no time would be lost in introducing the necessary railway Bill and proceeding with the work. As members were aware, it was not until this session that a Bill authorising the construction of the railway was introduced, and both in this Chamber and in another place it passed almost without a dissentient voice, and certainly without a division. It was generally supposed, and indeed there was the assurance from the Premier in a speech he delivered at Geraldton, and an assurance which was given to him (Mr. Nanson) in private interviews, that it was the intention of the Government, immediately the Bill authorising the construction of the railway was passed by Parliament, to make provision on the Loan Estimates, so that the work of constructing the railway might be proceeded with without any unnecessary delay. When one took into account the strong justification that existed for the construction of that line and the amount of revenue it would produce to the Government railways, there was the strongest reason why there should be no delay in proceeding with the work. The line was only a short one, the distance being between 20 and 30 miles, and the sum involved in its construction was under £40,000. If the Government showed a reasonable amount of energy in pushing forward this work, the line might be completed and ready for traffic to bring the wheat down at the time of the next harvest, and he did not hesitate to say that a

considerable amount would be recouped to the Government in respect of the expenditure. He did not base his contention in regard to this work merely for the revenue which would accrue to the Railway Department, but he based it upon the still stronger belief that the Premier in the most emphatic manner possible, when at Geraldton some months ago assured the people on a public occasion, the time of the Geraldton show, that it was the intention of the Government to proceed with this work without delay. As far as introducing the Bill and using such power as the Government possessed to persuade the House to carry it, there was no complaint against the action of the Government, but there was a very strong expectation that provision would be made upon the Loan Estimates, so that the work might be carried out. He urged upon the Treasurer that an undoubted pledge was made by the Government with regard to this work. The work should not be delayed, and the necessary provision should be made on the Loan Estimates in order to carry out the promise that tenders would be immediately called. He could not but think that the omission to make any provision on this year's Estimates for commencing that work, must be due to an oversight on the part of the officers responsible for the Estimates. In the absence of any explanation, he could not think that the Premier, after the assurance he had given, would not make provision for the work. He brought the matter forward now, so that he might get an assurance from the Government that there would be no delay in calling for tenders. Then, if the tender should not happen to be satisfactory with regard to the amount, the Government could carry out the work by day labour. While a great deal had been done during the last few years in the direction of constructing agricultural railways in various parts of the State, this northern part was still without an agricultural line, although provision was made in the Loan Bill of 1906 for carrying out this work. He hoped the Treasurer would be able to give him an assurance that it was expected that this long delayed work would be

immediately put in hand. Funds were available because the amount provided in the 1906 Bill was still unexpended.

The TREASURER : The Engineer-in-Chief and his officers went carefully into the estimated expenditure of public works up to the end of the financial year, and this was then embodied in a column in the general summary. With regard to this railway the hon. member could rely that the Premier once having given an assurance, the work would be carried out. The position however, was that we could not get rails and fastenings for this various works until at the earliest about June next.

Mr. Nanson : The Premier assured me that he had rails and fastenings which could be made available for this work.

The TREASURER : Rails and fastenings were ordered but they could not arrive before June next. Besides, plans and specifications had to be prepared, and these and other preliminary works could not be carried out in a week. He assured the hon. member that there would be no delay, and as far as these Estimates were concerned, they contained provision for this work under the heading of rails and fastenings. A small line like this was different from a bigger undertaking where preliminary work would be undertaken before the rails and fastenings came to hand. We could not on a small line do much until the rails and fastenings were available.

Mr. Nanson : How long will it take to construct the line ?

The TREASURER : From the date of commencement of construction, between six and nine months. He could not give a more definite assurance than that.

Mr. Nanson : I was assured that there would be no difficulty in making an early start ; I am sorry the Premier is not here.

The TREASURER : Rails and fastenings were on the water, and would be here about June. The hon. member could not expect the whole of the Works Department to be turned on to his railway ; he must be satisfied with the assurance that provision was contained on these Estimates, which would be all that was necessary up to the end of the present financial year. Then there had

been an alteration in the route. A new survey had been made, plans and specifications drawn and tenders called. The work would be pressed on with as fast as possible. It was always the way—everybody wanted his particular railway first. The member should be satisfied to take the assurance of the Premier that no time would be lost. If we could commence the work before the end of the financial year it would be done.

Vote—*Departmental*, £65,918:

Item: Salaries, Public Works Department, £40,329:

Mr. BATH: In the discussion on the Loan Bill he had pointed out the increase in the amount allocated to a loan vote by way of salaries. This was a convenient way of showing an apparent saving, while as a matter of fact it was not a saving at all. It was characteristic of the economic methods of the Government.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.24 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Friday, 5th February, 1909.

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

BILL — MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Withdrawn.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): I ask leave to withdraw this Bill. It was printed rather

hurriedly and I find considerable alteration is necessary. I think it would be better to withdraw the Bill and introduce a fresh one.

Bill, by leave, withdrawn.

BILL—LIMITED PARTNERSHIPS.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) in moving the second reading of the Bill said: It is not necessary for me to speak at any length, firstly, because the principle involved in the Bill has been adopted now for some time in England. It is a Bill that was under discussion for a number of years in Great Britain, and was approved of by the different Chambers of Commerce there, and eventually passed the Imperial Parliament. This measure, with a slight alteration which does not interfere with the principle of the Bill, is a reprint of the Imperial Act. Then, again, the Bill was introduced and passed through this House in a previous session. It has just been passed by another branch of Parliament and has come to us. I admit it is somewhat late to ask the House to assent to a Bill of this character, but for the reasons I have mentioned it is not unreasonable, even at this hour, to take the Bill into consideration. Although the Standing Orders have been suspended, I do not intend to press the Bill through to-day, because we shall have to sit on another day. If members did not become acquainted with the provisions of the Bill when it was before the House previously, they will have time to study the measure and become acquainted with the provisions; and those who remember the measure of last session will have time to refresh their memories. This is a copy, almost an exact copy, of the Imperial Act of 1907. It is a small Bill with some slight alteration.

Hon. R. W. Pennefather: Anything original?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Any alteration? No.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: Anything novel?