

General will ask the Chief Electoral Officer for an explanation of this matter. Certainly that officer is not showing much zeal over the matter.

Hon. P. Collier: He is too lazy to do anything.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know about that, but as he is not displaying that zeal which he should be doing, he is not likely to die of heart disease.

The Attorney General: I will make inquiries.

Vote put and passed.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore [11.24]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to Thursday, the 21st November.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.25 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 21st November, 1918.

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

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

#### MOTION—PACIFIC ISLANDS' CONTROL.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [4.36]: I move—

That this House declares that it is essential to the future safety and welfare of Australia that the captured German possessions in the Pacific Ocean, which are now occupied by the Australian and New Zealand troops, should not in any circumstances be restored to Germany, and that in the consideration and determination of proposals affecting the control of these islands, Australia should be consulted.

There is no need for me to elaborate this question; the motion speaks for itself. A similar motion has been passed by the Federal Parliament, and it is thought that the hands of the Federal Government might be strengthened by the State adopting this motion. Undoubtedly all Australians will feel that it would be a menace to the safety of Australia if those islands were to revert to German control. The

possession of those islands by a power which has shown during the last four years that it is desirous of obtaining worldwide control, with a particularly jealous eye on Australia, would be distinctly inimical to the Commonwealth. At least the Federal Government should be consulted in regard to the determination of any proposals that may be made concerning the future control of those islands. The motion fully embodies the views of all Australians who are proud of the fact that the Australian and New Zealand forces were able to secure possession of those islands during the early stages of the war. One could speak at length on a subject such as this, but I think that as the object of the motion is merely to back up the Federal Government in any determination they may resolve upon—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Has this been introduced at their request?

The PREMIER: No. I have not had any official request. However, as this has been determined on by the Federal Government, and as it has been suggested in the Federal Parliament that the States should express an opinion on the subject, I desire without further comment to submit the motion.

Mr. BROWN (Subiaco) [4.39]: I second the motion.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.40]: Let me say at the outset that with the object and purpose of the motion I am in entire sympathy. There is no need to waste words in regard to the position of the Pacific Islands and the danger it would spell to the future life of the Commonwealth if Germany should ever be permitted to again get a footing there. I do not wish to see Germany again a back-door neighbour of Australia. Having made myself clear on that point, I must admit that I question the wisdom of a motion of this character being brought forward in a State Parliament. Australia has already spoken on this question through the one Parliament which is entitled to speak in the name of Australia; our national Parliament has passed a motion dealing with this matter, and for my part I think it would be a mistake for the State Parliaments to take up matters of international concern arising out of the war.

The Colonial Treasurer: The acting Prime Minister has asked us to do this.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am glad to have that explanation. As a matter of fact, I knew something of this. Moreover, I know, or at least I would be prepared to swear from the wording of the motion, that the acting Prime Minister in his turn was asked by the Prime Minister in Great Britain to pass this motion.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It would be better to gag him.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Much better. That is the position. Why is this motion submitted to the State Parliament? I can understand the national Parliament passing it, although I regret that even that Parliament should have taken such a step. The Australian National Parliament is the first Parliament in the British Empire, in fact, the first among the Allied countries, to pass a motion dealing with any of the problems that will have to be settled at the Peace Conference.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): None of them have a similar question to deal with.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They all have questions equally affecting the national life.

The Colonial Treasurer: America, in her newspapers, is speaking loudly enough.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am talking, not about newspapers, but about Parliaments. In all the wars of history where there has been a number of nations engaged on the one side we know perfectly well that in the final clean-up there has been friction occasionally ending even in wars amongst those previously fighting together. Never in the whole world's history has any body of men been called upon to face such difficulties and problems as must confront the men who will comprise the Peace Conference to be held shortly in Europe. If then, as we know from our reading of history, difficulties ending even in war itself have arisen amongst nations that have been fighting side by side, what are the possibilities ahead of us in this case? There are a greater number of nations concerned on the Allies' side in the settlement of this war than have ever been banded together in the past, and each of them has its own particular viewpoint. The national interests of some of the Allied nations are as wide apart as East and West. When the Peace Conference is faced with a situation of this kind, is it wise that those present should perhaps be hampered in their troubles and have their difficulties increased by the passing of such a motion as this? If every one of the nations interested, America, France, Belgium, Italy, Serbia, and Great Britain and her dependencies, were in their Parliaments to take up problems akin to those with which the Peace Conference will be faced, such as territorial adjustments, annexations and indemnities, and were such Parliaments to pass a motion binding the hands of the delegates from those countries attending the Peace Conference, what hope would there be of a settlement? The spirit animating that conference will have to be one of give and take or one of compromise, and if the hands of the delegates are tied by specific instructions from the Parliaments of their countries I fear they are not going to arrive as easily and as amicably at a settlement as we all hope will be the case. I believe that this motion is the outcome of the splenetic eruptions of Mr. Hughes in Great Britain during the last few weeks.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is a tool of the Northcliffe Press.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is a calamity that in these days Australia should be represented in the Old Country by a man of the temperament—I will put it in no harsher way—of Mr. Hughes. During the last week or two after four years of war, in which Australia has earned for herself a standing and a credit equal to that of any other nation engaged in the great struggle, we have seen the spectacle of the Commonwealth being degraded in the eyes of other nations of the world by the actions of her representative, the Prime Minister in the Old Country. We have had the shocking example of Mr. Hughes telling the Prime Minister of Great Britain is plain language, that he was a liar. Mr. Lloyd George made a

certain statement, and Mr. Hughes a day or two later contradicted him point blank. In words, which were certainly not Parliamentary, he called Mr. Lloyd George a liar.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): He said the statement was not in accordance with facts.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That amounts to saying that he was not telling the truth. In Parliament we say that a statement is not in accordance with the facts, but in the streets we say that the man making that statement is a liar. That is the difference. Mr. Hughes has been raging around England during the past week or two making a pitiable exhibition of himself, and unfortunately of Australia as well, all because he was not consulted, so he says, at the Conference which settled the terms of the Armistice. Now, fearing that he will not have a seat at the Peace Conference he has, I venture to say, cabled out this motion from England in order that it might be passed in the Parliaments of Australia. I am firmly convinced that Mr. Hughes instructed his Government to bring this motion forward in order that he might have backing, and some show of justification for the pitiable exhibition he has been making of himself during the past week or two. There is no doubt about that. We have only to read the comments of practically the whole of the Press of Great Britain with regard to the attitude adopted by Mr. Hughes.

Mr. Davies: You cannot always accept as gospel statements in the Press.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so, but our common sense as practical and reasonable men helps us in making up our minds. Mr. Hughes fears that he will not be admitted to the Peace Conference, and in order that he may be helped to get there, and that he may be able to show that he has had some justification for his actions, or that Australia is behind him in the complaints that he has been making, he takes this step. That is one reason why I do not like the motion. As the position stands, the people of Great Britain have summed up Mr. Hughes fairly well, and knowing him as they do they are not disposed to blame the people of Australia for what he has done. Having taken up an attitude which I say, to put it mildly, is regrettable, and fearing that the people of Great Britain will regard the opinions he has expressed as being his own opinions, without Australia being behind him, he wished to get some backing not only from the National Parliament of Australia, but also from the State Parliaments as well, in order that he might say to the people of Great Britain, "Here you are. The Federal Parliament of Australia and every State Parliament in the Commonwealth are behind me."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And why not the municipal councils?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why not carry the thing further and bring in municipal councils, road boards, progress committees, and so on, ad infinitum?

The Minister for Works: What about the Trades Hall?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister for Works might leave out the Trades Hall altogether.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): If it is for the good of Australia why should not Mr. Hughes be backed up?

Hon. P. COLLIER: If Mr. Hughes was not in London at all, the rights and interests of Australia would be just as well preserved by the delegates representing Great Britain, as if there were a million Hughes's at the Peace Conference.

Mr. Holman: Perhaps better.

Hon. P. COLLIER: For that reason I propose to move an amendment to this motion. I consider that the inclusion of all the words after "Germany" constitute an insult to the people of Great Britain. Have we not been told a thousand times by the representative statesmen of the Old Country that Australia will be consulted?

Mr. Teesdale: That ought to be enough.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Australia has been consulted. We have had a representative at the Inner War Cabinet, and in connection with everything that has transpired for months past Australia has been consulted. The inference to be drawn from the concluding portion of this motion is that the representative men of Great Britain, who will attend the Peace Conference, are so thoughtless, so ungrateful, and so unmindful of the interests of the people of Australia, that unless we specifically carry this motion, urging that Australia shall be consulted, her interests will be entirely neglected. Will anyone say for a moment that Great Britain is not just as much alive to the necessity of keeping Germany out of the Pacific as is Australia? Australia is part of the British Empire.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It is a long way from the Old Country.

Hon. P. COLLIER: My honourable friend has suddenly become Australianised. He was for the Empire until quite recently, and now he is talking from the Australian national point of view.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I have never talked from any other point of view.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Is that so? I am prepared to say that Australia's interests will be in no way neglected by Great Britain in anything that transpires in regard to the settlement of the peace terms, and that they will be more taken into consideration as a result of the passing of this motion. What will the Prime Minister and the people of Great Britain think when they read the concluding portion of this motion? I endorse the first portion of the motion down to the word "Germany," although I think it is a waste of time for State Parliaments to carry it. If State Parliaments push themselves into matters which do not concern them we shall have municipal councils and all the other local authorities doing the same thing. When we say that the Islands should not be returned to Germany we go quite far enough. To add that Australia should be consulted is to imply that Great Britain is prepared to do something harmful or detrimental to the welfare and best interests of Australia, unless Great Britain is compelled to do something by the passing of this motion.

Mr. Teesdale: It is an insult to England.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is an insult to the men who will be in charge of Great Britain's interests at the Peace Conference.

Mr. Davies: There is a fundamental difference between the opinion of the people in the Old Country and those in Australia with regard to coloured labour.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We are not dealing with that.

Mr. Davies: We may do so when we come to the question of the control of the Islands.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That question may arise at the Peace Conference, but does not affect the disposal of the Islands in the Pacific.

The Attorney General: It would not affect the question of the sovereignty of the Islands.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no difference of opinion between the people of Great Britain and of Australia as to whether Germany should have these Islands or not.

Mr. Draper: There is a difference in England itself.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There may be, but I do not think there is any volume of public opinion in England, that is worth consideration—

Mr. Draper: That is a question.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Which would indicate that these Islands should be returned to Germany. Does the hon. member suggest that there is any considerable section of the people of Great Britain who would say that these Islands ought to be returned to Germany?

Mr. Draper: There is undoubtedly a section of the people in Great Britain of that opinion.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have not heard or read of such a thing. I have read that there is great difference of opinion in Great Britain with regard to the peace terms and the general conditions, but I do not think I have ever read of any representative man in Great Britain, or any representative body or section of the people in Great Britain, declaring that these Islands ought to be returned to Germany.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): They have said that in effect. I have seen it in the "Daily Mail."

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have not. We do know that the responsible men who will represent Great Britain at the Peace Conference have never expressed such an opinion. No man with any sense of responsibility would think of handing over to Germany, islands which she could use as a base for future operations. I can only think that this motion is an instruction from the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth in an endeavour to bolster up his wounded pride and dignity, and to re-establish himself in public opinion in the Old Country over the errors and mistakes he has been making. I heartily endorse and agree with every word the Federal member for Perth Mr. Fowler, has uttered in the Federal Parliament during the past week or two with regard to the actions of our Prime Minister in Great Britain. I move an amendment—

That all the words after "Germany" be struck out.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.0]: I second the amendment.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [5.0]: I support the motion, because I feel convinced that any person who realises the terrible risks Australia has run through the occupation of these Pacific Islands by Germany must recognise the necessity for the motion, which I hope will be carried and have the effect of showing the world that we here are alive to the absolute need for, as far as possible, preventing any repetition of the enemy preparations of the past, either naval or military, in the vicinity of Australia. All of us are conscious of British magnanimity to a beaten foe, and I fear that at this time, when, as mentioned by the leader of the Opposition, the peace conference will be faced with such tremendous problems, the question of these islands may be classed as a minor issue. Certainly, I see no harm in carrying the motion, because it will go forth to the world as an intimation that Australia, which has done such noble work in the great war, considers itself entitled to be consulted, and to receive special consideration, in this very question. The meaning I attach to the word "consulted" in the motion is that the Imperial authorities will make themselves thoroughly acquainted with Australia's desires; and we have a just right to claim that our desires should be well known at least to those who still have the handling of this very important question. There are other countries besides Germany; and I take it every man in Australia would wish it to go forth that we are conscious of the risks Australia runs from other peoples than those which we have defeated in this war. I feel that the motion is amply justified. As to Mr. Hughes's statements in London, I give the Commonwealth Prime Minister credit for diplomacy.

Hon. P. Collier: What? Anything but that.

Mr. PIESSE: I feel sure that the card Mr. Hughes is playing to-day, will be productive of results more beneficial than expected by his one-time friends.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is only playing party politics.

Mr. PIESSE: I give the man this honour, that his object is not to fly his own kite, or to make himself famous. I feel sure that Mr. Hughes has the interests of Australia at heart.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [5.4]: While I fully appreciate the manner in which the leader of the Opposition has put forward his amendment, I personally would be glad to see it defeated; and I will give just a few reasons which appeal to me. The question is not whether Mr. Hughes has, or has not, acted diplomatically. With me it is not a question whether Mr. Hughes, who has made mistakes, should be whitewashed. With me it is a question that the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, whoever he may be, the man representing Australia at Home, should have some knowledge of how a matter of this kind is regarded by the people of Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Mr. Hughes is only the fly in the ointment now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The leader of the Opposition said very clearly—and I hardly think there will be a dissident in

Australia from his views—that as regards New Guinea and those other Pacific Islands, whether we are Australian born, or residents of Australia like myself, no country but Australia must have a say in the disposition of those islands. If anyone else has a voice in their disposal, it will be a menace for the Australian generations yet to come. We do not for a single moment say that Great Britain or her counsellors would wilfully disregard the interests of this great island continent. We do not for a single moment say but that they have a great deal of information on the subject. But I say—and I think many will agree with me—that even now in the Old Country a great proportion of the population do not understand Australia, and certainly do not understand Australian sentiment. To come a little nearer home: here we have in Western Australia part of the nucleus of that great nation which in the time to come—never mind the immediate present—is going to rule the South Pacific. There is no mistake about that. But even we Western Australians, as portion of the Australian Commonwealth, are not understood in the Eastern States, although there are many Eastern States people who have businesses here or have the closest commercial relations with Western Australia. Those conditions have existed for years and years, and yet the bulk of the people on the eastern side of Australia do not understand Western Australia. I think that must be admitted as an indisputable fact, which no one can deny. One certainly cannot hold, as I have held, the position of manager in Western Australia for an Eastern firm, whose only idea was to get what dividends they could out of the place, nor can one have been, as I have been, Commissioner for Railways in this State, without discovering that the leading people of Melbourne and Sydney know Western Australia only as a locality from which they may occasionally draw profits, and if this ignorance exists in Australia as to Western Australia surely it is reasonable to assume similar absence of knowledge of Australia and Australian sentiment which exists in the British Isles.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are you dealing with this matter as a commercial man?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, I am not. I am dealing with it as a Britisher, and I claim the support of the hon. member interjecting, who is also a Britisher.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am dealing with the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Possibly the wording of this motion might be improved; I do not know; other members can speak as to that. But I consider that the passing of some such motion as this must strengthen the hands of the representative of Australia in Great Britain to-day. Even assuming that our representative there has made mistakes, even assuming, for the sake of argument, that he has exhibited a certain degree of overweening conceit, as perhaps is only natural in the representative of a continent like this, whose men have made for themselves names which will never perish in the history of the world, surely we can forgive him. But, even if we will not

forgive him, we must support him when he is working in the interests of Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is questionable whether he is doing that or not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It may be a matter of opinion. I ask the hon. member to regard the question with a little broader charity than is shown in viewing it simply in the light of the fact that Australia's representative at Home to-day is Mr. Hughes, with whose political views the hon. member does not agree.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am not taking that into consideration at all.

Mr. Foley: Mr. Hughes himself would not ask for the charity of anybody.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I want hon. members to look at the matter in this way: assuming that the whole political arrangement of Australia prior to Nationalism still existed—and Mr. Hughes' views regarding labour differ very considerably from mine—at a crisis of this nature I should feel it my duty, quite irrespective of my State views, to support the man who represents the great majority of the Australian people. I have lived in Australia now for 35 years, and I know a good deal about it; and I say that those who were governing Australia years and years ago made a mistake when they permitted the occupation of a portion of New Guinea by the German people. Just as the German nation desired by this war to correct the mistake they had made in not taking more of the iron fields near Briey, Longwy, and Verdun, so we, through our Empire's Government, should now redress the mistake made years ago in permitting the occupation of any island contiguous to Australia by any nations other than those flying the British flag. One remark of the deputy leader of the Country party (Mr. Piessé) appealed to me very much. The hon. member did not deal with the matter at length, and it will bear amplifying. He referred to "other peoples." Apart from the Australian and the British peoples, I care not what people may occupy the Pacific islands; such occupation would be a permanent menace to Australia. We may as well be frank on the matter, and let it be known that the fear of Australia as regards her northern coast is whether other people may not some day wish to occupy territory there. We have our opportunity now—at least I think we have—of representing to the British Government that the view of Australia is that either Britain herself or else Australia must occupy New Guinea, and no other nation must be permitted to do so.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [5.12]: I do not know that there has ever been any serious question as to the wisdom of Great Britain and her dependencies continuing to occupy the islands which have been won by the valour of Australasian arms. That is not in debate at all. We can all go into hysterics over the danger of having Germany at our back door, although I regard it as unwise at this juncture to discuss even that phase of the question. Those who have to debate and settle the future geography of the world have much to do with it.

worried in any sense by resolutions from us or from any other irresponsible body; because, so far as the shaping of the future geography is concerned, this Parliament has no more responsibility than has a municipal council. The whole weight of authority is centred in the Commonwealth Parliament; the whole responsibility rests with the Commonwealth Government. We as members of this Assembly can effect nothing.

Mr. Thomson: But surely we can back up the Commonwealth authorities.

Hon. T. WALKER: Surely they need no backing up. They speak for us, and in our name, and in the name of the whole Commonwealth. Once they have spoken officially, they need no backing up by the State voice. That is what Federation is for, to save independent subsidiary bodies from participating in debate, from confusing the issue. The only voice that can be heard in Great Britain upon such a subject as this is the voice of the Commonwealth. Moreover, this motion looks like manufactured opinion. It has that appearance. Because of that, it may do more harm than good if carried. Because of the consciousness that there is an effort to manufacture public opinion in Australia, this opinion will be discounted when it reaches the Home authorities.

The Colonial Treasurer: But would you not say that this opinion does not require manufacturing, since it is in the mind of every one of us at the present time?

Hon. T. WALKER: Undoubtedly; and the opinion has been spoken throughout this Commonwealth; therefore it is an insult to this Assembly to ask us to do something that has been done already. We are asked to pass a resolution which has already been carried, word for word, by the Commonwealth Parliament. We are perhaps interfering with a free expression of opinion. I am under the impression that what we say here, one way or the other, will scarcely be read in England, but supposing it had some effect, what is our ideal of the issue of the Peace Conference—that from the date the document is signed by the nations attending, the terrors of the past will be over for ever. If there be anything in the intimations voiced by the principal nations of the world amongst the Allies, we shall have a guarantee that a force, independent of separate nationalities, will police the whole world and render the menace such as we had in the past, by the occupation of the islands of the Pacific, impossible.

The Colonial Treasurer: Do you honestly think that?

Mr. Thomson: We shall have no guarantee.

Hon. T. WALKER: Is there a guarantee with anything?

Mr. Thomson: Not with Germany.

Hon. T. WALKER: We are speaking with all the nations of the world; we are not dealing with Germany; and at a time when peace is approaching we can sink a little of our bitterness and consider the great difference between Germany represented by the Kaiser and the military class, and Germany represented

The Colonial Treasurer. They are not stable; we do not know that they exist.

Hon. T. WALKER: The world knows that prior to 1779 it could not be deemed possible to have a Republic whose achievement we celebrated yesterday in this very Chamber.

Mr. Harrison: And still we are assured that the same hands are pulling the strings.

Hon. T. WALKER: I do not understand.

Mr. Harrison: The military autocracy.

Hon. T. WALKER: That, like all other parasites, must be destroyed. The battle is for democracy.

Mr. Thomson: What about Russia?

Hon. T. WALKER: The experience of Russia is the experience of France in 1790 and 1892. The blessings of this world have never been achieved without travail; we have suffering and disaster before we can get the fruitage. It may be that Germany will have to pass through that. I am firmly convinced she will pass through some of it, but I am just as convinced as I stand here that never in our lifetime or the lifetime of the generations that are to follow will it be possible for Germany to launch upon the world an avalanche of destruction such as we have had in the past few years. Her power has gone, and the nations that were asleep are awake to the realisation of the dangers that beset the whole of humanity. The manhood of nations has been asserted, and I am convinced that an effort—whether successful in its first attempt or not I cannot say—will be made to so direct the world that nations shall live as neighbours and not as hostile rivals. That must be the outcome, otherwise the war has been a failure. The blood of Australians has been shed with that object.

Mr. Davies: How will the White Australia policy be effected?

Hon. T. WALKER: That is a matter for our own Government.

Mr. Davies: Ours or the Home Government?

Hon. T. WALKER: Our Government—the Australian Government. If we are to lose the power of self-government as the result of this war, then the war will have been a disaster instead of a blessing to us. If the war means anything it means that our self-government is more assured than ever it was, that autocratic and military interference is less possible henceforth than ever it was in days gone by. Therefore we have it within our own hands to govern Australia and to preserve our policy of a White Australia. So that question does not come in. It is to assure self-government, and how do we know but that at the Peace Conference a suggestion may be accepted to the effect that even islands like Samoa shall be self-governed, just as Tonga is under the suzerainty of the League of Nations. The Liberians, the Samoans, and the Fijians, are just as capable as the Tongans, and how do we know but that such a policy, which is to be more or less applied in Europe, of giving independence to those various races, will not be the proposal so far as those places are concerned. I personally have every confidence in the wisdom of the statesmen who will meet at the Peace table, and that they will champion the views

so eloquently and humanely expressed by President Wilson and endorsed by the nations of the world, views which have had more force in winning this war than even the long conflict and the courage of the soldiers.

Mr. Smith: It was not that that brought Germany to her knees.

Hon. T. WALKER: It did a lot towards it. Make no mistake, when the history of the war is written we will find it has had a great deal to do with it. The point now is whether we are to use this Parliament at the instigation of Mr. Hughes merely to back him up in his dreams, and whether we are to use this Parliament to make ourselves tools for his glorification. There was a time when all those now barracking for Mr. Hughes would have hanged him to a sour apple tree.

Mr. Thomson: We are not discussing Hughes; what has he to do with it?

Hon. T. WALKER: This is Mr. Hughes and nothing else.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Hughes does not enter into the matter.

Hon. T. WALKER: I am entitled to explain the origin of this motion.

Mr. Thomson: That, then, is the reason for your objection.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. T. WALKER: Mr. Hughes has been taking a certain course in England, as the result of which I noticed a cablegram published in our daily papers to the effect that it would not be possible for all the Dominions to be represented at the Peace Conference, and that the delegates would probably be elected. The chances are that when it comes to electing those who represent the overseas dominions, Mr. Hughes, the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, the author of this motion, may be left out.

The Minister for Works: You would not like that.

Hon. T. WALKER: I object to being made a tool to try and influence the authorities at Home to include Mr. Hughes. I object to this Parliament presuming to dictate to those who have the weighty responsibility of determining how the conference shall be constituted.

Mr. Smith: Did we not do the same thing in connection with Home Rule?

Hon. T. WALKER: There is no similarity at all. We shall be represented; our interests will be considered; we may rest assured of that. Here is a motion which has been sent out, to get what? To get Mr. Hughes on the Peace Conference. There is a danger that he may not be included.

Mr. Thomson: You would be glad of that.

Hon. T. WALKER: Such an interjection shows the character of the hon. member. I yield to no man in my desire for Australian welfare, but I contend that in this proposed action we are lowering Australian dignity, acting the part of a mob in the street, clamouring and crying out that we have no confidence in the statesmen of Great Britain, whimpering and crying before we are hurt. I object to being the tool of even the Prime Minister of Australia, to manufacture evidence of his right to be on the Peace Conference.

Mr. Smith: We have had one lesson about being unprepared.

Hon. T. WALKER: All that we need say in the motion is that the House declares that it is essential to the future safety and welfare of Australia that the captured German possessions in the Pacific Ocean, which are now occupied by Australian and New Zealand troops, shall not in any circumstances be returned to Germany.

Hon. P. Collier: That is sufficient. Does it not cover everything?

Hon. T. WALKER: Now, listen—

And that in consideration and determination of proposals affecting the control of these islands Australia should be consulted.

Mr. Thomson: Why should she not?

Hon. T. WALKER: She should. What is Mr. Hughes in England now for but to be consulted. What is Sir Joseph Cook in England now for but to be consulted? They are consulted; all the facts are placed before the proper authorities and the facts are known. Were not men here before the war for the purpose of learning the whole circumstances? They know as much as they can be told, and to tell them they should consult us—

Hon. P. Collier: It is an insult to the British people. "Unless we ask you, you will not do it."

Hon. T. WALKER: It is exactly saying that. In truth, it is telling Great Britain, "We have no more confidence in you than in Germany, you are friends of Germany, you will give back to them our back doors if you are not held strongly. You will play into the hands of Germany." It is ridiculous; it is making us appear paltry to a degree. Where is the dignity? In the first place it is none of our business, it is the Federal Parliament that is handling all matters like this. In the next place it is an Imperial matter that may be safely trusted in the hands of Imperial statesmen who have always had the welfare of her dependencies at heart. This is for no other object than to tell the British Government that they have to include "Billy" Hughes in the Peace Conference. That is the whole object. It is manufactured like the "bobby" that was placed in Queensland. I believe in the fitness of things. I do not want to presume to do anything that we have no business to do, what is not our right. I do not want to arrogate a responsibility that does not come into this matter. I do not want to pretend what I am not or assert a right and power that are not mine in any sense of the word. There are some who have no sense of fitness, who are cock-sure of anything and everything and who presume to tread in where all the angels fear to tread. I believe in doing what is right.

Mr. Thomson: Combination of effort.

Hon. T. WALKER: You can have all the combination of efforts you like but to tell Lloyd George he must include "Billy" Hughes in this Peace Conference is absurd. It is ridiculous. I trust the House will have more sense than to carry the motion as originally

we show our disapproval of Germany getting back her colonies.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin) [5.35]: Surely if Mr. Hughes is representing Australian opinion, and the member for Kanowna said he was there to be consulted, is it not a wise thing if we can all say it is the opinion of Australia with regard to this particular question that we want expressed. The leader of the Opposition said that we might just as well take the municipalities and the roads boards and consult them. That is just what we should do if we are to have a universal expression of opinion, and I am surprised to hear that view expressed by the leader of the Opposition. If we are to have a universal expression of opinion why should it not be a universal expression of the people in whatever capacity they gather? That is the way to mould a solid opinion. There can be no question that in Australia this view is strongly held. There is nothing that gives a greater cold shiver than to think that these islands may be re-occupied by Germany.

Hon. P. Collier: We all agree with that.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Assume we all agree. Then we say Australia should be consulted. Perhaps it is not a nice word to use, but my mind takes me back when we told Downing-street pretty plainly that in those things which are for the benefit of Australia, Australia had to be consulted and that is how we got self-government. The motion says that we should be consulted. Let us put our consultation on a higher plane. We do not say you must not take any action without consulting us, but let us have behind the decision, the right opinion. I do not like a manufactured opinion because it really is not, it is the actual opinion. Let us be able to say in consultation how this very thing which we are asking for can be carried out.

Hon. P. Collier: And by putting it here we say, "Unless we specifically ask you to consult us we have no faith that you will consult us."

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The leader of the Opposition is straining that point. The motion may be badly expressed but it is not in my mind for a moment or in the mind of anyone in its big and broad aspect that the miswording will have the effect that the leader of the Opposition imagines. When I say I would like to consult with you, Mr. Speaker, and we are dealing with certain matters, and I say we think the House should be consulted, you would not take it as an offence. You would say we like to talk over the views of both sides. We are not dealing only with British statesmen but with all those who will sit at the Peace Conference, and America practically says that Australia should be consulted. They say before anything is done as to the future occupation of the islands and so forth Australia should be consulted, and they go further and say they must be controlled. If we have Australian opinion voiced in consultation, it is not offensive. If they are consulting and Mr. Hughes is representing Australia he will say this is the opinion of Australia. What

I say this, not offensively, that had it been done by someone and not Mr. Hughes and had he not made use of other unwise expressions, I do not think there would have been any opposition in this House. In our hearts we do believe Australia should be consulted.

Hon. P. Collier: We know it will be. It always has been.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Assuming we are going to be consulted, we are only stating a thing that is going to take place. There is no offence in that coming from a people whose hearts are in what they are saying.

Hon. P. Collier: It is going out of your way to tell a man he is honest.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I want the people sitting at the conference table to recognise that they are up against the trouble that we are and that America may be, because these Islands practically do not affect them. But if the Federal Parliament have behind them the united voice of Australia and America—there is going to be a consultation, we want that consultation—what harm can there be and what harm is Parliament doing in backing up the Federal Parliament if it is right? If it is right, on a great national principle like this should it not be one of the functions of this Parliament to express its opinion? It is quite true the Federal Government ought to voice the views of Australia, and we say this little particular portion of Australia which has probably done more in connection with this war than other parts, wants to give her voice. We shall probably suffer more and take a bigger risk, because of the greater coastline which we have, in the occupation of these islands. I think the leader of the Opposition is in accord with the motion. It is only the question of expression and it is only because the leader of the Opposition and his colleagues do think honestly that this is an attempt—

Hon. P. Collier: It conveys an inference to the people of Great Britain—

The COLONIAL TREASURER: May I interpret your thoughts this way? You say this is an attempt to bolster up the opinion of Mr. Hughes. That is the expression that came from yourself and your colleagues.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, not in that way.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We say this is an attempt to bolster up the opinion of Australia, no matter who expresses it.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.46]: I should like to express my admiration of the views of the leader of the Opposition when he places such implicit confidence in the statesmen of England. No doubt all who come from England, or who knew England at all, will share that view. The leader of the Opposition said it would be unwise to hold any definite opinion or make hard and fast conditions before entering on the Peace Conference. There are certain vital issues which every nation concerned will desire to have settled on lines in its own best interests, as for instance the indemnities to France and to Belgium. I take it that this question

of Australia is the question of indemnities to Belgium and to France, and therefore I think Australia has a perfect right to say that she desires that those islands should not be occupied by Germany, or any other foreign power.

Hon. P. Collier: We all say that.

Mr. PICKERING: But it is not so stated in the motion. The only power there referred to is Germany. If a position should arise in which some other power put in a claim for the possession of those islands, Australia should be asked to express her opinion on the question. I have never been in accord with Mr. Hughes, but I say that at present he is representing Australia as Prime Minister, and in his capacity of Prime Minister of Australia we should support him. It is within the knowledge of all members that on many vital issues concerning Australia, as for instance, conscription, there has been disunity of opinion among the various States. If Mr. Hughes is in ill-repute in England, as stated by the leader of the Opposition, surely he is justified in submitting this question to the Federal Parliament for endorsement, and in having the question passed on from the Federal Parliament to the State Parliaments so that he may know whether or not in this he is properly representing Australia. We should dissociate this question from any individual. It is of vital importance to the States, to the Commonwealth and to the Empire. I am convinced that the statesmen of England will not take it as a reflection that Australia, in view of the noble services she has rendered in the war, thinks fit to make this small claim to consideration at the Peace Conference.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.49]: I am afraid the hon. member has not read the motion. The motion, with the proposed amendment, conveys everything that in this connection all hon. members agree with. It is the latter part of the original motion which the leader of the Opposition thinks—and I am with him in this—is not required.

Hon. P. Collier: It is an insult to the people of Great Britain.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I also regret that no member on this side can at any time deal with a question of importance without being accused of having some personal objection to Mr. Hughes. I guarantee that if a majority of the members were to give their honest opinions concerning Mr. Hughes, they would condemn him for his actions in England.

Mr. Holman: He is condemned over East.

Mr. Davies: The hon. member thought he was a good man once.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, I disagreed with his attitude when he was previously in England, for it was clear that he had gone Home to teach his grandmother to suck eggs. In the Federal House the other day Mr. Fowler spoke the truth when he said that Mr. Hughes was dealing with questions he knew nothing whatever about. I have conversed with many strong Nationalists on the question, and I have not yet come across one who does not condemn Mr. Hughes for his actions in England. When the



people of the allied countries, including Australia, were overjoyed at the news of the armistice, Mr. Hughes was the only man endeavouring to keep the war going.

Hon. P. Collier: I believe he said lately that if he had thought he was going to be treated as they are treating him, he would not have won the war for them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Colonial Treasurer tries to take a very mild view of this question. He said we were looking at it in an entirely different light, but that he agreed to be more charitable in his views, and that he really thought there was a possibility of this question escaping some of those who will be at the Peace Conference. In his next breath he said that America, like Australia, did not want Germany to regain possession of the Pacific Islands, and that we were to be assisted by America in our demand. Does not that show that there will be at the Peace Conference someone who will endeavour to prevent the Islands being handed back to Germany?

Mr. Griffiths: But we wish to be consulted.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Australia, with her  $4\frac{1}{2}$  millions of population, is not going to override the hundreds of millions of people of the Allied nations who also are concerned in the question. I say, further, that an overwhelming majority of the people of Australia want peace to-day.

Mr. Thomson: Not at any price, though.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I suppose the hon. member does not want it at any price. This is not a commercial undertaking, as the Minister for Works tried to make out. He referred to this as being analogous to the case of a manager of some firm in the Eastern States who merely wanted to know what they were going to make out of Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: No, no. It was merely to draw a comparison.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That was the comparison the hon. member drew; that is all he thought about the matter. I am confident that Mr. Hughes has lost caste with the people of Great Britain. He has allied himself to a political party.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is wandering a bit far. Mr. Hughes in not mentioned in the motion. The hon. member cannot discuss the merits or demerits of Mr. Hughes.

Mr. Holman: Mr. Hughes has been discussed by those on the other side.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not wish to transgress, Sir, but while the Premier was moving the motion, I by interjection asked whether the motion was being introduced by request. I was told no. A few minutes later the Colonial Treasurer said that it was being introduced at the request of the Acting Prime Minister. Also we have been told by a member on this side that the motion has been cabled out from London by Mr. Hughes.

The Minister for Works: That is only an allegation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Surely, therefore, I am entitled to give what I consider the reasons for this motion having been sent here. Mr. Hughes, in England, has allied himself with a political party in order to get the support of a section of the Press. The people

of England have disagreed with his action, just as the people of Australia would disagree with the action of any British statesman who came out here and attempted to dictate our policy. The leaders of Great Britain have lost faith in the Australian Prime Minister; they no longer think he is representing the views of the people of Australia, and consequently they are not taking as much notice of him as they did before he entered into party politics in England. This motion has been sent out here in order to elicit the views of the people of Australia—views with which all persons are already acquainted, for the view has been repeatedly expressed in Australia that the Pacific Islands must never go back to Germany. But, owing to the want of tact in the Australian Prime Minister, which might possibly lead to some disruption at the Peace Conference, it might not be desired to have him present at that conference, and so the motion has been sent out here. I am quite in accord with the motion when it states that the Pacific Islands should not revert to Germany. I would prefer that they be retained under the British flag. I go further and say I believe that to be the unanimous opinion of the people of Australia, while at the same time an overwhelming majority of those people are opposed to the actions of the Australian Prime Minister in England.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [6.0]: I intend to support the motion submitted by the Premier, and cannot see what objection the leader of the Opposition can have to the words that he proposes to delete. I think Australia should be consulted on this question. It is not so long ago that the ignorance, which the statesmen of England displayed towards the ideals of Australia, resulted in the loss of Java, and now we have within two days' sail of the Australian coast islands teeming with tens of millions of people who, if armed by the holders of those islands, would constitute a terrible menace to Australia. It was only a year or two before the war that an article by an English professor, written upon Australian and Pacific matters, was published. The writer made the suggestion, in order that the peace of Australia and the Pacific might be maintained, that part of Australia should be handed over to the Germans. That shows what ignorance there is amongst the English people upon Australian matters. There is another phase of the question which I might put forward. Whether I am right or wrong I do not know. The terms of the armistice were compounded in America and were submitted by the President of the American Republic. The question of keeping these islands was not mentioned, and it may be that a higher authority than our Prime Minister has suggested to Mr. Hughes that a resolution of this nature should be secured, not only from the Commonwealth Parliament, but from the various Parliaments of the States. It may be that this has been done with the idea that when the Peace Conference meets the hands of the British delegates may be strengthened on this question.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [6.3]: I am somewhat surprised at the opposition to this

motion. It would give me great pleasure indeed to see a unanimous vote recorded. Hon. members who have spoken on the other side of the House have stated that they are not in favour of these Islands being handed back to Germany. I am pleased to have at least that expression of opinion from them.

Hon. P. Collier: "At least"?

Mr. Munsie: Have you ever heard any other expression of opinion on this side of the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. THOMSON: I am very sincere in this matter despite the interjections which were hurled at me during the earlier portion of the debate. There is no man in the House who is more sincere in his desire to do what is best for Australia than I am.

Mr. Holman: You have to tell us that, because no one would think it was so.

Mr. THOMSON: We have to study the interests of the people of Australia and of the future generations in Australia. It has been said that we can with confidence rely upon the statesmen of Great Britain to look after our interests. If that be the case there was never any need for Australia to become a self-governing country. We should have been satisfied to remain under the Government of Downing-street. As the Treasurer has said, the colonies of the Empire gave a fair indication to Downing-street that they were going to be consulted as far as their local government was concerned. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) remarked that if a statesman from England came out here and attempted to dictate the policy of Australia, we would strongly resent it. That is quite right. I look upon Mr. Hughes not as Mr. Hughes, but as the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia, and he is at home in England to-day as the mouthpiece of the Commonwealth. Surely a motion of this description, coming from the whole of the people of Australia, including their Parliaments, their municipalities and road boards, will enable the Prime Minister in England to say that the people of Australia are behind him, and that they are unanimously of the opinion that these islands should not be handed back to Germany. I regret that so much feeling has been shown during the debate. I think we can with confidence look to Great Britain to watch our interests.

Mr. Teesdale: And leave it at that.

Mr. THOMSON: Great Britain has preserved Australia ever since the continent was peopled by a white race, but the statesmen of Great Britain have in the past made mistakes. We have only to instance the mistake which was made in handing over Heligoland to Germany. This small piece of territory has been a distinct menace to Great Britain throughout the war. At the time it was handed over the matter was not looked upon as one of very great importance, and yet I think we all agree that during the struggle which we have, I hope, just emerged from, it has been of vital importance to Great Britain. Notwithstanding this, we have the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) stating that we should sink

our bitterness and take into consideration the fact that we are now dealing with a republic and not a military autocracy. We have no guarantee as yet that this republican movement in Germany is not a scheme engineered by this military autocracy. I have no faith in the German people and no trust in them. It is my intention to vote on the side of keeping Germany as far away as possible from the doors of Australia.

Mr. Jones: Will you not advertise any more German cement?

Mr. THOMSON: The interjection of the hon. member is only compatible with his mind. He does not grasp the fact that we are dealing with big problems, upon which the future of Australia greatly depends. We have the biggest coast line of any country in the world. We should, therefore, be consulted in this matter. I trust the wisdom of the House will prevail and that the motion will be carried in its entirety. We shall then be able to show to the people of the Homeland that the majority of the members of this House is behind the Prime Minister of Australia, no matter who he may be, in his desire to keep for all time the German menace from our doors.

Mr. JONES (Fremantle) [6.10]: I regret that there has been this waste of time. It certainly has given an opportunity to members, like the previous speaker, to indulge in their usual exhibition of flag flapping patriotism, and to assure other members, if such assurance is necessary, that they are quite sincere in their patriotic beliefs. I am not sure whether the motion or the amendment goes far enough. The motion seems to be designed to cover up the faults of the Prime Minister of Australia, who has for the last few months misrepresented this country in Great Britain. I am hardly aware as to exactly what the motion intends to be carried into effect. I am also in doubt as to what sort of motion should be moved to deal with the other islands which changed hands during the war from Germany to other hands that were neither Australian nor of New Zealand. I refer to the Marshall, Caroline, Ladrone, and Gilbert islands. These four islands were captured by one of our allies. I do not know whether it is the intention of this Assembly, in moving that Australia should be consulted with regard to those islands that she herself has captured, to say whether or not she should also be consulted as to the other islands, which in years to come may be the means of providing a power, with important bases at our very back door. The only policy which a democratic community should lay down for these islands is one of "Polynesia for the Polynesians." What right have we, or any other white nation, to interfere with and exploit these child races of the world, these native races who are still capable of living their own lives, although, it is true, they are living upon the doorstep of barbarism and are just a little past the stone age?

Interjection.

Mr. JONES: I have no desire to raise the point as to whether Australia has the right to do the same or not. Had we allowed the aboriginal to pursue the same kind of life

he followed before we entered upon his territory, it may be we would not be doing very much harm, but in this respect we have only to look at the way in which the aboriginal in Australia has been exploited and interfered with. Of what benefit will it be to Australia if the whole of the Pacific Islands came under the domination of "Billy" Hughes and the rest of the Imperialists who are so busy prating patriotism to-day? I venture to say that few members of this great community would benefit in any way by the possession of these islands. But what use would they be save to a man who had a large amount of capital to sink in them, and who was able to obtain the cheap labour available there, in order that he might get a profit out of his capital? The only purpose that is to be served by the subjection of a native race by a white race is that it enables the white race to exploit the subject race which is under its domination for the time being. If the intention of the motion is that Australia, through Mr. Hughes, shall be consulted with regard to these islands, in order that they may pass under the care of Australia, and that she may have other naval bases in the Pacific, then I say that we as democratic people cannot support it. And we cannot stand for an Imperialism which has for its object the exploitation of the native races of the world.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. JONES: Before tea I was dealing with the question of subject races, and endeavouring to show that there is always danger for a white race holding an inferior race in subjection. Despite all ideals, despite all the good wishes of the governing race to deal with the subject race in the most humane manner possible, the tendency always has been to tyrannise over the people held in subjection. This is true from the days of the first slave raids right down to the atrocities perpetrated on the Congo, and is true of the Pacific Isles. The only way in which the problem of these islands can be settled is to give them self government. The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) has referred to the fact that the Tongans, under the guardianship of a league of nations, have achieved an approach to nationality, have made of their self government a great success. And what has been achieved by one Pacific race can be achieved, given proper opportunities, by all of them. Undoubtedly the Fijians and the Samoans are the highest Polynesians; the inhabitants of the Caroline and Marshall Islands are almost akin to the Malays; and the lowest of the Pacific races, the Melanesians and the Papuans, are very near to our own Australian aborigines. Nevertheless, I hold that all of them, given fair opportunities, could govern themselves suitably. At the present time, where they are not interfered with—and there are many parts of those islands on which the white man has not yet cast the curse of his presence—the natives

still are governing themselves. It is true that in those parts they practise cannibalism; but they eat only their enemies. Well may hon. members laugh, after the holocaust in the Old World, with its piled-up ten million dead! Murder amongst the tribes, murder within the particular community—small tribes, small communities, it is true—is practically unknown, even in the case of the lowest of these Pacific Islanders. Take a Melanesian or a Papuan village—and I am now referring particularly to the lower races—it is found that they govern themselves through a chief, who is elected by the whole of the villagers. He is no despot, no tyrannical autocrat, but a chief who functions as the father of the tribe, a chief to whom all disputes between individuals are referred, who has the settling of all arguments between members of his community, who, if he is young enough—in most cases he is an old man—leads the men of the village out to battle when they go to fight a neighbouring tribe. These races are blest by Nature with a superabundance of food. With very little tillage indeed they are able to grow everything they need for their existence. They live practically a vegetarian life. With their stone tools they mould out their canoes and build their houses. Their apparel they make out of grass cloth. They live a happy, healthy life.

Mr. Johnston: But Germany was governing the races referred to in this motion.

Mr. JONES: The hon. member, having been deeply immersed in conversation with another hon. member on I know not what subject, did not hear me remark that there are many parts of those islands which the white man has never yet visited, and that in those parts native self government survives. My argument is that what the Polynesians can do under those conditions they could do equally well and better under the benevolent suzerainty of a league of nations. In the native villages the arts of peace are practised; the natives till the fields, and live a life to which many Europeans who have observed it look back with longing. In those villages there are no starving people, no unemployed, no destitution, no prostitution, none of those beautiful benefits of civilisation which the white man is so anxious to bestow upon his heathen brother in the South Seas. Along to this primitive Utopia comes the missionary, to preach his particular gospel of "the great one on top." The child mind of the native accepts the gospel, and welcomes the missionary's views.

Mr. Smith: By all accounts the missionary has a sad time.

Mr. JONES: Not nowadays. Nowadays the missionary has a good time, running a fine plantation and making large profits out of it. I do not suggest that that is what the missionaries are missioning for, but they do that. So far as the missionary may be engaged in teaching and training the native and in fit-

ting him for the real benefits of civilisation, I have no quarrel with missionary enterprise. But after the missionary comes the trader, with all the gewgaws and mirrors and glass beads and ornaments of a beneficent civilisation.

Mr. Smith: Bully Hayes.

Mr. JONES: Along comes the trader, as I say, and gradually the native exchanges primitive dress and primitive ornaments for the goods which the white man introduces. In this way the small mind of the native becomes prepared for those further benefits of civilisation which are to follow after. Behind the missionary and the trader comes the recruiter, looking for labour.

Mr. Teesdale: What about the Trades Hall delegate?

Mr. JONES: I have not the slightest doubt in the world that a delegate from the Trades Hall would be very beneficial in those circumstances. The usual wage paid to the native who is brought from his home and taken to work in order to earn profit for some big man in Australia or in London, is 6s. per month, with a little rice—the sort of wage which the hon. member interjecting would like to see the workers of this country receive.

Mr. Teesdale: Do you say there is no prostitution?

Mr. JONES: Not in the villages. Of course, wherever the white man goes, there is prostitution. Wherever the white man foists the alleged benefits of civilisation on the native, there is that evil following in the white man's track.

The Minister for Works: What has that to do with the question?

Mr. JONES: Some hon. members make me feel ashamed of white men.

The Minister for Works: Some white men are ashamed of you.

Mr. JONES: The opinion of white men I have no fear of; the opinion of other men I disregard. Along comes the recruiter. He enlists the services of this primitive, stone-age native, and takes him to work somewhere on a plantation at the munificent wage of 6s. per month—in some cases the recruiter may manage to secure the native for 5s. per month. One shilling is paid in cash, and 4s. are deferred; the native gets the 4s. in trade, in the shape of a few lengths of turkey twill and a hurricane lamp, when he is finished. Hon. members know that that is the way the white man treats the native whenever he gets a chance to exploit his coloured brother.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): What did the Germans do?

Mr. JONES: I am endeavouring to show that the tendency of any white race is to tyrannise over any native race whom they may happen to hold in subjection.

Mr. Pickering: Which section of the white race?

Mr. JONES: Any section of the white race, particularly any section in which the hon. member interjecting had a say.

Mr. Pickering: Speak for yourself.

Mr. JONES: I trust hon. members will not force me to make hot retorts.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think if the hon. member would keep a little more closely to the motion there would be less interruption.

Mr. JONES: I am endeavouring to show that it is not to the benefit of any white race to govern a native race from outside; that the only solution of the problem to which this motion refers is to give self government to these particular people.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): What chance would they have with Germany?

Mr. JONES: What chance had Tonga against Germany? What chance had Liberia against Germany? Tonga is self governing.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Tonga has the protection of the British flag.

Mr. JONES: What I wish to save these natives from is exploitation by any race whatsoever. I have no illusions on the subject. No doubt, if it were left to many of us, we would impose good and wise laws on those natives. But so long as it is permitted, in any part of the world, to engage the members of subject races to work at a very low wage, at a wage that really is not a wage at all, but represents the cheapest of cheap labour, so long as that is permitted, the holding in subjection of native races is good neither for the natives nor for the Europeans.

Mr. Pickering: What standard of wage would you advocate?

Mr. JONES: I do not want these natives to work for wages at all. I am right up against the wages system.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must keep to the motion.

Mr. JONES: If, hon. members will not interrupt me so much, Sir, I will do my best to keep to the motion. I am doing my best. These natives are called lazy and when they refuse to leave their Utopian homes, where they have plenty of food and everything they need, so as to go to work in order to pile up profits for some outside firm, they are flogged. No doubt hon. members who have been interjecting are hardly aware that at the present time these islands are still being administered under German laws. These laws were laid down in the days of Germany's early occupation of the islands and the British are carrying them out, floggings and all.

Resolved: that motions be continued.

Mr. JONES: Undoubtedly the British administration, even though it be of the German laws, is better than the German administration. Nevertheless we must not forget that if a native absents himself for two hours from his work without asking the permission of his master, he is placed across the threshing block.

Mr. Smith: What proof have you of that?

Mr. JONES: My own eyesight, 18 months ago.

Mr. Smith: On which islands?

Mr. JONES: The late German New Guinea, New Island, New Britain, and the late German Solomon Islands.

Mr. Smith: And you saw natives flogged on all those islands because they were away from their work for two hours?

Mr. JONES: Not in every instance. But I am not here to submit to a cross examination at the hands of the hon. member. I am not under the harrow of the "Sunday Times" at the present moment. I have seen cases of flogging for the simple offence that I have described. The more highly developed races, those further away from the Stone age, the Melanesians and Polynesians, the Fijians and the Samoans, having greater reasoning power, cannot be so easily recruited, and whilst it is still possible to obtain natives to work there, they are gradually becoming wise that it is no good leaving their homes in order to work simply to enable somebody else to make a profit. The day is rapidly dawning when, if these islands are taken over by European power, it will be necessary to take indentured labour there. What we want to do with those islands, I do not know. Is it in the interests of democracy that we should reduce those people to the level of slaves, and I say that it amounts to nothing else but slavery when a man, whether he be black, brown, or any other colour, is forced to sign a contract to work for one, two, or three years for his food and a few miserable shillings. The ignorant natives do not know what they are signing when they put their mark to a document.

The Minister for Works: We would take them out of the hands of the brutal Huns.

Mr. JONES: We did that four years ago and the same system is still going on. We are still forcing them to sign contracts for three years, and if they find that the servitude is too hard and they run away, the machinery of Government is placed at the disposal of the planter and the natives are brought back to be flogged. A motion of this sort is of no value unless it goes to the logical conclusion and says that we will give these people self-government and declare under what conditions they shall work. I will not stand by calmly and see a motion carried which means that we are in favour of these child-like people being exploited. As a democrat I cannot do that, and unless we have an amendment to the motion on the lines I have indicated that we are prepared to give them self-government, I shall not vote for the motion or the amendment which has already been moved.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [7.53]: My remarks on this subject will be brief because the motion is one which should not have been brought forward in this House. A question of this character needs more consideration and more inquiry than can be given to it in the course of a superficial discussion such as we have had this evening which discussion in its results

can only be misleading. It does not give to the country and neither does it give to anyone outside a clear interpretation of what the wishes of the people of Australia are regarding these conquered territories. This Parliament has no right to speak the views of Western Australia in regard to such a matter because the people have not been consulted. From a sentimental standpoint or because they may be influenced by passions resulting from the recent great war, the people might be agreeable to these territories being taken over by the Commonwealth. I am convinced in my mind, however, that there will be strong doubts expressed regarding the wisdom of the taking over by Australia of any such new burdens. I do not know whether the Premier intends by this motion to give to the world the idea that Australia wants these territories. I am of the opinion that Australia does not want them. We are a handful of people in this mighty continent, and for the next 100 or 200 years we will have all we can possibly do to carry out the development of this country in the manner that we expect it to be done if we desire to retain possession of Australia. To ask us to take over these islands or to insinuate that we are willing to take over territory which cannot be done without increasing our liabilities, is to ask too much. Even Germany could not develop those islands except by the use of indentured labour and by the payment of Imperial bonuses. I am not desirous of seeing that this territory should be handed over to any nation which may become a menace to the security of this continent, and it is time that we should express an opinion regarding the dangers facing us. . . . If by a resolution of this House we are going to give permission to the Prime Minister to make representation to British statesmen as to our attitude, it is not due to the Commonwealth Government to tell those who are going to represent us at the Peace Conference that we do not favour the handing over of these islands. . . . If I were asked to express an opinion as to which nation I thought should have control of these islands with the information I have at my disposal and the limited time I have had in which to give consideration to the matter, I should say hand them over to America.

Mr. Davies: Why America?

Mr. TROY: Because, in my opinion America will be our safeguard for all time. If there is one nation which has a great deal in common with us just now, a nation which is with us in speech and largely in ideals and at the same time has great interests in the Pacific, it is the United States of America and since that nation has the means where with it will be possible to develop these islands, I would offer no objection to them being handed over.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): What objection can there be to Australia having a say in the matter?

Mr. TROY: If Australia will say definitely what it wants, I might be prepared to consider it. But a motion such as we have before us does not express any opinion. It merely

tralia ought to be consulted. How? By Mr. Hughes giving an expression of opinion to British statesmen? If the people of Australia are going to express an opinion, let us put the question to them and thus decide it definitely. If Australia is to be consulted it cannot be consulted in an adequate manner by the passage of a bald motion of this character. The motion is definite in part. It says that the territory should not be handed back to Germany and that in the consideration and determination of proposals affecting the control of these islands, Australia should be consulted. "Just so." But Australia means Mr. Hughes just now. Mr. Hughes is not the mouthpiece of Australia on this question. He is on a visit to Great Britain as the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, and the Premier in moving the motion, is influenced we are told by the Colonial Treasurer, by the Commonwealth acting Prime Minister, and this Parliament is to decide the question which time does not permit us to decide adequately and properly, and by giving information by which we are able to decide it. If the Premier had moved a motion that this territory should never be handed back to Germany that would be something definite. If he had moved that it be handed to America that would be definite. If he had moved that we in Australia want these islands, that would be definite. Mr. Hughes has put forward certain definite proposals in England, and because he has not received the backing which he did formerly, he is negotiating and has cabled to Australia asking that the Parliaments should support him and that is the reason we are discussing this motion. We ought not to be discussing it at all. I have here some facts relating to the position of these islands, and I find that all these islands have been a burden on the country that has held them. New Guinea has been a great burden on the Commonwealth. The Northern Territory has been a burden. We have taken on £300,000,000 of a burden in connection with this war and we shall have very heavy liabilities still to meet. We do not know where we are going to get the population to develop the country and pay the taxation. The whole future of this country is clouded. We do not know really where we are as to our present liabilities. It is held in Great Britain that we in Australia are endeavouring to secure more territory, that we have land hunger, that we are greedy, that we want an acquisition of territory when we have all the country that we require for ourselves and our children for hundreds of years to come. I intend to vote against the amendment and the motion. I protest against the motion being brought forward without proper consideration and inquiry and without the people being consulted. Not even a practical businesslike proposition has been put forward. Since Australia is not likely to secure any indemnity as a result of the war, we might with advantage take over Ocean Island by way of indemnity, because I understand Ocean Island possesses a commo-

itself to this country, I am of opinion we have no business to express an opinion on matters of this character without proper reference to the people and without full knowledge of where these proposals may lead. I therefore shall vote against both the motion and the amendment.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [§.6]: I had not intended to address the House on this matter, but after listening to the remarks of the member for Mt. Magnet and the member for Fremantle, one is bound to express amazement at some of the remarks. The member for Mt. Magnet says he does not see the use, or why the House should express its opinion on a motion of this character. I want right here to express my unbounded admiration for the frankness this afternoon of the leader of the Opposition in confessing, so far as he is personally concerned, that he does not desire to see these islands returned to Germany. I hope the leader of the Opposition is speaking for his party on this occasion, because it is a fact that, whilst some members of that party have expressed the opinion that this House should not consider this motion, they themselves as a party have considered it. When Mr. Tudor led the Labour party to the polls at the last election, he issued a statement in an official manifesto, and these are the words used by Mr. Tudor and signed, I understand, by every member of his party who consulted the electors on that occasion—

Recent developments in aerial and submarine warfare indicate the perils which would threaten this continent if a potential enemy were permitted to acquire or resume sovereignty of the islands adjacent to Australia.

Mark you, acquire or resume those islands.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We were with him.

Mr. DAVIES: An interjection was made to the hon member "why Australia resumed control; what is wrong with Britain assuming control, what is wrong with France, why not America, why go outside our own nation, why not Australia be consulted." Seeing that the Labour party is now split up into two factions—

Mr. Munsie: Do not make any mistake, there is only one party.

Mr. DAVIES: And are clamouring for representation at the coming Peace Conference, let me say I am with them in requesting representation at any Peace Conference that may be held, but if they desire to be represented at such Peace Conference, what is wrong with this House, elected on a universal franchise, in expressing its opinion?

Hon. P. Collier: Because there is another Parliament which has to deal with national matters, the Commonwealth Parliament.

Mr. DAVIES: That is admitted. Mr. Tudor went on further to say—

In enemy control these islands would furnish numerous bases of operations for incessant raids on our coasts.

Mr. Tudor when he issued that manifesto on that point, and since Mr. Tudor consulted the electors of Australia I am with the member for Mt. Magnet when he said that the people of this continent should first be consulted. They were consulted at the 1917 election, 12 months last May. That was the statement of one party; the statement of the other party is to be found to-day because we desire to control those islands. To-day Labour speaks with two voices.

Mr. Green: Where?

Mr. DAVIES: In this Chamber. Let me again say that I am pleased with the admission made to-night by the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. Collier: I wish the hon. member would not put it in that way. He says "an admission," which conveys an inference that I have entertained opinions otherwise.

Mr. DAVIES: The last Interstate Conference, which is held in the labour movement to be the High Court of labour, declared last June that so far as the official labour movement of Australia was concerned they desired to get peace by negotiation and no annexations.

Hon. P. Collier: Which was the policy of Great Britain and all the Allies engaged in the war.

Mr. DAVIES: Why was the policy changed?

Hon. P. Collier: Upon that policy declared by President Wilson we have the present Armistice.

Mr. DAVIES: "No annexations."

Hon. P. Collier: That is the policy.

Mr. DAVIES: If that is the policy of the official Labour party of Australia—

Hon. P. Collier: It is the policy of Great Britain and America.

Mr. DAVIES: If that is the policy of the Labour party, why the statement in this Chamber to-night? These are the words of the leader of the Opposition—"As far as I am concerned I do not desire to see the islands returned to Germany."

Mr. Munsie: He never has desired it.

Mr. DAVIES: You cannot have it both ways.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has had his say. There must be order.

Mr. Green: But the hon. member is making false statements.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not wish to interrupt, but I cannot speak again and I cannot allow incorrect statements to be made. I do not wish false impressions to be placed on my words.

Mr. DAVIES: The member for Boulder said to-night that as far as he was concerned he did not wish to see the islands returned to Germany. Is that clear? The conference held in the Savoy hotel said, "We will have peace"—

Mr. Green: Why not have a policy of your own.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members must keep order.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member said, "We desire peace by negotiation and no annexations," and I say without fear of contradiction if that policy means anything it means that these islands should be resumed by Germany.

Mr. Munsie: It means nothing of the kind and you know it.

Hon. P. Collier: That is what President Wilson and Lloyd George stood for.

Mr. DAVIES: This hurts.

Mr. Green: That is why you seem so pleased. You are the greatest hypocrite in the Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: Hon. members must keep order. The hon. member will address himself to the subject.

Mr. DAVIES: What does "no annexation" mean? Does it not mean that the islands are to be resumed by Germany? If not, it must mean, as the member for Fremantle suggests, Polynesia for the Polynesians, and give it back to the natives.

Mr. Jones: A very good motto, too.

Mr. DAVIES: On the question of Mr. Hughes representing Australia, I say that while he is in England Mr. Hughes has the right to speak for Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you think Australia would call Lloyd George a liar?

Mr. DAVIES: I am not prepared to accept the statement of the Press on that point. It has been said that the representatives of Great Britain are quite capable of conserving the interests of Australia at the Peace Conference. I find that the Labour movement in Great Britain are not troubling their heads at all about the White Australia policy.

Hon. P. Collier: Why single out the Labour movement? Are the rest of Great Britain troubling about the White Australia policy?

Mr. DAVIES: Perhaps not, but the difference between the two is that in Australia it is laid down as the policy of Labour that we shall have a White Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: Not merely the policy of Labour, but the policy of Australia.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so, but the Labour party of Australia claim a common brotherhood with the Labour party of any other country, and if the Labour party of Australia desire to see the White Australia policy carried into operation, it behoves them to make their voice clear on the subject. While the statesmen of Great Britain know a good many things, we cannot hide the fact that the members of this Chamber who owe allegiance to Labour know that when Mr. Hughes left Australia in 1915—I do not wish to give anything away; it is difficult to know what to say on a subject like this.

Hon. P. Collier: There is nothing to prevent you from saying anything, except that it might be censored.

Mr. DAVIES: Well, when Mr. Hughes went Home in 1915 we in the Labour movement were told—and this argument was used with the workers of Australia for the purpose of turning down conscription—and we

must not forget that Japan is our ally and fought for us and we cannot be curs enough to allow a nation to fight for us and then decline to fraternise with them afterwards—

She made the request that her services should be recognised and that her people should come into Australia on the same conditions as white people. That question is still unsettled. What if the Peace Conference decides that New Guinea shall be handed to Australia, providing that the Japanese shall enter New Guinea on the same conditions as Australians? The moment New Guinea becomes part and parcel of Australia under such conditions, the policy of a White Australia breaks down.

Mr. TROY: What has that to do with the motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: It has no bearing on the motion. The hon. member will confine himself to the motion.

Mr. DAVIES: It has been said, and I agree with it, that this motion ought not to have been brought forward in this House. That is all right, provided we stick to it on all occasions. We have previously had motions that were the peculiar province of the Imperial authorities, and no exception has been taken by either side of the House. The objection to this motion is based on the probability that Mr. Hughes will be chosen to represent Australia at the Peace Conference. It is for that reason the Opposition are finding fault with the motion.

Hon. P. Collier: Not with the motion.

Mr. DAVIES: If striking out the latter part of the motion means anything, it means that the whole ought to be struck out. It would have been far better if the mover of the amendment had merely voted against the motion. The leader of the Opposition agrees with the motion so far as it states that the islands should not be restored to Germany. We all agree with that. But the hon. member desires that the latter part of the motion should be eliminated. In the former part we give a direction to the Imperial authorities that the islands shall not be handed back to Germany, while in the second part we say, "If you intend to take the question into consideration you should consult Australia."

Hon. P. Collier: They consult Australia every day.

Mr. DAVIES: I have no doubt that the representatives of Great Britain at the Peace Conference will look after the interests of Australia in point of sentiment. But the Britisher does not regard a thing from the same viewpoint as an Australian, and so there is the danger that if Australia be not directly represented at the Peace Conference this question of the Pacific Islands may be settled in a way unsatisfactory to the people of Australia. I plead with hon. members to carry the motion unamended. It would have been better if the leader of the Opposition had contented himself with voting against the motion instead of moving to amend it.

Hon. P. Collier: I am not opposed to the principle of the motion.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [8.27]: I wish to at least disabuse the minds of some members opposite that every member on this side is opposed to anything done by Mr. Hughes. I have disagreed with many things he has done, but let me say that I am right with him in the attitude he has adopted on this question. I believe he is on the right course. Whether or not he should represent Australia at the Peace Conference, I am not prepared to say. I believe that if Australia had an opportunity for voting on the question, he would not be the man. While I am confident that the British statesmen will give a fair deal to Australia, as far as their knowledge guides them, I should be more satisfied if Australia had direct representation at the Peace Conference.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: She will get it, too.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not know where the hon. member receives his information. From the only information I can get, namely, the cable columns of the newspapers, I am very doubtful whether Australia is to be directly represented at the Peace Conference. I have always held the opinion that Germany should not be allowed to regain control of New Guinea. . . . Personally I do not see any great objection to the motion, even as it stands. The position taken up by the leader of the Opposition is that we are endeavouring by this motion to instruct Great Britain to do something which she has already promised to do. He takes the view that it is practically an insult to our British statesmen to carry the motion as it is worded. It appears to me from the Press cables that there is a movement towards the Dominions being represented at the Peace Conference only by one delegate, and that the Dominions shall select that delegate. If that is so we have no hope of securing that delegation. Canada, with her eight and a half millions population against our five millions will secure the representation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We sent more soldiers than Canada did.

Mr. MUNSIE: If any country in the British Empire is entitled to representation at the Peace Conference it is Australia.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Western Australia itself has sent more soldiers per head of the population.

Mr. MUNSIE: In my opinion we could get quite as good a representative from this State as from any of the Eastern States. I am, however, speaking as an Australian, and when I speak as an Australian, I speak for the Eastern States as much as for Western Australia. In the interests of Australia, and in justice to Australia for what she has done in fighting for the liberty of the world, we should have some say at the Peace Conference when the result of the great victory is apportioned amongst the nations of the world.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question—put and passed.



## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1918-19.

## In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from 19th November; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Departments of Industries and Woods and Forests (Hon. R. T. Robinson, Minister).

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES AND WOODS AND FORESTS (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [8.35]: The operations of the Agricultural Bank have been limited largely by the amount of funds at its disposal. The amount of new capital placed at the disposal of the bank was £75,000. Of this, £73,000 has been loaned to settlers. The sum of £13,000 of this £73,000, has been used in the purchase of stock and implements, and the taking over of certain liabilities, whilst the balance, £60,000, has been used for developmental purposes, including no less than 48,000 acres of new clearing. During the year the sum of £36,753 has been repaid to the bank, leaving a balance owing by borrowers on the 30th June of £2,789,388. Notwithstanding that 130 of what are called abandoned properties, or properties which have come back to the hands of the bank, have been sold during the year, the number of properties on the hands of the bank has in the aggregate increased. It now amounts to 722, carrying an advance amounting to £190,000, with £36,000 accumulated interest. Losses amounting to £3,000 on properties sold have been written off to profit and loss account. The principle adopted in connection with the sale of such properties is that they are sold at their actual value, and not at the value at which they stand in the books of the bank.

Mr. Troy: You refer to abandoned properties.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: Yes. Valuations of abandoned properties are being made so that as many as possible of these shall be available for the settlement of those who wish to take them, or possibly for discharged soldiers. With regard to the soldiers many restrictions have been placed on the class of property which may be offered to them, particularly that restriction which has regard to the distance from a railway line. When we come to judge the position from that standpoint we find there are not many properties which are capable of being dealt with under that head.

Mr. Draper: What is the distance from a railway line?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: It is nine miles. Most of the properties are at distances which range from 12 miles to 13 miles. Up to the end of September 35 properties within the radius were disposed of. With regard to the policy of the bank in respect of abandoned properties, if a farm stands in the books of the bank at £850 and the inspectors agree that it is worth £500, the balance of £350 is written off and that is the end of it.

Mr. Smith: Do you not call for public tenders?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: No, not in the case of returned soldiers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You have only lost £3,000.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: That is the amount that has been written off. It would be almost foolish to hazard an estimate of what losses the bank will eventually have made. It is impossible to-day to say what the actual value of land is. Anyone who owns a farm knows how difficult it is to sell it. If we were to judge the value of our agricultural lands or the assets of the bank by what the properties might fetch in the open market, we should have to make a very hazardous guess as to what our losses would be. With the clearing away of the clouds of war and the return of prosperity to this country, and when agricultural lands are developed and come into their own again, there can be no question but that these losses, if any, will be very largely wiped out of existence, and our Agricultural Bank securities will be found to be of a proper value. No less than 1,000 of the bank's clients, as well as a large proportion of our agricultural labourers, have enlisted. It will be seen from this that the industry has been left short of man-power, and I am not surprised that I have to tell the Committee that many of the farms are on our hands. The fact that the 1,000 farmers who are indebted to the bank have gone to the war, and that through drought, distress, and other causes there have been many failures, is responsible for our having about 700 farms on our hands, but in most cases arrangements have been made for carrying them on satisfactorily alike to the soldier who has been fighting our battles and the country itself. There are about 9,000 clients or customers of the Agricultural Bank. With regard to the administration of the bank, last year the cost amounted to 11s. 10d. per £100 advanced. This year the cost has been reduced to 10s. 4d.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is the cost divided up with the Industries Assistance Board?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: The estimate may not be as accurate as if there was no Industries Assistance Board, or as if the two establishments were separated. In many cases the services which used to be separated are now joined together. The cost can be worked out pretty accurately, and it has been reduced, as I have said, from 11s. 10d. to 10s. 4d. per £100 advance. This has been done notwithstanding the fact that a great deal of extra work has been cast upon the officers of the bank owing to the settlement of discharged soldiers, for which work no charge up to date has been made. We have merely tried as a unit of the community to assist in the settlement of returned soldiers, without causing any extra charge to be made upon them or the Lands Department, with which we are working. The amount advanced from the bank in connection with soldiers—I may say that the bank is merely acting as a machine, so to speak, in the way of book-keeping, inspections, and so on, for the Repatriation Department, which is under the control of the Premier—was £10,915 to the 30th June, and to the 30th September this was increased to £22,872. The total commitment of the bank on the latter date in the same category amounted to £68,000, distributed amongst 188 borrowers. Dealing with the question of the Industries Assistance

Board, which is so closely allied to the Agricultural Bank, I may say that for the financial year ended 31st March last the advances made totalled £303,825 as compared with £936,000 for the previous year. Of the sum advanced last year, £93,000 represented money paid to the various Government departments for bank interest, water rates, and so on, the balance, £710,000, being for ordinary assistance towards the production of crops, that is to say, the finding of the wheat itself and super, the occasional finding of machinery, and the sometime finding of horses and harness, and also for subsistence money, which is allowed from time to time to enable the farmer to carry on. The total advances made on account of Government indebtedness since the inception of the board amounts to £579,995. I give these figures because they were repeatedly asked for when I was making my address on this subject last year. That is the total to the end of the last financial year.

Mr. Pickering: It has been paid back again, though, has it not?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: True. That is in payment of rents, water rates, bank interest, bank charges, and so forth.

Mr. Troy: Also roads boards rates?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: Yes.

Mr. Troy: And arrears of rents?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: Yes; and also land tax, and the like.

Mr. Pickering: What interest is charged for those advances?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: The rate of interest charged by the board is seven per cent. The capital provided to the board up to the 31st March totalled £1,372,000, whilst the advances outstanding by settlers amounted to £1,456,000. This includes advances made under paragraph (c) of Section 9 only, and at present outstanding, approximately £68,000. From this amount has to be deducted approximately £257,000 representing moneys held in trust and not yet credited—that is, certificates coming in for the sale of wheat. Therefore the net liability on account of advances stands at £1,198,653. Hon. members will probably recall remarks I made on the introduction of these Estimates last year, when the amount due to the Treasurer by my department under this heading was between £500,000 and £600,000. We were then looking forward, on the advice of experts, to an eleven-bushel harvest, which would have reduced the amount due to between £300,000 and £400,000. But one of those dispensations of Providence for which even the Minister for Industries cannot be held responsible occurred, and we received only a 5½-bushel harvest for the I.A.B. settlers. If hon. members thought otherwise at the time the forecast was made, they would have pulled me up, for there were, as there now are, practical farmers in this Chamber. The result of the 5½-bushel harvest has been to duplicate my overdraft with the Treasurer, to raise it from about £550,000 to over one million pounds. The Treasurer tells me it is appalling; but he has found the money all the same. The farmer has been carried on in the most sympathetic way possible. We had

2,378 settlers on the Industries Assistance Board, and their average return throughout was 5½ bushels. In the financial stress through which the State has been passing, it is a matter of congratulation for the farmer that the State has been able to find that extra half-million of money and still to carry him on, having a full confidence in the farmer and the great country in which he operates. But with those figures in view, is it any wonder that the board and the Minister should have endeavoured by every means in their power to administer affairs with every possible regard for economy consistent with that sympathetic treatment of the farmer which Parliament has established as a principle in connection with assistance to industries? For the reasons I have given it was deemed advisable to revise the scale of payments, and the scale has been reduced to 5s. per day sustenance for the single man, 7s. per day sustenance for the married man without children, and a maximum of 9s. per day sustenance for the married man with children. The answers I gave this afternoon to certain questions asked by a farmers' representative in this connection will be well within the recollection of the Committee.

Mr. Johnston: The reductions seem very drastic.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: I regret the hon. member interjecting was not in his seat to hear the reasons for the reductions. Prior to the present arrangement, the board were paying everybody—single man, married man without children, and married man with half-a-dozen children—9s. a day, which was apparently called a wage irrespective of conditions. Then a cry came to me from the Treasurer, "You must watch the expenditure of money in your department. I cannot go on finding you sums of money indefinitely." Various means have been found, legitimately and carefully to watch the outflow of money, and the reduced scale has been one of the economies effected. Special cases of hardship will be considered by the board on the advice of the inspector. That, indeed, is nothing new; it has always been the practice during my time and I believe it has been the practice right along, not to treat these regulations as inflexible. Cases of hardship must be treated on their own particular merits, and they will continue to be so treated with the utmost sympathy for the distressed farmer. I do not believe that the reduction of 2s. per day in the sustenance allowance is going to drive large numbers of farmers off the land. The farmers, according to what I have seen of them in the backblocks, are men with stout hearts, who will pull through. In any case, the married men with families will continue to receive approximately their previous allowances. We do not want to penalise the man with a family; he is worth helping and supporting. We can economise without trenching on him. But, so that hon. members may not be under the misconception that this sustenance allowance is all the farmer gets, let me point out that the farmer has his own grist, has his own little mill, and can grind up his own flour or make his own meal, or send the grain

out to be treated. Nearly every farmyard has its own fowls, or a pig, and most farmers know how to turn a pig into pork or bacon.

The Colonial Treasurer: And the farmer can keep a cow.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: Yes; and I am glad to say that farmers on the board who have the necessary feed and accommodation keep cows. The board have used these ready moneys to help I.A.B. farmers with cows, and we are prepared to continue that. The cows are kept not for dairy purposes, but for sustenance purposes, for the farmers' families.

Mr. Pickering: Up to what value?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: Up to a reasonable amount, enough for one or two cows. The amounts advanced have been from £10 to £20 per animal. In connection with the present harvest, superphosphate was supplied for the purpose of seeding an area of 548,000 acres. That refers only to farmers on the Industries Assistance Board; do not let anybody think that means the farmers of Western Australia, or even the farmers on the books of the Agricultural Bank. My remarks now relate solely to I.A.B. farmers. In order to show how closely what was intended has been approximated, I state that an area of 506,000 acres has in fact been seeded. I need not tell hon. members, since it is known throughout the land, that the prospects of the harvest about to be reaped, or in many places being reaped, are on the whole very favourable. In many districts the crops are looking splendid, and returns are golden. There is no country dependent on agriculture which can say that every farmer in it has succeeded. Therefore, even when I speak of a very favourable crop, and of crops looking splendid, I do not wish to convey the false impression that everybody's crop looks splendid and that everybody is going to have a rain of golden sovereigns. Speaking generally of the farms that are being assisted by the Government in connection with the Industries Assistance Board, I have no hesitation in saying that the results should be good, and I hope to see my debit balance with the Treasurer this time substantially reduced. A good deal of controversy has taken place amongst farmers throughout the community by a decision of the Industries Assistance Board to compel assisted farmers to send in returns of their stock and the amounts they receive for the sale of wool, pigs, etc. That may seem from a general statement to be somewhat harsh. I have, however, found that the farming representatives in this House are satisfied when reasonable explanations are given to them and in these cases the explanations are quite reasonable. There are in some districts many farmers on the Industries Assistance Board who have lots of sheep. If hon. members will peruse the report of the Board which is on the Table of the House they will see that in one district there are Industries Assistance Board farmers numbering 87, who have amongst them no fewer than 35,000 sheep.

Mr. Troy: Where are they?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: I will not tell the hon. member; it might make him jealous. But I can tell him that they are not far from where he is. One farmer alone, who is on the board, has 2,000 sheep. It seemed ludicrous to me that a man with such a number of sheep should complain of his sustenance allowance.

Mr. Johnston: Why not get him off the board?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: It is not very easy to do that, but I can get him off by saying, "You shall not have any sustenance allowance." I would be surprised to find any member in this House question a decision of the board in that respect; on the contrary I should say they would be satisfied with the action of the board. If a man is getting sufficient from the progeny of his sheep and pigs to keep him, he does not want sustenance allowance from the board.

The Colonial Treasurer: In his own interests he should not have it.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: Quite so. It has been decided that the Government should introduce a further amendment to the Industries Assistance Act for the purpose of acquiring security not over the whole of the farmers' free assets but over free stock, machinery, fencing, and buildings. My own way of looking at it is that it would be a very drastic step for the Government to demand security over everything a man possesses, in view of the decision of this House two years ago that chattels and stock should not be included in Government security. But we are entitled to take that fact into consideration in deciding whether we are going to give a man 9s. or 5s. or anything at all per day. I want to come to another subject. The Industries Assistance Board almost from its inception decided that fallowing must be adopted. It is considered by the practical farmers who constitute the Board that fallowing is essential to successful farming, and this policy from a very small beginning has gradually been brought into effect. In a number of cases settlers who are assisted under this Act had such a small area cleared that the operation of such a policy was impossible so far as they were concerned, and in such cases a different policy and different methods had to be carried out. The Board therefore established what they called a small area system of sustenance, whereby provision was made for sustenance payments for the actual sowing and harvesting of the crop. That is to say it was payment for work and labour done, measured by the amount put in and taken off and throughout the rest of the year the sustenance was not given. But to meet the position arrangements had to be made with the trustees of the Agricultural Bank to advance to those particular settlers what is called "improvement money" for the purpose of carrying out further clearings and therefore improving their security and providing for them work and income during the intervening period. I personally have been keeping a good watch over these small holdings because this system is experimental. It was instituted 12 months ago by the present

board and a close watch is being kept by everybody. I am glad to say that most of those who are being assisted in this direction are increasing their clearing and at the same time increasing their earning capacity. The result is that very much larger areas have been brought under cultivation and it is proposed to continue this system until a settler, by the means I have described, is brought up to the position that he will be able to receive what is known as his full sustenance allowance. On the subject of rabbits, as hon. members are aware, the Government have embarked on a special policy to deal with this menace. Arrangements have been made, and they have already been outlined in this House, whereby the Chief Rabbit Inspector is undertaking a vigorous crusade against the pest on their breeding grounds, whether those breeding grounds be on Crown lands or on Agricultural Bank lands. The Industries Assistance Board, who are poisoning on abandoned properties, had a conference with the Agricultural Department so as not to duplicate the labour, with the result that the board has undertaken to do portion of the work for the Rabbit Department under that department's guidance. I had the privilege recently of travelling through a good deal of rabbit infested country with my friends the members for Toodyay and Avon. Miles and miles of country were examined and it was a great delight to us to observe that where the poison carts had been regularly working either by the Industries Assistance Board settlers or private individuals the result was extremely gratifying. Where men, whether they were on the board or not, did not use poison carts great arks had been eaten in the crops, and in one case 25 or 30 acres had gone altogether. This showed the necessity for using poison carts. The Industries Assistance Department is assisting the Rabbit Department and the Agricultural Department in carrying out this work, and is doing it in what I may call an economical way. I understand that one or two inspectors have been added to the staff so as to reduce the size of the circuit. Each inspector, therefore, is able to do a certain amount of work for the Rabbit Department.

Mr. Duff: What are you doing on Crown lands?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: Wherever there are breeding grounds they are being attacked. As hon. members are aware, we have passed a Bill through this Chamber dealing with vermin, and it has gone through another place and in a day or two it will be before us again with certain amendments.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is the Bill which it was said at the commencement of this session was so urgently needed.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: The main principle of that Bill is to compel the settler himself to do the work of exterminating on his own place. Those settlers who have been helping themselves and who have been using poison have benefited considerably while the settler who has not bothered his head has suffered. The Bill will enable us to treat everybody alike.

Mr. Duff: This is the time to get the poison to work.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: I understand from the Agricultural Department that they have now plenty of poison on hand and they can go right ahead with the work. Just twelve months ago I laid on the Table a return which indicated the position of the various settlers under the board. I have had that return brought up to date, and the statements in it appear under the headings of "Good, doubtful, and bad." I do not propose to quote the figures from that return, because they have been lying on the Table for some time and in all probability hon. members have seen them. But the return only requires to be looked at for one to realise the difficulties of the department owing to that  $5\frac{1}{2}$  bushel harvest. I hope some of the results will be improved before very long.

Mr. Duff: What are the prospects of this year's harvest?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: I have no report as to what the average is expected to be, but the reports which I have already referred to speak of what is called by those who should know, a "splendid" harvest. We have in the Industries Assistance Board, as I have repeatedly assured hon. members, the advantage of administration by three practical farmers. I have learnt to repose confidence in those men. The members of the board are Mr. Richardson, who has been on it for many years, Mr. Cook, and Mr. Maitland Leake, all men who understand their business and who have learnt to carry liabilities and tribulations of their own, and emerge successful. They are full of sympathy and help and encouragement for the farmers. They say the harvest is a splendid one. Dealing with the Forestry branch, my close association with that department enables me to speak with some confidence of its administration. Last financial year the department, in common with others, had to be subjected to the most stringent economy, and in the administrative work alone a saving of £1,600 was effected, whilst the revenue was increased by no less a sum than £12,000. Hon. members should realise that from its inception this department has been a great source of wealth to the State. The figures of the department of themselves are striking. Since 1895 the revenue collected has been £638,000, whilst the expenditure over the same period was £153,000, leaving a balance of £485,000, or close on half a million, which has been paid into Consolidated Revenue. Owing to the war the timber industry has been passing through bad times, and the revenue has shrunk in proportion, as we have been unable to pass our timber overseas to the countries that require it. It is anticipated, however, now that peace is within measureable distance, the industry will not only assume its old dimensions but, owing to the world-wide shortage of hardwoods, our timbers will find a larger market than they have ever had before. We are taking advantage of the presence here of the French Mission to show them the possibilities of our timber and the extent of our forests. I look forward to the time when the hardwoods of Western Australia will

be used in the reconstruction of many of the houses that have been desecrated by the Huas. That should apply, not only to our great timber, jarrah, but also to karri, which can be used with the utmost confidence anywhere in the world for all work of a superstructural nature. In the past the Forestry Department has been primarily a revenue collecting department, and our foresters have been, in fact, tax-gatherers. It has been impossible, therefore, to start the very necessary sylvicultural work that will restore our forests and make them a permanent, instead of a wasting, asset. But I hope that as a result of the passage of the Forest Bill, the forest administration will be able to show in the regenerated areas an asset which will daily improve to the State. As I have previously told hon. members, the classification of the forests is in progress. This has for its object the delimitation of that land which is purely forest, and the demarcation of that land which is purely agricultural. In framing the Estimates for the current year, rigid economy has been again observed, and although, as I explained, we effected a saving in administration last year of no less a sum than £1,600, the Estimates show that we propose a further economy in the coming year of £495. I commend the Estimates to the Committee.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [9.22]: I am glad to have the assurance of the Minister that it is not his intention to enforce the amended scale of assistance in respect of married farmers.

The Minister for Industries: It never was so intended.

Mr. PIESSE: The allowance of 9s. per day is little enough for those men working under such trying conditions. While we must give credit to the department for its work, and for its desire to assist the farmers, I do hope the Minister will speedily instruct his inspectors to correct the impression which is abroad that the assistance to married men is to be reduced to 7s. per day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is for those with out families.

Mr. PIESSE: Married men, with or without families, should receive 9s. a day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Minister says that those without families are to be reduced to 7s.

Mr. PIESSE: There might be some justification for reducing the allowance to single men, but I hope nothing will be done to disturb the conditions in respect to married men, with or without families. We have repeatedly heard it declared that the State has advanced too much financial assistance to the I.A.B. men, but I venture to say that, notwithstanding the proportion of doubtful clients, the State is well protected by the asset created.

Mr. Troy: Where will the asset be if the men leave their holdings?

Mr. PIESSE: The asset is in the holding.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Agricultural Bank holds that.

Mr. PIESSE: But after satisfying the Agricultural Bank there is a sufficient balance to protect the State. I hope the department, when considering the position of those men

who have failed, will bear in mind that their failures are not always due to inability to make good, but are due rather to extraordinary circumstances under which they have toiled. If it is sound business to make a compromise with outside creditors, I think it is also sound business on the part of the State to make a compromise with those men, and see if it is not possible to give them another chance to make good on their holdings. I am sure the men have now a knowledge of local conditions which they did not previously possess, and that it would pay the State to extend the time for the repayment of the liability, and to provide that it should be free of interest for a given period. A good deal of the liability represents arrears of rates which, under the circumstances, it was not fair to impose on those people. I hope that in the near future a close investigation will be made as to the condition of those people in the list of doubtful clients, and that every possible consideration will be extended to enable them to remain on their holdings; because, if they are forced off their holdings, those who follow them will reap the reward of their labours. I am confident that the conditions of settlement were such that many men took up their holdings without a knowledge of the difficulties they had to face. Once more I ask the Minister to make clear the assurance he has given me to-night, and so put an end to the agitation which is brewing amongst the farming community in consequence of the suggested reduction of the 9s. per day. The Minister said that good work had been done in the rabbit infested area which he recently visited. I can endorse those remarks. I am hopeful that it will be only a matter of a few years before the pest is completely stamped out between the two fences and the position of the I.A.B. settlers in that district rendered sound. I am confident that a considerable body of the settlers between the two fences will make good and that that portion of Western Australia will be a large producer of grain and other agricultural produce.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams - Narrogin) [9.29]: I find considerable relief in the explanation of the Minister that the circular sent out to the inspectors is not to be enforced to the letter. The circular has been made public in the farming districts, and the inspectors have been instructed by the general manager to show it to the settlers during the November inspection. The circular says that Cabinet has now decided that single men are to be allowed a sum of not more than 5s. a day. Married men without children are to be allowed the sum of not more than 7s. a day, and married men with children up to 9s. a day, for six days a week only. That is all the assisted settler is to receive.

Mr. Mullaney: He is a long way better off than the working man about Perth.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Not at all. We have to consider the price of stores as ruling in the State to-day. The Government quite properly have found it necessary to allow a special war bonus of 1s. a day to Government employees, bringing them up to a minimum of 10s. a day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Nine shillings and sevenpence.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It must be borne in mind that the worker in the metropolitan area does not have to pay the heavy freights that are now charged. I do not, however, wish to labour that point. Where men are fair, square and honest workers on the land, it is the duty, as I believe it is the desire, of the Minister to see that they get a fair amount to live upon, and with which to support and feed and clothe their families. My complaint applies more particularly to the married man with a family. In so far as single men are concerned, many of these have big properties and are employing a man all the year round. They only have wages allowed them for a man for perhaps three months a year, and have been endeavouring, out of the 9s. a day, to employ a man largely for the benefit of the Government and to the end that he might pay off the liability which rests on the holding he gets. From the Minister's reply to my questions, I understand that cases of that kind will be dealt with on their merits.

The Minister for Industries: They always have been.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It seems, therefore, they are not to be dealt with under the hard and fast rules such as appear on the surface. The circular goes on to say that for the purpose of this instruction it is desired to be understood that single men and settlers with dependents may be viewed in the same way as married men without children, etc., but the inspector must satisfy himself that there are dependents. In the case of married men with children, the scale will automatically increase from 7s. to 9s. per day on the basis of 6d. for each child. I respectfully urge upon the Minister that where the settler's account is fair and satisfactory, he should not be reduced, if he is a married man, to 7s. a day, even if he has no family. In the case of men who have large families, I am sure that in many instances it will be found that the 6d. per day allowance up to four children is not sufficient. I know it is the desire of the Government to keep these men on the land, and I am not bringing this matter forward in any captious spirit. The display of this circular in the district has caused feeling to run very high during the past fortnight, and I think the matter is one that deserves the careful attention of the Government. The defence of the Minister is, generally speaking, a satisfactory one, namely, that he does not intend to enforce the terms of the circular in the way that many of those who read it feared it would be enforced. I am certain that his assurance will afford a great deal of relief in the farming districts. I should like to say a few words in defence of the assisted settler on the land. There seems to be a feeling that he has been unduly assisted by the Government. I am sure this is not the case, particularly since the present Minister, who has considerable business knowledge and ability, has been in charge of the department.

Mr. Smith: And a soft heart.

Mr. JOHNSTON: For the last couple of years we have had very close supervision over

the men on the land, and there has been an inspector to about every 80 settlers. These inspectors are going round all the time, and I have heard of settlers having one day's pay struck off if the inspector happened to hear that they had been away to a picnic or a wedding for one particular day in the month. The settlers who have survived, and are on the land to-day, are practically all good men, but many of these have had their assistance reduced.

The Minister for Industries: Wherever I have been the farmers have spoken in very high terms of the inspectors.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The vast majority of the inspectors work sympathetically and well with the farmers, who owe a great deal to the advice and assistance given by the practical inspector, such as most of the inspectors are. From that point of view, also, the inspection has resulted in good work being done in that, for the most part, Government officials have been ready at hand to assist the settlers in the direction of their holdings. Farmers have been compelled to carry on their operations in accordance with the wishes of the inspectors, and if they did not do this their assistance has been stopped. I take it, therefore, that where failures have occurred the cause has to be looked for beyond the inspector, who is a practical man, and beyond the farmer, who is doing his best to improve his property under the direction of the inspector, and that the failures have been due mainly to the land itself in some cases being a poor selection, or to adverse climatic conditions brought about by drought.

The Minister for Industries: To be fair you must admit that in some cases the failure has been due to the man himself.

Mr. JOHNSTON: In some cases that may be so, but since the rigid system of inspection has been in vogue the farmer has had to follow the advice of the inspector, failing which assistance has been denied him. That phase of the question must not be not overlooked by members. I would like to point out how the advances have come down. Naturally, it is the ambition of every settler to get off the board as soon as he can, and I am satisfied that the sooner a farmer does pay off the board the sooner will he become better off himself, and the sooner will he have his property in his own hands. Ninety per cent. of the assisted farmers are looking forward earnestly to attaining that object and working hard to that end. I find that for the 12 months ended the 31st March last the sum of £803,825 has been advanced by the board, of which £93,000 was advanced to the Government to pay for Government indebtedness.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Government had to pay interest on that money.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Even to-day the Assistance Board is being used to pay nearly £100,000 yearly to the Government, which the farmers cannot honestly earn from their land in order to pay to the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are paying the farmer to go on the land.

Mr. JOHNSTON: In the old days when from year to year adverse conditions obtained, these payments to the Government were held over.

The Minister for Industries: So they are now. In respect to land rents, if the farmer is not in a position to pay, we put ourselves in his shoes and say to the Lands Department, "You must hold over this man's rent."

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is so, but before the present Minister came into office huge sums of money were paid to Government departments for land rents.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I think they did wrong in not paying them.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Even for the year ended 31st March last, I find that £26,887 was paid to the Lands Department for land rents, £62,865 was paid to the Agricultural Bank for interest, and £4,048 was paid to the Water Supply Department, making a total of £93,800 paid by the Assistance Board to Government departments. I do not question these payments, but would point out that had it not been for the board the Government would have had to wait for the money in the same way that they had to wait before the board was formed. To-day the farmer is paying seven per cent. on his payments made to Government departments by the Industries Assistance Board—

The Minister for Industries: He pays five per cent. on the bank money.

Mr. JOHNSTON: But the Minister pays that off. The farmer pays seven per cent. to the Industries Assistance Board for the money which has been paid in reducing the debt on which he only pays five per cent.

The Minister for Industries: On the bulk of the money owing to the bank he only pays five per cent.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am referring to the £93,000 which was paid to the Government departments by the Assistance Board.

The Colonial Treasurer: A man is very lucky if he can get money at seven per cent. in these times.

Mr. JOHNSTON: In the days when droughts occurred, it was the practice of the various Ministers to hold over these payments to Government departments for land rents, bank interest, and other things, and in the case of Mr. Bath's administration of the department the money was eventually accepted without any interest at all being paid on it. This is on record. I am only pointing out that this board has helped the Government very largely in keeping down the deficit.

The Colonial Treasurer: The board was formed to assist settlers during the drought.

Mr. JOHNSTON: We have put before the Minister a scheme which he approves of, but has not yet carried into effect, and which, if carried into effect will be one of the finest things that has ever been put forward for the agriculturist in Western Australia. The scheme I have in mind would result in putting to an end the operations of the Industries Assistance Board. The amounts advanced by the board for the year ended the

31st March, 1918, were £803,825; for the year ended the 31st March, 1917, they were £936,702, and for the year ended the 31st March, 1916, £1,104,025. It will be seen that the activities of the Government, combined with the fact that assisted settlers are getting into a better position, have resulted in the amount required for this purpose being reduced by over £300,000 per annum in two years.

The Minister for Industries: That is because last year quite 200 settlers were able to leave the board.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is the good effect of the policy of assistance to which I am trying to draw attention, and for which I am trying to give successive Governments of this State credit for having carried into effect. In spite of these large amounts, over one million pounds per annum, advanced only three years ago, we find that on the 31st March last, according to this balance sheet, the total amount outstanding on account of assisted farmers was only £1,200,138 9s. 1d.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Use the word "only" again, to impress it on our minds.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It is to be specially noticed that an item of reduction has not been shown, an item which would reduce the total considerably. I refer to wheat certificates held on which further dividends may be declared, and to deliveries of wheat after the 31st March, 1918. That has to be deducted from the outstanding balance of £1,200,000 existing on the 31st March.

The Minister for Industries: You can put that as a credit of say £350,000.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am delighted to have those figures from the Minister. The total amount outstanding on the 31st March was, therefore, only £850,000, if everything could have been wound up on that date. These figures prove that the assisted settlers, with isolated exceptions, are doing their duty as regards wiping off their liabilities. Further, a sum of nearly £600,000 has been paid by these settlers to Government departments.

The Minister for Industries: But that is spread over the whole period of the board's existence.

Mr. JOHNSTON: True, but whilst on the 31st March last the assisted settlers owed, in round figures, only £850,000, those farmers have paid, through the medium of the Industries Assistance Board since its inception in 1914, no less than £579,995 3s. 10d. to Government departments for Government purposes.

The Minister for Industries: Largely land rents.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Largely land rents.

The Minister for Industries: But 75 per cent. of that amount represents interest.

Mr. JOHNSTON: At any rate, those are payments which, in view of the untoward circumstances of the drought, could not have been made by those settlers had not there been an Industries Assistance Board in existence. The revenue account has certainly derived great benefit from the existence of the board. Now I wish to quote the figures of payments made to the Government depart-

ments in each financial year. In 1914-15 the amount was £122,958 19s. 8d.

The Minister for Industries: You are now reading from the annual report?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yes. I am taking the figures from the very comprehensive report on which Mr. Richardson is certainly to be complimented. The report gives a great deal of valuable detail, which unfortunately was not obtainable in previous years, and which ought to be circulated among the farmers. For the year 1914-15 the amount paid by the farmers to State departments was £122,958 19s. 8d., for the year 1915-16 the amount was £134,878 2s. 7d., for 1916-17, £218,242 14s. 11d., and for 1917-18, £103,915 6s. 8d.; or a total for the four years of £579,995 3s. 10d. The assisted farmers as a body are to be complimented on the fact that, after having paid off through the board liabilities to the State of nearly £600,000, they should on the 31st March last have owed only a total amount of, in round figures, £850,000. Let me point out, too, that through this transfer of the money from loan through the Industries Assistance Board to revenue the farmers have had to pay interest, first at the rate of six per cent., and now of seven per cent., on their total indebtedness. Though the Government may think seven per cent. a fair thing, I wish to remind the Attorney General that a great deal of money was borrowed by the Labour Government at only 4½ per cent., for the assistance of farmers. It seems that owing to the financial stringency of the State much of this money has since been used for financing the deficit, and that fresh money borrowed has been put down to the farmer's account, his interest being increased.

The Colonial Treasurer: Do you stand up there and suggest that money obtained on loan should be put away in some corner just to be used for this purpose?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Certainly not.

The Colonial Treasurer: Had it been paid, then the Treasurer would have had it; but the Treasurer has had to advance additional money.

Mr. JOHNSTON: But the account seems to be decreasing, not increasing.

The Colonial Treasurer: According to your own figures, the farmers paid £300,000 and the Treasurer had to find £500,000.

Mr. JOHNSTON: These figures satisfy me completely that the total indebtedness of the farmers has been coming down, and, consequently, that the money which has been repaid by the farmers has been used to finance the deficit, and that subsequently other moneys have been borrowed at higher rates of interest and charged to the farmers at seven per cent.

The CHAIRMAN: I have no desire to baulk discussion, but what bearing has that on the Estimates?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I think I have made my views on that point clear. Next, as regards the position of the man who had 2,000 free sheep. In my opinion such a man should be put off the board altogether. At the same time I want the Committee to know some of the difficulties which certain men actually in credit have to get off the board. It may be

news to some hon. members that if a man can meet all his current liabilities, and then have a surplus in the board's books, he is unable to get off the board unless he is prepared to pay now promissory notes falling due perhaps next March and the March following that for machinery in respect of which the board have given a guarantee.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Quite right, too.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It is quite right that the State should be protected, and I am not objecting to that; but I am sure the Treasurer will recognise the hardship of keeping such a man, who may be earning £500 or £600 a year on his property, down to 5s. or 7s. a day sustenance.

The Minister for Industries: But that man does not get sustenance.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yes.

The Colonial Treasurer: He does not need any sustenance.

The Minister for Industries: That man gets what money he wants. If he wants £50 or £100, he gets it.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am glad to know that. The case as put to me last week by farmers actually in that position was that, whilst they had a surplus with the board, they could only get up to 7s. per day because their surplus was not sufficient to meet debts which would not fall due for 15 months.

The Minister for Industries: That is not correct. If a man will be clear in March next, we treat him as an ordinary banker would treat him.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am glad to have the point cleared up.

The Minister for Industries: I should like you to send me particulars of the cases to which you refer.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If such a man were to be reduced from 9s. to 7s. per day, the injustice would be apparent to the Minister. In conclusion, let me urge on the Minister to give effect to the scheme which he has outlined to the public, and in which I understand he takes a great deal of interest. The Minister has, I know, had in mind a proposal for endeavouring to get rid of a lot of the liabilities of assisted farmers to outside creditors. It has been suggested that the properties of such settlers should be valued, and that the creditors should be asked to accept a payment in the pound corresponding approximately to the ratio of the settler's assets to his liabilities.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Will the Government do that for everybody else? The farmers have no right more than anybody else to be supplied with Government money for such a purpose.

Mr. JOHNSTON: This State has had a land settlement policy. This State has persuaded men to give up good positions in the Government service and elsewhere in order that they might build happy homes for themselves on the agricultural areas of Western Australia. That prospect has, generally speaking, not been realised so quickly as was originally anticipated. In 1914 there occurred a drought which according to the Government publications could not occur in this highly favoured land. That being so, and since I understand the Perth Chamber of Commerce have expressed their



desire, as representing the commercial community, to meet those men by accepting some such proportion as I have indicated of outstanding liabilities, I wish to take this opportunity of assuring the Minister that if he can bring his project to fruition he will have done a very great thing for all the settlers on the land in Western Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And a splendid thing for the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. JOHNSTON: A splendid thing for the settlers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A thing to the detriment of the State.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If he carries that into effect, the Minister will attain that consummation so devoutly to be wished of doing away with the Industries Assistance Board altogether. All that is necessary is to add the existing liabilities to the amount of bank mortgages on such reduced basis as may be accepted by the creditors, and then the farmers will all have a fresh start. I venture to say that such a start would create fresh confidence in the whole of our agricultural industry. There would therefore be credit obtainable everywhere, and farming and commercial circles would derive a great benefit. The Government could enter into such a scheme with all the more confidence, since the figures disclosed in the bank's report show that the majority of farmers are making good and that the board's account has been considerably reduced and that each year less money is required to carry the farmers on. I venture to say these objects are being attained because the farmers as a general class are honest and hard working men, who are doing their best to pay off their liabilities which they were unfortunately forced to contract through the disastrous drought of 1914.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [10.2]: We in the South-West unfortunately have not had the advantages which have been enumerated by the member for Williams-Narrogin. We have never had extended to us that paternal consideration which those who are under the Industries Assistance Board have received. What I desire to draw attention to is the fact that we have an institution in existence—I refer to the Agricultural Bank—which could devote serious attention to the development of the district I represent, and I think the Minister would be well advised to consider the need for widening the scope of that institution so as to enable it to assist the South-West which has been so sadly neglected by every Government in Western Australia. There are large areas in the South-West which have been lying idle for a long time and which, if properly treated—and that could only be done by liberal loans being granted—would give big yields, and the development of which would result profitably not only for the individual but for the State. I may instance one particular spot which may be known to hon. members who have travelled on the Boyanup-Busselton line, I refer to Elgin. There, is to be seen at Elgin, one of the most barren-looking places that could be found anywhere and yet under proper treatment that country has been proved to be highly productive. In

connection with the suggested liberal treatment of the South-West, attention might be drawn to the fact that the Government have a tree-pulling plant for the hire of which a charge of 18s. per hour is made.

The Minister for Industries: That does not come under this Vote.

Mr. PICKERING: I understand that advances for this particular purpose are obtained from the Agricultural Bank.

The Minister for Industries: But we have no control over the tree-pulling plant.

Mr. PICKERING: But the department which the Minister controls has a good deal to say in connection with the sinews which are required for the payment for the hire of these machines. The price I have stated is very high and I understand has been increased by 2s. quite lately. Then again the period for which loans are granted is too short. I understand that it is 10 years. The only way to successfully carry on settlement in this part of the State is to provide a sufficient area of improved land, for it is only on improved land in the South-West that farmers can make good. As was illustrated when the Forestry Bill was under consideration, it is only when areas in the South-West are denuded of the trees that anything can be done with them; it is only possible in three months of the year to derive any profit from the forest country after burning prior to improvement. A generous policy should therefore be instituted in order to bring about successful development. Another matter of importance in the South-West is that of drainage. To my mind the secret of the successful development of a large area of this country lies in a system of national drainage. This could be wisely undertaken by the Government and settlers afterwards could carry on the work of draining their own land which at the present time they are not able to do for the reason that it would mean that they would be draining the water from their own property on to that of their neighbours.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You should have dealt with that under the Agricultural Estimates.

Mr. PICKERING: I want the Agricultural Bank to appreciate the value of draining these properties.

The Minister for Industries: They do it now.

Mr. PICKERING: With regard to the question of lime, I have before me a report which the Minister for Industries did me the honour of obtaining from the Geological Surveys of Western Australia, and which report shows that a sample of lime which I submitted for assay purposes, and which represented the lime that can be got from a large tract of country extending over an area of 13 miles, contained calcium carbonate to the value of 88.38 per cent., magnesium carbonate 2.95 per cent., and there is a footnote which reads—

This limestone is well suited for making burnt lime for building or agriculture, for ground limestone for agriculture, or for cement making.

This lime was taken from land at Busselton adjoining the railway. The limestone at Dongarra may be excellent, but it is far too remote to be of great value to settlement south of Perth, even considering the 8 or 10 per cent. difference in the value. I would therefore ask the Minister for Industries to take into consideration the advisability of encouraging the development of these lime deposits.

The Minister for Industries: The Lake Clifton lime is 98 per cent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This matter, too, should have been discussed under the Agricultural Department Estimates.

Mr. PICKERING: The hon. member is very anxious to curtail my remarks regarding the South-West. He has a general antipathy to the farming industry. I am particularly interested in the question of lime in the South-West, and as it has been pointed out that in connection with farming the use of lime is vital, the question is one which should receive attention. I am anxious to know also whether the Minister can tell us when we may look forward to a classification of the vast areas that lie at the back of Busselton. We have heard adverse comments from the Minister in connection with this particular part of the State, and evidence of the lack of interest in it is to be found on the maps of the Lands Department, on which maps vast areas are shown as being practically unknown. I have repeatedly drawn attention to this matter since I have been elected to represent Sussex, and I have been promised that this would be one of the matters that would be put in hand when the classification was commenced. I learned recently, however, that instead of the department going through the areas which I consider should be classified, the work has been diverted to another direction. It is of great importance that this part of the State should be speedily classified. The State has invested at Busselton a considerable sum of money in the construction of a jetty and that jetty is practically idle. Busselton has suffered considerably from the fact that traffic which geographically belongs to it has been diverted to Bunbury. I am unable to ascertain why we do not get our share of the trade. In conclusion I would like to add my appreciation to that of the other members of the Country party of the courtesy which the Minister for Industries has extended to that party whenever they have waited on him in connection with matters affecting the welfare of the State, especially in connection with the Industries Assistance Board. The Minister has always been prepared to listen to members in a sympathetic way and has extended to us fair treatment whilst at the same time he has been just to the taxpayers of the State.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.13]: It is amusing to hear hon. members complain that the Government are not doing enough for the farmers. One hon. member pointed out that the farmers' indebtedness was now only £1,100,000. But I am pleased to see that the Minister is realising that other people in the State have to be considered equally with the farmers. There are the timber workers whose wages are 9s. 7d. a day,

and who in addition have to pay rent, and who work from morning till night. We find from the figures which have been placed before us that of the sum advanced to farmers £908,304 is regarded as doubtful as to whether it will be paid back or not. And we have also been told to-night that the advances have gone up 100 per cent. since last year, and that they now amount to £1,198,653. And yet members are saying the Government have no right to take money from the farmers. I admire the member for Williams-Narrogin for his interest as far as the farmers are concerned, but he has little interest in it, so far as it affects the State generally. He complains because the Government have not suspended Agricultural Bank interest. It is true that half a million pounds have been paid into the Government departments but £219,000 of that has been paid for bank interest only. It is money that has been borrowed by the Government and advanced to the farmers to improve their holdings and on which the Government have to pay interest. It is transferring money from one department to another. I want also to say that the Agricultural Bank Act provides that the farmers should pay instalments but these have not been charged at all—only interest has been charged to the farmers and the instalments have remained unpaid. Yet members castigate the Government because they do not continue paying 9s. a day for single men who work for the farmers on the land. It is time we realised what we are doing. I have pointed out that £908,304 is doubtful and in addition to that £92,524 is bad, which the Government realise they will not get back at all. The Industries Assistance Board was inaugurated to assist farmers temporarily over the drought season. It was not brought in as a permanent institution; but it is my belief that if it is kept going for 20 years some farmers will want it kept on then. I hope the Government will, as soon as possible, get rid of the Industries Assistance Board and that the Government will be very careful indeed in borrowing money at a time like this to compromise with the creditors of farmers. The Government have no more right to borrow money to pay the creditors of farmers than they have to borrow money to pay my creditors, or merchants' creditors, or other persons' creditors. I notice that the Government have made arrangements to take over the accounts of the National Harvester Co. and Harris, Scarfe, & Co.

The Minister for Industries: Those were guaranteed accounts.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I notice in connection with the doubtful farmers, who in all probability will not pay, there are creditors in addition amounting to £204,013. Whether any of this money is owing to the Government I do not know, but private creditors have claims on any surplus. Of those which the Government say are bad, amounting to £100,000, there is an additional £45,806 owing to private creditors. It is time the Government took a pull as far as this system is concerned and realised the financial position of the State. It is time they saw that the farmers should only have justice and not be spoon-fed in the way in which they have been of late. As the mem-

ber for Mr. Magnet said, he would be only too glad to get on the Industries Assistance Board, and there are others who have to battle along to meet their payments, and have not this easy way of getting out of their difficulties by going to the Industries Assistance Board. I notice in the return the Government this year have received only £26,887 for land rents, and I want to remind members that the other people of the State are paying interest on that money. Farmers have only paid a very small proportion of their land rents. This is borrowed money that they are using and is shown in our deficit to-day. If the farmers cannot pay they should have the interest charged up to them.

The Minister for Industries: In fairness to them, I may say that the man who is not on the Industries Assistance Board and cannot pay his rent, and makes out a fair case to the Lands Department, his rent is held over also.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He is fined under the Act.

The Minister for Industries: So is the other man.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not if he is released under the Act.

The Minister for Industries: He is placed on the same footing as the other man.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That has not been done previously. The man who is trying to push through on his own is fined if he cannot pay his rent.

The Minister for Industries: My arrangement is that they are placed on the same footing.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: These land rents are a misnomer. It is land purchase money, and I wish to emphasise the fact that the people of the State have to pay interest on this money.

The Minister for Industries: My arrangement was that the Industries Assistance Board man who could not pay should be placed on the same footing as the ordinary farmer.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I congratulate the Minister on being extremely careful in seeing that those he intends to assist are those who deserve it. The deputy leader of the Country party says that the Government should not refuse to pay the 9s. a day to the single man. The farmer who has a dozen children is making no complaint, but where there is a man who has a wife only he is considered hardly done by if his amount is reduced to 7s. a day. I hope the Minister is correct in his anticipation that there will be no losses. I think that there will be a loss of not less than £500,000 as far as the farmers are concerned, or it will be very many years before the Government get the money back.

The Colonial Treasurer: After this harvest we are going to be very strict.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In conclusion I want to congratulate the Minister on exercising care in regard to the advances which he intends to make to the farmers in the future.

General debate concluded; votes and items discussed as follows:—

Votes, Agricultural Bank, Industries Assistance Board, Soldiers' Land Settlement Industrial Development:

Item, Sub-accountant, £240.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Last year this officer was receiving £264, this year the amount is £240. What is the reason for the reduction? It seems a very small amount.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: As far as my notes go the amount is the same as last year.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: According to the Estimates the amount is the same but the amount paid last year was £264.

Item, Rent, £1,990.

Mr. SMITH: Would the Minister give some explanation as to the large increase in this amount? It is about £500; a pretty substantial amount. Those who know the offices occupied by the bank are aware that they are altogether unsuitable. They are more like a rabbit warren than anything else, and it requires a tracker to locate the individual offices. The rent seems exorbitant, and now it is proposed to increase the rent by about £10 a week. Surely the Government could find more suitable premises, if not their own something less costly. If the Government are under a contract, it is unfortunate.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: The very day I was appointed Minister for Industries I found a note on my table to which my attention was drawn that the lease of the premises was to be renewed for a period of two years. I immediately saw the Premier and Treasurer about it and the conclusion came to was that the premises were not to be renewed. When I went back to the department I found on the file that the Minister who preceded me had agreed to renew the lease some two or three months previously. Under the previous Administration the Wheat Scheme and the Agricultural Bank were administered by the one Minister, and he had all the Wheat Scheme officials on the St. George's Terrace side of the second floor. Then the Wheat Scheme was placed under the Department of Agriculture. The offices we were providing had no public access. The Wheat Scheme has become a public scheme, requiring public access. A change had to be made, and the Scheme officials had to be given other office accommodation. They were moved along to another part of the building, giving public access. The total amount of rent payable for the whole of the offices is £1,990. But we receive in our department a recoup for all those offices occupied by the Wheat Scheme, which brings the amount down to what was paid last year, namely, £1,503. However, under the existing system of presenting the Estimates, we have to charge what our rent really is. It is the system of the Treasurer that we must not show recoups from other departments, and so the Agricultural Department has to pay the Industries Assistance Board some £400.

The Colonial Treasurer: That is shown in another department.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: In point of fact we are paying not a penny more than we paid last year. The difference between the two amounts is what the Wheat Scheme pays. The lease expires in, I think, next July.

Mr. Smith: Are you going to renew the lease?

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES:** Inquiries are being made in other localities. The Minister for Works and the Colonial Treasurer are both looking for other premises. I shall be quite content to be removed to cheaper offices, so long as they are convenient. If I can get it I require one large room, in which the 80 officers can work where they can all be seen. The work would be more expeditiously performed and better supervised, while the health of the officers would be improved.

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** I am glad to hear that the Minister is looking out for another office. I can recommend to him a room at the Supreme Court, which is at present virtually unoccupied. This would relieve the overcrowding of the present offices. At the A.M.P. buildings the Minister, with his two clerks, occupies three very large rooms, while other smaller rooms are disgracefully overcrowded. The same condition obtains among the offices occupied by the Agricultural Bank. No private firm would be permitted to carry on under similar conditions of overcrowding.

Mr. Smith: What do you suggest?

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** That the Minister should go back to the rooms at the Crown Law Department which are reserved for him as Attorney General. This would afford a good deal of additional office accommodation at the A.M.P. buildings.

**THE COLONIAL TREASURER:** One of the first things I did on being appointed Treasurer was to endeavour to find out exactly what offices we were occupying, and what they were costing us. I was astounded to learn that it had been agreed to renew the lease of the offices in the A.M.P. buildings. Had it not been for this we could have got two whole floors at Sargood's building for about £900 per annum, and we could there have housed four complete departments. It was just what we were wanting, but we had to renew the lease at the A.M.P. building. We have had an expert going round seeing what can be effected by alterations in our own buildings, and we think we can get all our departments housed in our own premises for an outlay of some £2,000 odd. They will require a good deal of alteration, the estimate being about £2,000. If this can be arranged, and I think it can be, it will not only lead to better work being done, but to those files which get on a man's nerves being reduced in number. I do not think the offices in the A.M.P. buildings can be said to be suitable for the business that is carried on in them. As a matter of fact they are most inconvenient. I have been astounded to see so many people jammed into a small space. As soon as the session is over the first job for the Minister for Works and myself will be to house our departments in decent surroundings, so that the work can be done in a more systematic manner than it is at present.

Mr. Smith: I am pleased to hear there is to be a change, and I hope it will not be left too late.

**THE COLONIAL TREASURER:** I can assure hon. members that there will not be a renewal of the lease of this place.

Item, Ship building in Western Australia, £350.

**Mr. PICKERING:** I should like an explanation of this item.

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES:** The endeavours of the Industries Department to promote shipbuilding in Western Australia necessitated a good deal of expense in the launching of the industry. I regret to say that owing to a difference between the unionists concerned and the Commonwealth, the unionists refusing to sign the agreement, the scheme had to be abandoned.

**Hon. W. C. Angwin:** The Commonwealth are more to blame than anyone else.

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES:** The Commonwealth Government would not agree to go on unless the unionists signed the agreement. In the establishment of the ship building company it was necessary to send an engineer to make inquiries in Melbourne, and about six weeks of his salary fell upon the Government. I also made a trip to Melbourne to endeavour to finalise the contract, and the expenses incurred appear also in this item.

Item, Experimental kiln at Crawley, £400.

**Mr. PICKERING:** What is this item in connection with?

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES:** For a long time there has been no method of drying timber other than in the open air. The result of open air drying is that the outer surface of the wood dries rapidly, which causes case hardening. We have been conducting experiments at Crawley under the supervision of the university to arrive at a method of kiln drying, which will obviate this case hardening. It is a system of hot air combined with a certain spraying of moisture into the air, which gives humidity to the atmosphere and prevents the outside hardening of the case. The drying process goes right through systematically. It is found in most classes of timber that after a month or six weeks in the kiln the timber is properly dried. The department has not been put to any expense. The professor of engineering has been in charge, and our officers merely visit the place from time to time. The students have also taken a hand. The cost has been in connection with the finding of the wood for the experiments, the construction of the shed which forms the hot air compartment, and the supplying of machinery which makes the hot air. The experiment has so far been successful. It is hoped that in the near future it will lead to the establishment at our timber mills of drying sheds of a similar nature.

Item, Pottery experiments, £200.

**Mr. SMITH:** I should like to know something about this item?

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES:** Last year a sum of £247 was spent under this head. I found that all the tiles in Western Australia were imported either from Marseilles or Sydney. I was told that there were no suitable clays in Western Australia for tile manufacture. I then happened to come across a Mr.

Rafferty, who had been manager of large pottery works in Lancashire. I sent him along to Mr. Simpson, the Government Analytical chemist, who said he was the type of man he had been looking for for years. There were sent to the Industries Department subsequently 140 samples of Western Australian clay, which had to be examined. For this examination it was necessary to build a kiln. Mr. Rafferty was put in charge, and we were able to prove beyond doubt that we had in Western Australia clay which turns out tiles as good as those which had been imported. There are several companies in the State now making tiles which did not make them before. It also been established that the Mt. Kokeby clay, and clay from other places, is as good for hollow ware as can be obtained.

Mr. Thomson: Can we compete with the Marseilles tiles?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: If we cannot compete with tiles which have had to be handled four times and carried across the ocean, and which have had 30 per cent. of them broken in transit, our workmen had better bow their heads. We are making tiles in Western Australia equally as good as those which come from Marseilles. That expense will not be recurring, for the reason that I have arranged with the Council of Science and Industry in Melbourne to provide pound for pound for our experiments. The Council have now agreed to provide £300 for a continuance of the experiments. Probably £100 or £150 of the amount set down will not be expended.

Mr. SMITH: I quite approve of what the Government have done in the way of experimenting, and I should like to see it continued. But as regards the conditions under which the experiments are being conducted, I made it my business to call at the building; and it is hard to conceive of a more unsuitable place. Success is scarcely possible under such conditions. I was informed that a suitable building could be erected for £1,000. On these Estimates we have passed an amount of £1,200 for repairing the Governor's cottage at Albany, and for other like purposes. That money would have been much better devoted to the erection of a building suitable for these experiments. I trust such a building will be provided. Apart from the success of the experiments, there is the health of the workmen to be considered.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: The same conditions as the member for North Perth found, I also found. After spending a day at the building, I was another day getting the fumes out of my head. I have made a special report to the Minister for Mines on the subject of the building required, and plans are now being prepared for a building which would cost about £1,000.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Woods and Forests, £10,725:

Item, Maintaining nursery, and pine, wattle, and sandalwood plantations, including reafforestation, £400.

Mr. PICKERING: I want to know about the sandalwood plantations.

Mr. Smith: Where are they?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: Last year's expenditure of £387 under this head was mainly at Hamel, but there are several places where experiments are being conducted to discover a suitable spot for continuing pine plantation work. In this connection "Sandalwood" is only a name, the name of a place. The sandalwood plantation at Pinjarra was destroyed years ago through cattle being turned into it. The word "Sandalwood" is retained because the Conservator of Forests hopes very soon to make a start with another sandalwood plantation, as that timber can be well grown in this country and will prove a valuable asset to the State.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: What has been done regarding the 30 tons of timber which were to be sent to the munition works for distillation?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: The 30 tons of timber have not been sent home. Timber in London was to be used. One of the professors arranged for the munition factory in Bideford to put through 30 tons and ascertain exactly the value of the products and the cost. He arranged with the Agent General's office to send the 30 tons of timber. He came out to Australia, and on his return to England he called at the munition factory to ascertain the results of the test, whereupon he was told that the timber had not come along. At the Agent General's office he ascertained that two officers there, who are not now in the employ of the Government, had neglected to send the timber because they thought the Government should not pay the freight on it: this although we were getting the tests made free of charge. A high official then in the employ of the Government further said that there was no occasion to make the experiments because he was satisfied the result would be no good. On those facts coming to the knowledge of the Government, we instantly cabled to the present Agent General instructions to have the 30 tons of timber supplied to the munitions factory. Owing to the stupidity of the officials I have referred to, the tests have not yet been made.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Industries and Woods and Forests Departments.

Treasury Department, Hon. J. Gardiner, Minister.

Vote—Treasury, £10,630:

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin) [10.58]: It is not my intention to detain the Committee with a long explanation of these Estimates. However, there are a few facts which I consider ought to be in hon. members' possession, in order that they may more clearly grasp the position. In Treasury salaries there is a net increase of £551; but included in this is an amount for salaries of officers transferred from other departments, equal to £1,000. It is practically an effect of the amalgamation which has taken place. This latter amount being deducted, it will be seen that a fairly good saving has been effected in the direction of salaries. In "Contingencies" there is a reduction of £1,091; but that is due almost entirely to the fact that printing is now charged to one department. In the Audit Branch there has been a slight

increase of £115. We are putting a good deal more work on the Auditor General, and as a consequence his staff has had to be slightly increased. As to "Compassionate Allowances," portion of the expenditure is permanent, while some is incurred pursuant to recommendations of the Public Service Commissioner. "Savings Bank" shows a slight increase, due to extra work. Last year the bank had a net increase in its accounts of nearly £16,000. On the subject of State savings banks, the Treasurers, at the last conference, had an informal conversation with the acting Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, Mr. Watt, who as Treasurer of Victoria had been a strong advocate of a policy of non-interference with State savings banks by the Commonwealth Bank. He assured us that when this was discussed again in all probability the Commonwealth Bank would then have so many functions that at least the Savings Bank would pass back to the State. I regret that here the collection of Savings Bank money is costing us a good deal more than it should, but whether the Commonwealth carry out their intention or not, there is an opportunity for doing some advertising to make our bank much more popular than it is. I have discussed the matter with the manager of the bank, and as soon as we can get into recess, it is my intention to endeavour to propound a scheme to make our own institution more popular than it is. The Government Stores show a net increase in contingencies, but actually there has been a saving of something like £340. Last year we expended £5,332, but this year we have taken over £1,640 worth of salaries which were hitherto paid by the Water Supply and other departments. If this were added to last year's expenditure, it would make the total £6,972. We have, however, got rid of a fair number of employees here, and we intend to get rid of a few more, the total cost to the Government this year being estimated at £6,132 or a saving of £840. With regard to the Literary and Scientific vote, there is a decrease due to the grant to the University to cover the salary of a professor of agriculture being now paid by the Hackett Estate, and the grant to the university for extension of work, £1,620, being non-recurring. The sum of £150 has been taken off the Zoological Gardens vote. In the Lithographic Department there has been a net decrease of £306 in wages and salaries, but an increase of £545 in contingencies entirely due to the increased cost of the high class paper necessary for litho work. So far as Printing is concerned, it is with great pleasure that I have to announce that owing to economies and the proper supervision of the printing work of the departments, the expenditure this year is £8,398 less than the expenditure of 1916-17 and £10,848 less than the expenditure of 1915-16. This must indeed be gratifying to the Committee when it is considered that the price of paper has increased enormously. It has to an extent been made possible by utilising all obsolete forms, book covers and everything obtainable, and the result reflects the greatest credit on the Government

Printer, who is now practically in control of this Vote, and who keeps a watchful eye on the expenditure, and also to Mr. Glyde. I always like to give credit where credit is due. We think we can still effect a saving of another £1,400 or £1,500 in this department. For the purpose of comparison it may be stated that the cost of Government printing in South Australia is £48,281 as against our £36,086. So far as taxation is concerned, the Committee will observe that there is a substantial increase in the salaries, the total increase being £3,785. This of course is due to the imposition of fresh taxation which was passed last session. I again regret that the Committee did not see fit to pass the suggestion of taxing wages and salaries at the base, as I am certain that would have given greater satisfaction and would have saved considerable expenditure in extra salaries. Before passing these increases I asked the Public Service Commissioner to make careful inquiries to see whether they were really necessary. He says they are, and that further, by giving the increases we will be able to have better inspection which will enable us to bring those people who have been avoiding the payment of their due taxes, or evading taxation, to account. Hon. members will no doubt have noticed that we have been vigorously prosecuting people for not obeying the law. When I became Colonial Treasurer, I found that a thousand people were to be prosecuted. I asked the Commissioner of Taxation what stamps I had to affix to certain documents, and being ignorant of the law myself I determined that I would not prosecute these people when I was not aware of what the law provided. At any rate I decided that I would not prosecute without giving them notice. I then caused to be posted notices at every railway station, every courthouse, and wherever we could, setting out the scale of stamps required and I caused to be announced through the Press that in the future any evasions of the law would be met by pressing for heavy penalties. We have instituted prosecutions with results which no doubt hon. members are aware of. There is no one more disappointed than I am over this question of the two Taxation Departments. At the conference which we had in Melbourne, at which the taxation officers from the various States were present, more concern was expressed about the 15 per cent. of the people who will pay than about the 85 per cent. who are honest and want to pay. It was stated that it was not possible to simplify the forms. I assure hon. members that I am going to have a hard try to bring that about, and I am going to get the views of other people who probably have more sense in this connection than I have. At the present time it is nothing short of a scandal that the people who are taxed have to put up with so much inconvenience. I am certain the forms can be simplified. Mr. Holman and Mr. Theodore were requested to prepare a scheme for the purpose of amalgamating the two departments. There is great room for saving here, not only in administration, but in the matter of convenience to the public. I hope that at any rate, when submitting the

Estimates of this department next year, something tangible will have resulted. When I was in Melbourne Mr. Watt said, "I will do your office for 25 per cent. less than it costs now." I replied that I would agree to enter into an arrangement with him straight away, but when it came to bedrock, I found that his idea was only to do a portion of the work. With regard to the Workers' Homes Board, there has been a slight increase in the administrative cost, due to statutory increases to the lower paid staff. I have just laid the annual report of this department on the Table of the House, in which it is shown that the profit on the year's operations was £2,296. After making provision for the sinking fund of £1,160, the balance of £1,236 has been brought forward as net profit for the year. The total profits since the Act was proclaimed in 1911 to the 30th June, 1918, were £6,454. The securities are in a satisfactory condition, and the board now does a fair amount of inspection work for the Savings Bank.

Mr. Duff: You are not paying very high salaries.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am paying all that it is stated they are worth. Thirteen applications have been dealt with for providing homes for returned soldiers. With regard to Miscellaneous Services, in this Vote there appear two or three new items. There is one of £2,552, being a pound for pound subsidy promised by a previous Government for the purchase of Keane's Point. There is also a refund to the Western Australian Trotting Association of £329 in connection with the McNamara Benefit Meeting. Another item is £200 representing the travelling expenses of Mr. J. D. Connolly, the Agent General, whilst making inquiries on behalf of the Government in Canada. This amount was arranged between Mr. Connolly and the previous Premier. I have made provision for £500 to be distributed amongst members of the service for making suggestions in the direction of effecting economies in the service. These suggestions that have in them any merit are now ready for close inquiry. This work, of course, will have to stand over until we get into recess. The sum of £2,500 has been placed on the Estimates so that the Committee will be able to see what the departments are doing practically free, for the returned soldiers. Each department will send along a debit for services against this vote. Members are prone to ask what the State is doing for the returned soldier. I do not want to have that question exploited.

Mr. Troy: You should have heard the speeches at Parliament House yesterday.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have heard members here making Esplanade speeches on the subject. The Commonwealth are taxing us that they might do this work for the returned soldiers, notwithstanding which they still expect the State to do a lot of the work they themselves should do. We have put this item on the Estimates so that the Committee shall be able to see what is being done by the several departments. The only other item is £2,670 for increases to the public service. Judging by the interview, a report

of which appeared in the newspapers, the Government do not get much encouragement to help those men. They say they asked for bread and we gave them a stone. They are going to the Arbitration Court. I ask the Committee to pass this amount, but I am not going to pay out if they go to the Arbitration Court. They can get that clearly into their heads. I am not going to make a whip for the Government's back. If the public servants go to the Arbitration Court and the judge awards them £6, £10 and £12 extra, we will give it to them; but if we give it to them now it will be made the basis on which they shall start. They cannot have it both coming and going. This item is provided as an act of justice and will give 190 officers an increase of £12 and 39 officers an increase of £10. If they go to the Arbitration Court they will have to take the risk of being judged on the same lines as any other body that goes to the Arbitration Court. They cannot expect to get what the Arbitration Court may award them and still enjoy privileges under their own Act. That Act almost makes a farce of a Minister's duties. There was no Public Service Act when previously I was Treasurer. Then I was Treasurer of the State, but now I am only a glorified office boy. The Act allows them to stack everything on to the Minister. I think the Act is wrong, and I am going to see if it cannot be amended. In regard to the form of the Estimates, I am disappointed with it. I see that we can effect a saving in the entries and yet give to the Committee all the information required. Unfortunately I was out of the State when they were being made up. One would have thought that every officer in a responsible position would know what information the Committee requires. The member for North Perth remarked that it is difficult to follow the items when one is unaware of the identity of the officers. When, previously, I was Colonial Treasurer every man's item was numbered, and members' lives were made miserable; because, every officer, knowing his number, went to his member and complained that he was inadequately paid. In the end a deputation of members came to me and asked me to alter the Estimates in such a way that an officer would not know his number. I did so and that is why it is they all appear as so many clerks. I commend the Estimates to the Committee.

Votes—Treasury, £10,630; Audit, £8,925; Compassionate Allowances, £2,104—agreed to.

Vote—Government Savings Bank, £21,679.

Mr. SMITH: I was pleased to hear that the Colonial Treasurer proposes to initiate a campaign to encourage people to save, for the Government Savings Bank is not the profitable institution it was a few years ago. I find that in 1913 the profit made was £24,681, notwithstanding the fact that £3,043 was written off. In 1914 the profit was £24,479, and in 1915 it was again £24,000. In 1916 it fell to £14,000. In that year £6,494 was written off.

The Colonial Treasurer: That represents losses.

Mr. SMITH: In 1917 the profit fell to £11,582, although nothing was written off. Last year the profits slumped to £5,077 and again nothing was written off. I feel sure that an investigation would show that

instead of a profit of £5,000 we made a serious loss last year. There is something seriously wrong. The Savings Bank has been a profitable institution in the past, and I hope the Treasurer will seriously consider the position. It may be advisable to appoint three commissioners as directors of the bank. Furthermore, the bank is in charge of an acting manager only. Notwithstanding the assurance given to the Committee I find from the last Public Service List that Mr. Carl Leschen is still the manager of the bank. This fact may have something to do with the unpopularity of the institution. I am sure it is the wish of the Committee that Mr. Leschen should not hold this position. Something ought to be done at once to put an end to the present state of affairs.

Hon. P. Collier: That list was printed some time ago.

Mr. SMITH: It was published in the "Government Gazette" of 13th September last. I undertake to say that as soon as peace is declared Mr. Leschen will issue a writ against the Government for his back pay, damages, and for reinstatement in his old position. In the interests of the bank he should be permanently removed from any connection with it. Our savings banks ought to be a valuable aid to the Treasurer during these times. People are earning a lot of money, but, unfortunately, are spending it as fast as they get it. If they could be induced to patronise the bank a little more it would be a very good thing for the State.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: There is a good deal of force in what the hon. member has said, and I hope that some finality will shortly be reached in the matter. Just now I can hardly be called the Treasurer, because I am merely a sort of high class clerk. Consequently there are many things which have to be done that I have not yet been able to do. In order to keep the business going the rate of interest has had to be raised, and this has reduced the rate of profit. Unfortunately, we have been just a little careless in the loans that we have been making, and this year I expect to have to write off another £3,000 because of a loan made to the Leonora municipality. Thanks to the member for that district we have been able to get back most of the £7,000 or £8,000 which was lent to that municipality, which fell upon hard times, but which has now been placed on a sounder financial basis. The competition for business is very strong. About £160,000 went into the last War Loan from the Savings Bank. The higher rate of interest offering under these circumstances also takes money away from our bank. When we settle down to ordinary business we must try to make a reasonable profit, and, even if we do not make a great profit, have an institution that will be a stand-by for the State.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Government Stores, £11,800—agreed to.

Vote—Literary and Scientific Grants, etc., £8,325:

Item, Zoological Gardens, £2,975.

Mr. SMITH: I am sorry to see that the amount under this heading has been reduced. As we have these gardens it is only right that we should keep them going. Every person who visits them has to pay a fare on the Government ferries, and if by reducing this item the gardens are rendered less popular the revenue received by the Government will also decrease.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I reduced this item for a very good reason. The authorities recently imported from Java and elsewhere £65 worth of animals, and I think the travelling expenses connected with the purchase came to about £200. If the authorities can spend their money in that way they are not going to spend Government money in that way.

Vote put and passed.

Votes — Lithographic, £4,957; Printing, £35,535—agreed to.

Vote—Taxation, £21,163:

Mr. SMITH: I desire to bring under the notice of the Committee a case in which I think an insult has been conferred upon them. Recently I asked a question regarding a taxpayer, or rather non-taxpayer, who I understood had been prosecuted for non-payment of his taxes. I requested that the papers should be laid on the Table. The answer I received from the Colonial Treasurer was that no prosecution had been brought against this person, a resident of Fremantle. While the answer was technically true, it was an evasion of my question. I discovered afterwards that the person had been prosecuted, not for non-payment of taxes, but for not furnishing returns. I do not blame the Treasurer himself for the nature of the answer given me, but I consider that the Taxation Department should have been candid. The person prosecuted is a wealthy man who has never furnished returns on his own behalf, though making a fairly substantial annual income from the stiff fees he charges for drawing up other people's returns. Furthermore, I am assured that although proceedings were initiated to bring him to book, the department went out of their way to make it easy for him and asked that only a nominal fine should be inflicted. I think the Committee will be surprised when the papers are laid on the Table.

Hon. P. Collier: Is there any objection to saying who the man is?

Mr. SMITH: His name is Higham. On the same day that he was let off with a nominal fine, an unfortunate foreigner, with an unpronounceable name, was fined no less than £18 for failure to furnish returns. I understand that to this day Higham, though he has been fined, has not furnished returns. Another extraordinary case I wish to bring to the Committee's notice is that of a South-Western settler, who received a threatening letter because he owed the department a balance of eighteenpence. It seems to be the practice of the Taxation Department to use a rubber-stamp facsimile of the Crown Solicitor's signature, and to send out threatening letters without prior reference to that official. That I consider a most improper arrangement and a most improper proceeding. In any case, the



department cannot lose the tax, which attaches to the land, and which, if not collected this year, must be paid next year. To take, or even to threaten, legal proceedings for a debt of 1s. 6d. is farcical. Owing to the rotten system adopted by the department, 25 per cent. of the people have never paid their taxes and have never been asked to do so. The Treasurer has told us that he is trying to arrange for the Commonwealth to collect our State taxes or for us to collect the Commonwealth land and income taxes. But why go from home? Why not arrange for the roads boards to collect our land tax? Under the present State system the landowner two or three months after the close of the year fills in a form and sends it to the State Taxation Department. Then the department take two or three months to assess him. Eventually he gets a notice that he has to pay so much tax, for which he is allowed thirty days. But if the taxpayer knows the ropes he can extend the period to sixty or ninety days. It is possible for him to put off paying his land tax for anything from six to twelve months beyond the date on which it ought to have been paid. The roads boards do not trust the ratepayers to send in returns, and do not even ask them to do so. They know exactly how much land each man holds, and at the beginning of the year they send out an assessment notice to each owner. The rates have to be paid, not twelve months after they fall due, but seven or eight months before the year is up. That is a much cheaper and simpler and more expeditious way than the Government way, and also one less irritating and less harassing to the taxpayer. All that is necessary to adopt the system is for the roads boards to add to their assessment notices a column headed "State Land Tax." If necessary, the Treasurer could arrange to pay the roads boards a small percentage for the work of collecting. Under such a system there would be no evasions of which there are numbers now, though the department do not know of them. The system of checking returns must be very loose, to leave so many loopholes. I have discussed the matter repeatedly with the Treasurer, and I trust that during the recess he will evolve a business-like scheme for the collection of State taxation.

Mr. MUNSIE: The member for North Perth has stressed the point with regard to the method adopted for collecting the land tax, and he has suggested that the Treasurer should do something in the nature of getting the various roads boards to collect the tax. I desire to protest against the system adopted of collecting both the income and the land tax in the country districts. I am not going so far as to say that the roads boards should be made to collect the taxes, but I contend that in every district, or town, where there is a Treasury officer, the people in those districts should be able to go to that officer and pay him their dues and thus avoid having to send the money to Perth. I can give an instance of a difficulty which arose through the tax having to be sent to Perth from Kalgoorlie. The sum of 16s. 9d. was owing by a woman in Kalgoorlie and she purchased a postal note for

that sum and sent it in the ordinary way by mail without registering it to the Commissioner in Perth. The first notification that she had, some time afterwards, that the money had not been received in Perth, was a summons for the recovery of the amount. If it had been possible to pay the amount due to the Treasury officer in Kalgoorlie, a great deal of bother would have been obviated. Then again, in some cases people themselves make up the amount they owe and forward it to the taxation office in Perth. Occasionally, however, the amount is short a penny or so, and the Taxation Department spend another penny or more in writing back to recover this sum which has been underpaid. Instances of that kind may seem ridiculous but the fact remains that they happen.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: There is a good deal of force in what the hon. member says and I think we can go further than he suggests. I do not like the suggestion that the roads board should collect the tax. We have trouble enough with those bodies as it is, but I cannot see why we should not use the savings banks more than we do. In connection with the loan transactions, we found we could use our savings banks and make exchanges very easily. We have trusted officials and we can rely on them. The difficulty that meets us everywhere is as to how it is to be done. The hon. member has my assurance that I am still on the track of it to see whether it can be done. I am certain that the whole process of collecting can be simplified. Regarding the case at Fremantle, I desire to inform the member for North Perth that we cannot lay any taxation papers on the Table of the House because the Commissioner of Taxation and myself are under oath not to reveal anything. That, however, does not prevent me from looking into the facts of the case. So far as the assessments are concerned, I cannot see why we cannot adopt the system of taking the roads board, or municipal assessments, because we would know then that we were getting at everybody. It is true that in some instances they would be below the assessments we would make. It also might be the case that they would be higher. But one would more than compensate for the other by reason of the fact that we would be getting at everybody. It is only a fortnight ago that I wrote to the Commissioner on this question. We are paying subsidies to these bodies, and what I want in return for that payment is a copy of their assessments. We could then see whether we are getting the land tax for that particular district, even if we did not adopt their assessment. It would be a difficult matter to arrange with them to collect the land tax.

Mr. MONEY: It seems still necessary to emphasise the absolute necessity, for the convenience of the people, to have one land assessment for three purposes, roads boards and municipalities, State land tax, and Commonwealth land tax. When everyone is preaching economy, we do not seem to be progressing in that direction. I regret the conference with the Commonwealth authorities has not been as successful as the Treasurer or members anticipated, but I think some greater effort should be made in this matter. It is not only the con-

venience but the cost of preparing the taxation returns which often is more than the tax itself. As the Treasurer agrees with the sentiments expressed. I think an endeavour should be made to bring the matter to a head. There is a necessity for the amalgamation of the departments including the roads boards, and I think the Treasurer should call to his assistance any members whom he thinks would help him.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Workers' Homes Board, £3,163:

Item, Secretary, £264.

Mr. FOLEY: The salary is low for the position. This officer does good work, and when Mr. Scaddan was Treasurer it was intended to increase the salary. I think this good intention should be put into effect now.

Mr. SMITH: I support the remarks of the member for Leonora. It is an absolute scandal that an officer holding this position should be paid such a paltry salary. I cannot understand the Public Service Commissioner allowing an officer to hold this position at the salary. This officer is controlling a department which has a capital of a million and a half, and he receives the salary of £5 a week. There are ordinary clerks in the service drawing that salary. The officer has an excellent record. For 21 years he was in the Treasury, and when he left that department he was receiving £216 a year. Now he is drawing £264. He has no accountant, and has to do his own accountancy. Last year he was docked 16 days' pay because he had to attend the Citizen Force drill.

Mr. NAIRN: I endorse the remarks concerning this officer. I have had a good deal of experience with him in connection with his department, and I know he has to be a thoroughly good man to control the department, in which organising capacity is required, and where tact and discretion are necessary. The officer is shamefully underpaid. This is an entirely self-supporting and profitable department. I do not know why this man's claims have been overlooked, and I trust the Treasurer will give his earnest attention to this matter, for he is a good and worthy officer, and if his services are lost they will be hard to replace.

[12 o'clock, midnight.]

Mr. MUNSBIE: During last session I drew attention to the salary paid to this officer, and pointed to the amount of State money invested in the Workers' Homes Scheme under the control of this officer. If there is one reason more than another why I should like to see the position reasonably well paid, it is because the Workers' Homes Scheme was initiated by the Government of which I was a supporter; and I realise that much of the credit for the successful working of the scheme is due to the secretary. This officer is at once able and courteous. The file proves that both the Under Treasurer and the chairman of the Workers' Homes Board have recommended this officer for an increase. Over £2,000 profit was returned from the scheme last year. If this admittedly efficient officer is not adequately paid, we run the risk of losing his services.

Mr. PICKERING: We require in this office special knowledge worth much more than we are paying him. Other officers in similar positions, such as the Chief Inspector of Aborigines and the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, are drawing much larger salaries.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I understand this officer handles 1,400 estates and a million and a half of State funds, together with £40,000 of Savings Bank funds. Yet he is being paid a "fiver" per week.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am glad to have these endorsements of this officer's ability. I do not know that it is wise to hand over the question of an officer's salary to the individual sympathies of the Committee. The probabilities are that I am to blame for this officer not having had an advance. As Colonial Treasurer, telling other Ministers that they must not increase salaries, I should be setting a bad example if I increased salaries in my own department. Everything I have touched in connection with the Workers' Homes Board has been satisfactory, but I have no power to fix a salary above that fixed by the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. Munsie: But why is this man kept continually on the minimum?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I often asked myself why certain others are on the maximum. There are plenty of men in other departments with equally strong claims to an increase. What am I to do? Whenever we give an increase to one man we create a precedent for others to go upon.

Mr. Smith: But this is a palpable injustice.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That does not move me for a moment. There are other equally strong cases that have come under my notice. I do not want to think that any member of the service can go round and, by the sympathy of members of this Chamber, get that which another fellow more modest or less pertinacious does not get.

Mr. Smith: I do not know the man; I have never seen him.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is introducing a bad principle for members to come here and say that this or that officer is underpaid. How many of them have seen this particular officer's work? Because a man in a bank takes two million pounds a day over the counter, is it expected that he should be paid two million pounds a year? I will undertake to look into this particular matter. Possibly I may be to blame because I would not permit any advances to be given in my department when I was trying to stop them in other departments. They have crept in, however, in spite of me. In my department, whatever a man has to do in his office time he gets no extra pay for, and in those cases where services are paid for by the Commonwealth or the British authorities the money goes into the Treasury. It will be my endeavour to see that this principle is adopted throughout the service. I have had many applications for increases, but had been obliged to refuse them.

Mr. NAIRN: I resent the remarks of the Colonial Treasurer. It is my privilege here

to say what is in my mind. I cannot understand his resentment to my supporting a case that I think is a deserving one.

The Minister for Works: What is the Public Service Commissioner for?

Mr. NAIRN: He is not here, and that is why we have to talk to the Treasurer. I resent the attitude of the Minister when he challenges me with having unduly used my position as a member of Parliament to espouse what I regard as a just cause.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have not spoken to Mr. Thomas since the last Estimates were dealt with, and have had no communication from him since that time.

Mr. Nairn: Neither have I.

Mr. MUNSIE: I resent the statement that a member may not support a case in this Chamber if he thinks it is a deserving one.

The Colonial Treasurer: I promise to look into the matter.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Colonial Treasurer could have given that promise without insinuating that this officer had used his influence with members to get an advance in his salary.

The Minister for Works: That kind of thing was rampant many years ago.

Hon. P. Collier: It was very rampant.

Mr. MUNSIE: It may have been rampant in the Minister's time, but has never been rampant with me. I believe this officer is controlling 1,400 estates, in which a million and a half of this State's money is involved, and he is being paid a salary of £264 a year.

Mr. Nairn: And they dock some of it for a few day's training.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is news to me.

The Minister for Works: Is he not getting the same salary as when the Scaddan Government were in power?

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not care whether he is or not. This officer has been on the minimum of his classification all the time.

The Minister for Works: There are many other officers in that position.

Mr. MUNSIE: I challenge the Minister for Works to name another civil servant who controls half the amount of State money that this officer controls or who has the responsibility that he has, who is not being paid a higher salary than Mr. Thomas is getting.

Mr. SMITH: Improper motives have been imputed to hon. members for bringing this matter forward. I have only spoken to this officer once, and that was quite recently, when I endeavoured to find out from him why it was he was being paid this ridiculous salary. For the last four years on the Estimates I have raised my voice against this officer being paid such a small salary, and I shall go on doing so until the position is remedied.

Mr. FOLEY: I take it I am able to refer on this vote to the work of this board. In connection with tenancies of workers' homes under the leasehold system, if through stress of circumstances the tenant has to leave the house he is liable, having complied with all monetary conditions up to the date of leaving, to receive subsequently an account

for painting and repairs. A system has been adopted of pooling all rates and taxes, so that a tenant knows exactly what he has to pay.

Mr. Willcock: But the renovations are not pooled.

Mr. FOLEY: I know of two cases in which tenants have been rendered accounts in these circumstances. Can the Minister bring about an alteration? The system works hardship.

Mr. WILLCOCK: During the past three or four years three or four of these workers' homes have been empty almost continuously. The reason would appear to be that the board's system of letting makes it considerably more expensive to be the tenant of a worker's home than to purchase the house. I understand that the higher rent is charged to cover the cost of renovations, and that it is not the policy of the board to have tenants.

The Colonial Treasurer: But the purchaser undertakes such obligations as keeping the house in repair.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Still, the purchaser is reducing the capital charge all the time.

The Colonial Treasurer: I will look into the matter.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Miscellaneous Services, £40,247:

Item, Cottage-by-the-Sea Convalescent Home, pound for pound towards upkeep, £100.

Mr. MONEY: I agree with the principle of pound for pound subsidies for convalescent homes as disclosed by this item; but I want to know why a similar grant does not appear for the Fresh Air League, the object of which is to give goldfields children a change to the seaside during the summer. The item appeared on last year's Estimates. Why is the one institution subsidised, and not the other? Really good service has been done for the children of the goldfields in the past by the expenditure of this money which has now disappeared from the Estimates. I do hope that the Treasurer will be able to see his way to reinstate the vote.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The subscriptions and donations received by the Cottage by the Sea Home totalled last year £393, and as the Estimates show, that institution received a pound for pound subsidy to the extent of £100. With regard to the Fresh Air League subsidy, I made up the amount which was required on the last occasion on the understanding that there was to be no subsidy this year.

Item, Fire Brigades Board, Contribution, £6,437.

Mr. GREEN: The accountant in the Colonial Secretary's office is the president of the Fire Brigade board, and it is apparent that the multifarious duties he has to perform prevent him from discharging his fire brigade duties satisfactorily. I am in close touch with the firemen of this State, and I have had a good deal to do with Mr. Campbell, who occupies the position of president of the board. The position to-day is that the permanent firemen have a heresy hunt at the hands of Mr. Campbell. The Fire Brigade Board have

been trying to instal volunteers where permanent men were employed before. This is calculated to cause considerable distrust and dismay, laudable as the desire may be to save money.

**THE COLONIAL TREASURER:** I have nothing to do with the administration of the board; we are bound to pay under the Fire Brigades Act, 1909, one-fourth of the total estimated expenditure, and for last year that amount was £30,000, our portion being £7,500. This year we think it will be less. The hon. member will see that we are bound to pay our quota, and the only power we have is to appoint a representative on the board.

**Mr. GREEN:** And it is about that member that I have to complain. This is the only opportunity I will have of discussing the officer in question and fire brigade matters generally. Some time ago the third officer at the permanent station did the whole of the work which is now done by the superintendent of the volunteer brigades at a cost of £8 2s. per week, and he did it more effectively than it is being done at the present time. When the question of appointing a president of the board comes up again, I trust the Government will realise the desirability of selecting someone else to fill the position. The whole of the service is dissatisfied with Mr. Campbell's administration. He dodges the point, and is full of sophistry so far as the men are concerned. The expenditure is high when we consider that there were formerly 92 men employed, and that there are 72 to-day. The money is being mopped up in the maintenance of the superintendent of the volunteer brigades, who has not made a success of his work. If we had a new president, and if the board could be induced to place Mr. Connolly, the third officer of the permanent men, in the position of organiser of the volunteers, things would be on a vastly different basis. The man who was president of the union, after six years of service, was summarily dismissed, the excuse being given that a cook was not required. Yet that man had been serving as a senior fireman up to two years ago, when he was asked to take the position of cook. The usual thing in all services is to put off a junior when it is necessary to get rid of someone, but this man was dismissed because he was president of the union, and at the present time no fewer than three men have been suspended by Mr. Campbell because they are supposed to have said something about the volunteers at the different stations. While one man is fired out and another is put in who is not receiving any money at all, the other men resent that man and call him harsh names. Mr. Campbell never keeps his word with the men, and the men have no faith in him.

**The Colonial Treasurer:** Would the hon. member mind seeing me afterwards and putting this case before me in detail? I will look into it.

**Item, Defalcations, hospital collector, Northam, £100.**

**Mr. SMITH:** This is a small item, but an important principle is involved. I should like to know if the Government have a system of guaranteeing the officers. If not, will the Treasurer give an assurance that he will see

that all officers handling money are guaranteed?

**The Colonial Treasurer:** Generally speaking, they are guaranteed. I will inquire into this case.

**Item, Payment to Railway Department to cover all charges for free passes, special trains and cars, etc., £1,500.**

**Mr. SMITH:** If this item were sufficiently reduced, it would enable the Treasurer to pay an increased salary to the officer whose case we were recently discussing. While the Government preach economy they should cut out all special trains. Reserved compartments should be quite sufficient just now for any Minister of the Crown.

**The Minister for Works:** How many special trains are run?

**Mr. SMITH:** If only one, it is too many. I do not know whether the Minister takes a special car.

**The Minister for Works:** If I want it, yes.

**Mr. SMITH:** Yet the Minister gets up here and preaches economy. He knows that the State is going back by millions of pounds, and I think these luxuries could be dispensed with.

**Item, Travelling expenses, Hon. J. D. Connolly, whilst making inquiries on behalf of Government in Canada, £200.**

**Mr. GREEN:** I should like to know exactly what the item means, and whether Mr. Connolly has been in Canada this year.

**The COLONIAL TREASURER:** Last year I challenged the item, and on looking up the papers I found that the arrangement made with the late Premier was that Mr. Connolly should make inquiries in Canada on his way Home, and that his expenses were to be paid. We had to pay them accordingly.

**Vote put and passed.**

**This completed the Estimates of the Treasury Department.**

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

**Progress reported.**

**House adjourned at 12.46 a.m. (Friday).**

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 26th November, 1918.*

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

[“For Questions on Notice” see “Minutes of Proceedings.”]

### MOTION—PACIFIC ISLANDS' CONTROL.

**The COLONIAL SECRETARY** (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.35]: I move—

That this House endorses the declaration of the Commonwealth Parliament, as fol-